Exploring challenges and supports for writing in Standard Australian English for Australian secondary English as an Additional Language/Dialect Students: A Scoping Study

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Abstract: *The overall purpose of this study was to explore the identified language challenges and supports for writing in Standard Australian English for secondary English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D) students. An initial review of the academic literature revealed that this research topic has not been extensively researched in the Australian context. For this reason, this research project involved a systematic scoping study of the academic literature, based on the framework of Arksey and O'Malley (2005) to determine findings to date. The 35 articles examined revealed a range of themes that either challenged or supported the writing process for Australian EAL/D secondary students. Key challenges that EALD learners in secondary contexts face when developing Standard Australian English (SAE) writing skills revolve around policy mandates from curriculum and assessment authorities, de-facto policy as realised through EAL and mainstream curriculum, teachers' attitudes, knowledge and beliefs, including notions of deficit, and pre-service teacher preparation. What was found to support EAL/D students were different pedagogical approaches which are cognizant of students' cultural knowledge, experiences and linguistic resources, as well as genre-based approaches incorporating Systemic Functional Linguistics and a teaching and learning cycle and technology. Given that some of the studies were relatively small which impacts*

generalizability, further research in relation to the topics under study would be encouraged, particularly as to what supports a wider range of EAL/D students.

Introduction

Australia is a culturally and linguistically diverse country with students drawing from over 2,000 different ethnic backgrounds. In primary and secondary classrooms this equates to approximately 21%-25% of students for whom English is an Additional Language or Dialect (EAL/D), with numbers of EAL/D students as high as 90% in some schools. EAL/D students can come from a range of backgrounds including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, immigrants, refugees, migrant children and international students from non-English speaking countries (ACARA, n.d.). Not only are these students learning English as a language or dialect in a range of content areas, but they are expected to demonstrate their understanding in Standard Australian English (SAE) in written forms which can be challenging.

National and international data reveal that EAL/D students underperform in SAE literacy tests, and they require additional support with English language in order to access age-appropriate curriculum (ACARA, n.d.; ACTA, 2022). In response to supporting EAL/D students, federal and state governments have made and implemented various policies to guide and support teachers. For example, in Queensland where the authors are based, Queensland public schools are guided by the *State Schools Improvement Strategy 2022-2026* (Department of Education Queensland, 2021) which is underpinned by a range of policies that focused on inclusion of student diversity counting the *Human Rights Act 2019, the Multicultural Recognition Act 2016*, and *Inclusive Education Policy*. The goal is to have all students, including culturally and linguistically diverse students succeeding and, in particular, succeeding in writing in SAE. At the local level all secondary schools are charged with implementing the *State Schools Improvement Strategy 2022-2026* and lifting the outcomes and engagement of domestic EAL/D students, with schools often identifying improvement agendas for writing.

However, research findings indicate that mainstream classroom teachers may not have the specialised knowledge to support EAL/D students and need more support to do so (Gilmour et al., 2018; Premier, 2021). An initial review of the literature found only a dearth of studies in relation to writing for

EAL/D learners in the secondary years. This indicates a gap in the literature generally but more research is needed for the diverse groups of EAL/D students, which has become the recent impetus for the present scoping research.

By conducting such a scoping review, this study aims to 1) explore the identified challenges and supports for writing in SAE for secondary EAL/D students in a range of learning areas, and 2) identify ways to support educators to teach SAE writing skills explicitly, actively and meaningfully. The remainder of this paper will provide a short review of the academic literature relating to the policy context for EAL/D education in Australia, and discuss the theoretical and conceptual framing for this research. The research methodology employed will then be rationalised and detailed, followed by the presentation and discussion of the findings. Some key considerations for future research and practice will conclude this paper.

The policy context in Australia
Teaching and learning do not take place in a vacuum and as such are influenced by policy which in turn impacts funding for various initiatives. As Scarino (2022) advises the current situation in Australia is that there is no national policy on language. Given the lack of national policy, Scarino (2022) states that a standardised Australian national curriculum serves as a "de facto policy in the schooling context," supported by a range of EAL/D resources (p. 154). Responsibilities for funding EAL/D moved from the Commonwealth Government to state and territory governments, and Gonski funding found its way into general school budgets (Creagh et al., 2022; Scarino, 2022). In Queensland Education, a restructuring of the educational bureaucracy has meant EAL/D has been incorporated into an overarching inclusion policy. In spite of extensive funding for EAL/D, this has been "devolved to schools, which now have greater autonomy over one-line budgets and with very limited accountability measures in respect of the provision and outcomes of the EAL/D policy in practice" (Creagh et al., 2022, p. 2).

In reality, changes in funding have resulted in "the disappearance of EAL/D qualified teachers and leaders in schools, diversion of earmarked funding away from EAL/D learner support, EAL/D programs subsumed within other school programs and dissipated EAL/D services in schools" (ACTA, 2022, p.5). As a result of these changes, ACTA (2022) highlight

this erosion of provision for EAL/D students coincides with their poor performance in literacy as measured by NAPLAN, and other literacy tests. Further concerned by the loss of EAL/D provision for students in Australian Schools, ACTA has again recently released a Roadmap for EAL/D Education post COVID-19 (ACTA. 2022). This roadmap suggests 12 key actions aligned to the Reform Directions and *National Policy Initiatives in National Schools Reform Agreement* (Department of Education and Training, 2018), which is a joint agreement amongst the Commonwealth, States and Territories, designed to boost student outcomes across Australian schools.

Of particular focus to this research study is the emphasis on ensuring teachers can support EAL/D students, given the lack of policy and structural support for EAL/D (Scarino, 2022). ACTA (2022) call for high-impact pedagogies that can support EAL/D learning losses, help achieve economic parity with their peers, and accelerate English learning. This research project, with a scoping study as its method, could "provide a coherent and sound evidence base for national policy, planning and practice in EAL/D education" which could inform teacher practice (ACTA, 2022, p.15).

Conceptual framework for this study
This research is guided by a range of theories, which are interpretative in nature. From an interpretivist paradigm, reality is viewed as subjective and relative (Ellis & Barkhuizen, 2005; Neuman, 2006). One interpretivist approach that frames this study is a hermeneutically inspired understanding of language acquisition which acknowledges the subjectivities of both students and teachers in the learning process (Gadamer, 1976; 2004). It seeks to understand the beliefs, values and actions of individuals that are shaped by their language, culture, and personal experiences, which in turn shapes interactions with others, the meanings made through development of knowledge and understanding, and demonstration of their knowledge and understanding (Scarino, 2022).

For Gadamer (2004), language, as a tool for mediation and negotiation between people, serves a social purpose. This notion of negotiation of meaning making as not only individualistic but collaborative, frames our second theoretical frame, that of social constructionism. As Scarino (2022, p.158) emphasises, "It is this being 'at home' in the language of their primary socialisation that shapes students' (and teachers') learning and coming to know".

Part of this coming to know, is not only tied to notions of language as a legacy, deeply rooted in histories, tradition and culture (Gadamer, 1976), but also tied to issues of power. This is particularly important given that written texts are co-constructed, and presented as genres that are socially recognised, with languages like SAE often privileged over the languages that EAL/D students may bring into the classroom (Scarino, 2022).

These interpretive theoretical approaches have shaped the choices made in regard to methodology, analysis, interpretation, and discussion of the results.

Research Methodology

The key aims and purposes of this study informed the following research questions:

1. What is known from existing academic literature about challenges for writing in Standard Australian English for EAL/D secondary students?

2. What is known from existing academic literature about opportunities to support writing in Standard Australian English for EAL/D secondary students?

To seek answers to these questions, a scoping review following Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) methodological framework for scoping studies was conducted. Given the potential audience of this report (educators and/or researchers), "a scoping study is an appropriate tool for enabling the research community to access existing understandings in the literature" (Major et al., 2018, p. 1996), which may reveal knowledge gaps and inform future research (Peters et al., 2020). Scoping studies need to be conducted in a rigorous and transparent manner, documented in sufficient detail to allow for replicability to ensure greater reliability of the findings. Whilst the five stages of Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) framework are delineated in a linear fashion, it should be noted that, the process is not linear but iterative, requiring researchers to engage with each stage in a reflexive way and, where necessary, repeat steps to ensure that the literature is covered in a comprehensive way. For the purposes of discussing the process, it will be discussed in a linear fashion as per the five stages of the framework:

- Stage 1: Identifying the research question
- Stage 2: Identifying relevant studies

- Stage 3: Study selection
- Stage 4: Charting the data
- Stage 5: Collating, summarizing and reporting the results

When **identifying the research question**, key parameters such as the study population, interventions or outcomes were defined as recommended by Arskey and O'Malley (2005). For this study a focus on the target population of secondary Australian EAL/D students drew from our roles as a secondary classroom teacher and TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) educator trying to support culturally and linguistically diverse students. The concept of writing was both a school priority and national priority as explained earlier, with the context defined to focus on Australian secondary schools.

To **identify relevant studies**, a comprehensive search of both published and unpublished studies and reviews addressing the research questions was undertaken, using search terms drawn from the research question (challenges, supports, opportunities, writing, Standard Australian English, EAL/D). Five electronic databases were selected for their relevance to education and EAL/D. For the majority of searches, Boolean operators, such as AND, were used to join key words, or phrase searching (such as "secondary schools"), truncation symbols such as EAL* were also applied when searching. These searches were limited to full text, peer reviewed articles published between 2010-2022. The term EAL/D was first used in 2011 in Queensland in relation to the EAL/D bandscales. ACARA then started to use the term from 2012 and afterwards. Given that it was officially used in 2011, it was decided to search from 2010 as there may have been some slightly early references prior to its more official use in Queensland educational documents. There were variations in the number of results yielded from each search strategy conducted (see results in Table 1).

The **selection of relevant studies** was an iterative and reflective process (Levac et al., 2010). A Level 1 review based on the article title, abstract and summary, applying the exclusion criteria revealed a total of 77 potential articles. Some identified relevant studies appeared in more than one of the above databases. For most of the citations selected from applying the search strategy a large number of studies were not relevant to the topic, in spite of defining the terminology at the beginning (Arskey & O'Malley, 2005). This was the case for Google Scholar which

yielded large number of sources (e.g., 18,000 or more). Analysis stopped after the first 100 potential sources were searched for relevance. Findings also included other terminology such as English as a second language (ESL), English Language learners (ELL), which in turn shaped the refining of searches. Overall, searches with no Boolean operators revealed more appropriate results.

　　To counter the possibilities of irrelevant studies, key decisions were made as to the inclusion and exclusion criteria at both Level 1 (title, abstract and summary) and Level 2 (full articles) review (Levac et al., 2010; Peters et al., 2015, 2020). The 77 articles identified from Level 1 Review were manually scanned and read for further detail for their ability to answer the research questions and for inclusion/exclusion criteria. This laborious process realised 35 relevant articles (see Appendix A for a list of these studies). Table 1 shows the number of studies remaining after application of inclusion and the exclusion criteria at Level 2 Review.

Table 1. Level 1 and level 2 identification of relevant studies

| Level 1 Review
Review of full text, peer reviewed journals based on **article title, abstract and summary.**

Criteria for Exclusion:
• Non-peer reviewed articles/ journals or books
• Prior to 2010
• Other countries apart from Australia
• Participants – primary years, University undergraduate
• Non-ESL, EAL or EAL/D students
• Writing as multimodal | Level 2 Review
Review of the **whole article** for those identified in **Level 1 Review.**

Criteria for Inclusion:
• Published peer reviewed journals or other peer reviewed sources, books which included research results
• 2010- 2022
• Australian
• Participants – secondary or high school
• ESL, EAL or EAL/D students
• Writing or aspects of writing for print-based text
• Challenges for writing for EAL/D students
• Opportunities or supports for writing for EAL/D students |

Database searched	Results Yielded from Searches	Number of Articles remaining after Level 1 Review	Number of Articles remaining after Level 2 Review
Griffith University	26	7	6
Eric Proquest	4	1	1
Proquest Education	77	1	2
Sage Database	22	2	2
Google Scholar - 3 searches	17, 000 18,500 980	21 8 37	24
		Total = 77 potential articles	**Total = 35 articles**

Charting of the data involved extraction of data from the included studies after inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied. Arksey and O'Malley's (2005) charting approach and Levac et al.'s (2010) descriptive analytical method were adopted as an iterative process and updated throughout, as well as a thematic analysis approach (Creswell, 2012) to make sense of extracted data. Data extracted from the previous stage was collated and summarized in Stage 5 – **collating, summarising and reporting the results**.

For those 35 suitable extracted studies, thematic synthesis process (Thomas & Harden, 2008) was undertaken, seeking to explore themes emerging in the data and refine meaning in relation to the guiding questions of the study. All empirical data were open coded for concepts related to writing challenges and supports either for teachers or EAL/D students. At all times, when coding data, comparisons were made between emerging categories. Documented information yielded from this comparative process allowed for the establishment of connections between categories. **Findings** from **collating and summarising** the extracted studies will be reported and discussed in the sections that follow.

Results
Eight primary themes and some sub-themes emerged from the analysis of the extracted studies from the scoping study though it

should be noted that the content of some articles could fall into more than one category (Kitson, 2022) (see Table 2). For example, whilst Baak et al. (2021) explored the rhetoric of policy and what was enacted, the main topic discussed was assessment, so it was included under the theme of assessment. In addition, writing in a range of subject areas were discussed in some readings, but these were categorised under pre-service teacher preparation, teachers' attitudes knowledge, skills and experience or writing as part of a curriculum.

Table 2. Primary Themes and Sub-themes Emerging from the Extracted Studies

Primary Themes	Sub-themes
Factors impacting teachers' practice in relation to writing	Pre-service teacher preparation and writing instruction
	Teachers' attitudes, knowledge, skills and experience
	Deficit Discourses
Writing as part of a curriculum	Critical literacy
	Hidden curriculum
Writing in a range of subject areas	
Writing as a creative and individual identity building endeavour	
Pedagogical approaches to writing	
Creating an environment that supports writing	Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) Valuing students' cultural and linguistic resources
Assessment of writing for EAL/D students	NAPLAN writing tests
	Classroom assessment
Ways to support different groups of EAL/D students	IEAL/D
	International students

All of these themes are reported in Kitson (2022). However, to address the focus of this journal article and a reduced word limit, only six key themes, though not all sub-themes will be reported here: F*actors Impacting Teachers' Practice in Relation to*

Writing, Writing as Part of A Curriculum, Pedagogical Approaches to Writing, Creating An Environment That Support Writing, Assessment of Writing for EAL/D Students, and Ways to Support Different Groups of EAL/D Students. Since some challenges identified can also be framed as supports or opportunities and vice versa, challenges and supports are discussed together.

Factors impacting teachers' practice in relation to writing
What occurs in the classroom in regards to how EAL/D students learn is impacted by macro and micro level contextual factors such as policy mandates, funding, school programs, pre-service teacher preparation, teachers' attitudes, knowledge and skills, and notions of deficit. Some major findings are presented in this section.

Pre-service teacher education preparation for writing
Three studies reported findings based on programs provided for pre-service secondary teachers (PSTs) to prepare them for school-based practicum experiences with a diverse range of students, including EAL/D students (Davison & Ollerhead, 2018; Love, 2010; Ollerhead, 2018). PSTs undertaking either a Bachelor or Master of Secondary Education, were mentored as to how to teach academic literacies including aspects of genre such as structure, register, and linguistic features in a range of learning areas, delivered through a series of workshops. Workshop content included a focus on building PSTs pedagogical language knowledge for writing (Davison & Ollerhead, 2018; Ollerhead, 2018) or in Love's (2010) case, literacy pedagogical content knowledge (LPCK). In Ollerhead's (2018) study, PSTs worked with Indigenous and Pacific Islander students, identified as needing more support with language and literacy in an intensive tutoring program. All three studies focused on literacy, which was conflated as supporting EAL/D students but also students who were struggling with literacy. Love (2010) included a focus on oral language, but did not really touch on second language acquisition and what strategies or knowledge is specially needed for EAL/D students.
Nguyen and Brown's (2016) study which explored the factors influencing the writing instruction of three PSTs, was the only one with a dedicated EAL practicum. Their mentors were all trained in TESOL, and the PSTs had completed some specialist EAL courses as part of their undergraduate teaching program. This study revealed that the writing instruction PSTs delivered in

schools was influenced by contextual elements including the school EAL program, the EAL and mainstream curriculum, the teachers who mentored them, and the PSTs' prior knowledge about their EAL/D students' proficiency levels, backgrounds and ability to respond to tasks. Whilst PSTs' experiences varied from school to school and with different levels of success, what was found to be successful was differentiated instruction based on student backgrounds, needs and interests and genre-based writing instruction. Structural templates like TEEL (Topic, Evidence, Explain, Link) and graphic organisers were less effective for one PST due to lack of clarity of purpose of all parts of the template.

Teachers' attitudes, knowledge and skills
Three studies explored teachers' attitudes, knowledge and skills (Gleeson & Davison, 2016, 2019; Truckenbrodt & Slaughter, 2016). Truckenbrodt and Slaughter (2016) proposed that EAL/D teachers, language teachers and classroom teachers should be working collectively to identify shared goals and expertise, to explore commonalities in the curriculum, create a common metalanguage and pedagogical approaches, in order "to promote plurilingual notions of language and literacy and, where appropriate, to align language and literacy practices" (p. 27). Notions of collaboration as implied, however, did not appear to be supported by other studies exploring the attitudes, content knowledge and skills of teachers.

For example, in Gleeson and Davison's (2016) study 11 teachers from a range of teaching areas from two public NSW secondary schools, each with over 70% EAL/D students, as well as a feeder intensive language centre for new arrivals were interviewed and completed questionnaires. In spite of opportunities to co-teach with ESL specialists, and thus learn how to support EAL/D students, Gleeson and Davison (2016) found there was a conflict between this experience, professional learning, and their beliefs about teaching EAL/D students. Some teachers were cognisant that different disciplines used different genres to convey information, and used some strategies to support secondary EAL/D students. However, they maintained that teachers only had a superficial understanding of the language knowledge needed for teaching EAL/D students, also supported in their later study (Gleeson & Davison, 2019). Gleeson and Davison (2016, p. 48) found that one ESL teacher did not have "the pedagogical language knowledge to guide or challenge his colleagues". Other

teachers in Gleeson and Davison's (2016) study also noticed a disparate difference between oral language proficiency and proficiency in writing, but there was lack of awareness that this was a common occurrence during language acquisition.

Further, some teachers did not consider teaching EAL/D students as a specialist area, viewing English teachers as having the necessary skills to teach them. In relation to differentiation in subject areas, others conflated teaching EAL/D students with foreign language teaching or supporting those with literacy learning difficulties. Some did not value writing as important to their subject (e.g., mathematics), and would focus on meaning but overlook grammatical and spelling errors. However, some more experienced teachers did not perceive any friction between their subject teaching beliefs, their professional knowledge and practices, and those related to teaching English language learners, "they saw no need to seek out additional specific professional learning" (Gleeson & Davison, 2016, p.53). This is contrasted with Gleeson and Davidson's (2019) later study, which found newer teachers who had EAL/D understanding built into their pre-service training were more open to professional development. Gleeson and Davidson (2019) also found that teachers had low views of EAL/D students pursing an academic pathway.

Deficit discourses
Two studies addressed challenges EAL/D learners have relating to five competing deficit discourses (Alford, 2014; Choi & Slaughter, 2021). Findings from Alford's (2014) 16 interviews with four English teachers explored how teachers positioned their secondary EAL/D students, revealing five competing discourses in teachers' talk. These are that: EAL/D students lack levels of sophistication to achieve higher grades in writing *(deficit as lack)*, and may not possess what is required by the demands of the curriculum *(deficit as need)*. EAL/D students also have conceptual challenges *(conceptual capacity for critical literacy)*, challenges relating to cultures of learning, rhetorical sophistication in writing, or writing in exam conditions *(linguistic, cultural and conceptual difficulty with critical literacy)*. Whilst some of these discourses offer a challenging viewpoint, Alford (2014) suggests others offer hope. For example, Alford (2014) argues that regarding *learner difference as a resource* offers potential opportunities for more equitable literacy learning although some teachers in Alford's study did not always draw upon these

resources. Choi and Slaughter (2021) also proposed that to challenge notions of deficit, EAL/D students' linguistic repertoires, resources and experiences as well as their language practices, should be valued. They suggested creating "language trajectory grids" to make these visible, which can be then used to prompt rich discussions and as a stimulus for creative writing.

Writing as part of a curriculum

Of the extracted studies, four articles focused on writing as part of the English and EAL curriculum, three with a focus on critical literacy (Alford, 2014; Alford & Kettle, 2017; Allison, 2011), and one on the notion of hidden curriculum (Janfada & Thomas, 2020).

Critical literacy

Critical literacy skills are higher order thinking skills used when reading literary texts for hidden or underlying messages on political, social and cultural aspects, and writing critically is an expectation in secondary English and EAL studies. Both Alford (2014) and Allison (2011), however, found this to be problematic for EAL/D students. Allison (2011) indicated that although EAL/D learners had necessary linguistic resources to engage in critical literacy successfully or as suitable to their ages, when it came to "essayist literacy" (Scollon & Scollon, 1981, p. 50), they lacked knowledge and understanding of important content and concepts and repeated concepts, as well as the required skills and knowledge for topic development, and were unable to link the concepts in a cohesive and logical manner.

The main data from Alford (2014) centred on notions of deficit discourse as reported earlier in relation to a "conceptual capacity for critical literacy", and the other on the contrary, "linguistic, cultural and conceptual difficulty with critical literacy" (Alford, 2014, p. 71), also noted by Allison (2011). For example, in Alford's (2014) study, one teacher commented that in spite of language skills, students wrote about foregrounding, marginalisation, and how and why readers are positioned in particular ways, but they did not have the language proficiency to manipulate the language to argue their opinion, or they may have challenges with complex sentences, lack of rhetorical sophistication in their writing, or have problems in relation to writing in exam conditions. Both Allison (2011) and Alford (2014) point out the disenfranchising nature of the essay, which is a staple form of

assessment, suggesting the use of other ways for EAL/D students to demonstrate their knowledge (Alford, 2014) as well as intensive support across secondary schooling to develop the complex language demands, including the ability to build the field (Allison, 2011).

Hidden Curriculum

In examining the hidden ideological underpinnings of the EAL Curriculum enacted in Victoria, Janfada and Thomas (2020) found that whilst the EAL curriculum is specifically devised for EAL/D students, the study of the texts selected still demands the rigour required of first language speakers. Further, the texts deemed suitable for EAL/D students due to their awareness of the diverse needs of EAL/D learners, in reality means fewer texts, which still promote an anglophone perspective and view of the world.

Pedagogical approaches to writing

Whilst they will not be discussed in detail here, different types of pedagogical approaches were reported including drama pedagogy and trans-languaging poetry pedagogy (Dutton & Rushton, 2018; 2021; 2022), the use of "language trajectory grids (Choi & Slaughter, 2021) reported earlier, and the use of word poetry to create a third space for EALD students through culturally sustaining pedagogy (Jones & Curwood, 2020). These approaches (Dutton & Rushton, 2018; 2021; 2022, Choi & Slaughter, 2021) serve as a way of engaging students, building identity through shared stories and lives, supporting development in writing or as a way into writing. In particular, word or slam poetry (Jones & Curwood, 2020, p.281) allowed students "to manipulate the language without the restrictions of grammar or structure", as well develop critical literacy. However, this approach used a program outside the school curriculum of English.

Whilst a context-based approach helps fluid transitions between the context and concepts in written work in science of middle school students (King & Henderson, 2018), genre or text-based models, often used with Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday, 1994) and in conjunction with a four-stage teaching and learning cycle, adapted from Callaghan and Rothery (1988), are the ones that have experienced success at whole school level (Clary et al., 2015; Humphrey, 2015; Humphrey & Feez, 2016). The use of SFL was found to support EAL/D students and

provide a metalanguage for both teacher modelling and feedback on student drafts which allowed for growth in writing. Both studies of Humphrey (2015) and Humphrey and Feez (2016) also reported that teachers' work had positive impacts on both internal and external data such as NAPLAN (National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy). In a similar vein, Clary et al. (2015) implemented a whole school literacy program in one regional NSW secondary school with a staff of about 50 teachers where 14% of the 700-student population identified as Indigenous and 8% as EAL/D. Anecdotal data revealed for Indigenous students there was improved pride in their written products, greater awareness of different genres, their structure and language, particularly in extended response questions using paragraphs. Janfada and Thomas (2020) also maintain that genre-based approaches can offer rich affordances for learning about the language of texts, although it has been criticised for teaching students to conform to predictable and normative ways of communicating which can dismiss multilingual voices.

Creating an environment that supports writing
Key studies exploring the notion of environments conducive to EAL/D students' writing were Gilmour (2017) who explored the school environment from teacher and student viewpoints, Downes (2015) in relation to ICTs, and Scarino (2022) the mediating role of culture and languages. Gilmour (2017) surveyed 2,484 students and 337 high school staff from five Queensland secondary schools in order to understand the learning experiences and environment for culturally and linguistically diverse students (CALD). Of the students surveyed 10.5% were classified as EAL/D, 10% were from bi/multilingual schools. Like authors reported earlier *in the Teachers' attitudes, knowledge and skills section*, Gilmour (2017) found that teachers did not have the necessary skills to support this 20% of the cohort, with only 4.7% of staff having received academic training, and only another 10.4% having received some professional development. 68 of the 2,484 students were further interviewed to unpack their experiences and their academic achievements, including performance in NAPLAN. In relation to writing, EAL/D students from years 7-9 were below the national minimum standard for writing, with -15.7%, -14.8%, and -36.9% respectively for writing. Grammar was another area of concern for this group. Those from bi/multilingual homes achieved slightly better. In exploring their school experiences, Gilmour (2017)

found that writing across a range of subjects was challenging for this group of students. Challenges included mixing up words when speaking two or more languages, sentence structure, starting to write, coming up with ideas, vocabulary, or writing up theory or in exams for Science and Health and Physical Education.

Downes (2015) and Scarino's (2022) studies found opportunities for environments to support writing. Downes (2015) in his review of the academic literature observed that ICTs offer more opportunities than face to face interactions for collaborative learning activities. They can lead to EAL/D students' literacy development, based on a more collective scaffolding, authentic language input and output, peer feedback and assistance. Scarino (2022) highlights the mediating role of culture and languages in relation to student learning particularly in relation to writing. She explored the written work on senior secondary EAL/D students, in particular one case study of a Malaysian's student's response to a written item in a Year 12 EAL/D exam. This case study highlighted that when writing for an Australian audience, as a Malaysian person, this student had to transpose himself to thinking in an Australian way, and to position himself in a particular role, as well as create a text in a genre that works differently in his culture. Scarino (2022, p. 166) proposed that EAL/D teachers tend to focus more on the written product or the genre, "when what is also needed is a variety of tasks that invite consideration of multiplicity, comparison, translation, different positionings and different vantage points".

Assessment of writing for EAL/D students
Several studies discuss the assessment challenges for EAL/D students regarding external data like NAPLAN, and internal data like ESL band-scales and other senior secondary writing tasks, which are guided by senior certificate policies (Angelo, 2013; Baak et al., 2021; Creagh, 2014; Dixon & Angelo, 2014). Angelo (2013), Dixon and Angelo (2014), and Creagh (2014) raised the highly problematic nature of NAPLAN. Creagh (2014) points out for ESL students, the manner in which NAPLAN data is disaggregated based on LBOTE (Language Background Other Than English) is the only indicator of language and it does not take into account proficiency in SAE or any second language factors which may impact upon student performance in writing. In doing so, Angelo (2013, p. 93) enforced that all EAL/D students should be assessed using EAL/D band-scales that relate to "their specific language

ecologies and particular learning situations". Creagh (2014) interrogated the LBOTE data to explore if there was a connection between English language level and NAPLAN test performance. Creagh (2014) found that teacher judgement is valid and aligns with NAPLAN performance, and where teacher judgement is based on qualitative observations measured quantitatively, it is beneficial and should not be discounted.

Other high stakes assessment is often dictated by policy. Baak et al. (2021) sought to explore the differences in the rhetoric of new South Australia senior certificate policies aimed at being more inclusive, and what was enacted in practice in two schools with a high population of refugee students. For EAL/D staff in these two schools, there were tensions in regard to the enactment of assessment in spite of allowances for flexibilities in assessment design. For example, even offering oral modes or powerpoint instead of written assessment, these modes still required oral or written competency in SAE which is still a challenge for students from refugee backgrounds. Teachers were also divided in relation to offering fewer assessment to students with some finding less would be better, whilst other teachers felt that more opportunities to write offered opportunities to draft, process and think, edit and revise their work. However, such flexibilities do come with their challenges for enactment, including teacher workload, previous assessment practice, experience, as well as fear in relation to aspects of uniformity and fairness, especially given the high stakes nature of this assessment, as well as a cultural shift at the school level.

Ways to support different groups of EAL/D students
The majority of the 35 studies reviewed discussed EAL/D students as a more homogenous group, even though there was great diversity within them, both as to how they were classified (rural, remote, urban, refugees, indigenous) or their ethnic background. These have been reported elsewhere under the main theme of the study. In this section, however, only Indigenous EAL/D students (IEAL/D) (Bevan & Shillinglaw, 2010) and international students (Crossley, 2021; Filipi & Keary, 2018; Lindner & Margetts, 2022) are reported, as these are the key studies that centred around the experiences of these specific groups.

Bevan and Shillinglaw (2010) found that Year 11-12 IEAL/D students from a secondary school in Western Australia, when completing an EAL/D course of study, needed further SAE

literacy development. They highlighted the importance of acknowledging the skills that these students bring from their Indigenous culture, a more oral culture and one based on the notion of story. The classroom teacher, along with a cultural consultant negotiated the classroom space, using the Two-Way Approach, codeswitching between cultures and dialects to develop students' literacy development. Such an approach develops both dialects, and creates a bridge to learning SAE. To overcome issues of developing linguistic and cultural awareness, along with a metalanguage for talking about SAE, students completed a code-switching journal.

Three studies reported on international students. Lindner and Margetts (2022) sought to investigate the experiences of 116 Chinese international students. As Lindner and Margetts (2022) point out, there is a dearth of research in relation to this at the undergraduate tertiary level but little for secondary. In relation to writing, Lindner and Margetts (2022) found that 35.2% of international students expected writing in English in Australia to be difficult or very difficult. Interviews with students revealed that writing for meaning was difficult, as it is inhibited by the inability of additional supports such as body language or gesture which can be used for oral communication. Other interview responses highlighted challenges of text length and vocabulary.

Filipi and Keary (2018) found that content area teachers lacked confidence in addressing international students' language needs, even though they felt a responsibility to do so. Crossley (2021) indicated a challenging gap between Intensive English Language Programs to Year 10 EAL/D courses in which some students enrol in some Victorian colleges. This was brought about by disconnected course content and insufficient teacher qualifications to support this transition, where higher order language skills, literacy and critical thinking are required.

Discussion and Conclusion

This scoping study sought to explore both the challenges for EAL/D secondary students for writing, as well as supports that may assist them. However, it should be noted that what can appear to be challenges can also be framed as supports and vice versa. The biggest challenges that EALD learners in secondary contexts face when developing their SAE writing skills revolve around policy mandates from curriculum and assessment authorities, de-facto policy as realised through EAL and mainstream

curriculum, teachers' attitudes, knowledge and beliefs, including notions of deficit, and pre-service teacher preparation. Each of these will be discussed.

Scarino (2022) points out, with a lack of national policy, the Australian national curriculum serves as a "de facto policy in the schooling context" (p. 154). The notion of curriculum and other educational imperatives from curriculum authorities and policies for senior secondary schooling where the stakes are higher, shape what EAL/D students experience in the classroom, in relation to sequences of learning, pedagogical practices that support the content, and the assessment tasks that might be used to assess the content. However, the theoretical underpinnings of each subject area will shape all of these aspects. In relation to the English and EAL curricula, critical literacy has underpinned these curricula, its intent to promote equity and access for non-native speakers though this is tokenistic (Allison, 2011). This tokenism is evident in EAL curriculum where the study of texts has the rigour of a first language speaker, and where text selection is fewer and still promotes anglophone perspectives (Janfada & Thomas, 2020).

Whilst authors were divided as to students' conceptual capabilities to be critically literate, other deficit discourses revealed challenges experienced by EAL/D students including the lack of rhetorical sophistication to achieve higher grades in writing, lack of necessary skills, challenges relating to the cultures of learning or lacking the linguistic, cultural and conceptual difficulties to perform under written exam conditions. This usually relies on what Allison (2011) refers to as "essayist literacy" (Scollon & Scollon, 1981, p. 50) which EAL/D students struggle with, in particular lack of knowledge of important content, how to develop a topic and how to sequence this logically and cohesively rather than repeating. These challenges mean that schools need to support EAL/D students to build these capabilities right from when they transition from primary school and throughout the junior and senior secondary years.

Numerous authors (Alford, 2014; Allison, 2011) call for opportunities to move away from the traditional staple assessment item of the essay. However, as the Baak et al.'s (2021) study highlights even with policies that allow for more flexibility in assessment to include EAL/D students, particular challenges exist that need to be considered. For example, even allowing presentation in other modes, EAL/D students still can suffer lack

of competency in SAE. Change like this is never easy and involves a cultural shift to embrace such opportunities.

Generally, whilst writing is part of all curricula in secondary schools, English is considered the subject area where literacy, and writing as part of literacy, is taught "in a manner that is more explicit and foregrounded than is the case in other learning areas" (ACARA, n.d.). However, it is the responsibility of all subject area specialists to teach students the language and literacy requirements. Numerous researchers (e.g., Gilmour, et al., 2018; Premier, 2021) have found that mainstream classroom teachers may not always have the specialised knowledge and support to teach EAL/D students, especially in regard to language. Of concern to Gleeson and Davison (2019) are more experienced teachers who view their years of practice with EAL/D students as enough. Gleeson and Davison (2016) have suggested it is only when there is a lack of dissonance between their existing beliefs in relation to their subject knowledge and practices that teachers will seek more professional learning or guidance from specialist EAL staff. It is about finding a way to challenge this status quo and for teachers to see the relevance of engaging in second language acquisition research, rather than just their literacy practices they gleaned from primary years teachers or from supporting struggling writers (Gleeson & Davison, 2016; 2019). Further, Initial Teacher Education preparation courses need to go further than teaching about disciplinary literacies, to develop PSTs' understandings of how EAL/D students acquire a second language.

Key supports for secondary EAL/D students' writing identified were different pedagogical strategies which are mindful of students' cultural knowledge, experiences and linguistic resources, genre-based approaches incorporating Systemic Functional Linguistics and a teaching and learning cycle, as well as technology. EAL/D students are individuals who draw from a wide range of culturally and linguistically diverse groups with a wealth of knowledge, experiences and linguistic resources. Such diversity can be brought to writing identity tasks (Choi & Slaughter, 2021; Dutton & Rushton, 2018; Jones & Curwood, 2020). Not only do they offer rich opportunities for student engagement and for students to use their linguistic resources, histories and experiences, but they act as a bridge to more academic discourses (Dutton & Rushton, 2018). Writing as an act is a cognitively demanding task where the writer not only needs to

think about content and how to sequence it, but also text structure, text purpose, how to use language to achieve this purpose, and punctuation and spelling as well.

Genre or text-based models are pedagogical approaches that have experienced success at whole school level. In secondary schools a genre-based model works nicely with Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1994), a language approach that underpins the Australian Curriculum: English (ACARA) Language Strand. It also supports curriculum literacies or disciplinary literacy approaches with its focus on text structure and language. Whilst it has great promise it should be remembered that it has been criticised for teaching students to conform to predictable and normative ways of communicating which can go against dismissing multilingual voices (Janfada & Thomas, 2020).

EAL/D students live in a technologically advanced society, one which they are expected to engage in as part of ACARAs General capabilities. Downes' (2015) study highlights the potential of web-based ICTs to provide opportunities for more collective scaffolding, authentic language input and output and peer feedback. The use of web-based ICT such as blogs, wikis, Google Docs, and online chat services might reduce pressure and anxiety, thus motivating and encouraging EAL/D student participation and engagement, should they have familiarity with the technology.

In conclusion, challenges can be turned around to provide supports for students. The transition of EAL/D students throughout secondary schooling means ensuring that there is a whole school approach to support EAL/D students across the secondary years, one that is built on an understanding of second language acquisition rather than just literacy or good teaching. Studies have shown success with this type of approach, where implementation involves whole school sharing of practice to enable buy in from more teachers. In relation to the teaching profession, ITE courses and their approach to language and literacy is a great start, developing PSTs who have developed knowledge about these genre-based models in their disciplinary areas and who may be able to have a positive influence as beginning teachers. Finally, another support would be that more consideration needs to be given to Truckenbrodt and Slaughter's (2016) suggestion of a coming together of EAL/D teachers, language teachers and classroom teachers to promote plurilingual notions of language and literacy, recognising that all cultural

groups have their own language and literacy practices. With this in mind, we make the following tentative recommendations:

1. Build staff capacity to support EAL/D students in writing through whole school EAL/D programs and trained specialists;

2. Build student capabilities in writing through a whole school focus that spans from junior to senior secondary;

3. Provide professional development for all teaching staff around Second Language Acquisition;

4. Build teacher awareness of the EAL/D and English resources that can support them to enact a focus on language and how it functions;

5. Advocate and engage in EAL/D communities of practice.

Writing is an important endeavour as part of demonstrating mastery of the curriculum, and improving writing for EAL/D students will reap benefits to all aspects of language development. Like all students, EAL/D students deserve the opportunity to experience success in school, or pursue an academic pathway should they choose. Therefore, it is imperative, for schools and teachers to take action as per the above recommendations. At the core of the Australian Curriculum documents is advocacy for student diversity, including EAL/D students. Classroom teachers and schools must take action to ensure some of our most vulnerable populations receive the support they need. It is only through educated and upskilled mainstream classroom teachers and EAL/D specialist staff that we can lift EAL/D student achievement so that they may succeed. ACTA (2022) suggests we need to enact key measures to ensure this happens. To support teachers in the classroom, the EAL/D resources supporting the Australian Curriculum must be updated, particularly to acknowledge or make visible IEAL/D learners (Angelo & Hudson, 2020). Further, these resources, along with professional development, must be rolled out in a systematic way so that teachers know of their existence, so that teachers know how they can be used to support their practice.

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Appendix A – Studies included in the scoping study

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