

# ***Editorial: Teaching EAL/D learners across the curriculum***

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Australian society has become increasingly culturally and linguistically diverse. This is mainly because Australia is home to a significantly large number of refugees, refugee-humanitarian entrants, migrants, international students, and long-term visitors who all come with not only varying expectations of participation in the Australian community, but with an immensely rich repertoire of social, cultural, linguistic, and religious practices. While this makes a significant contribution to the diverse nature and richness of Australian society, it poses educational and pedagogical challenges to schools and teachers who seek to meet the diverse needs of students for whom English is a second or additional language, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Such increased cultural and linguistic diversity in Australian classrooms has prompted numerous studies that have investigated aspects of English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) teaching and learning in diverse contexts and from diverse viewpoints. For instance, studies have examined the language needs of EAL/D learners from an early childhood perspective (Dobinson & Buchori, 2016), the preparation of mainstream teachers for EAL/D practice (de Jong & Harper, 2005), the skills and knowledge base required of secondary teachers for effective EAL/D pedagogy (Liu et al., 2017), among several others.

While a significant body of research has suggested that a range of pedagogical strategies are needed to cater for the diverse needs of EAL/D learners (e.g. Gibbons, 2008; Hammond, 2014), it appears that we continue to face a lack of synergy across a number of domains that prevent the effective and successful integration of effective practices for EAL/D students in diverse

classrooms. Such incongruity manifests itself at various levels. Besides the misalignment between the political rhetoric of inclusion and diversity in Australia and the precarious ways in which these are fully embraced, in this Special Issue we draw particular attention to the multifaceted educational, pedagogical and ideological aspects that enable and/or constrain the possibilities of inclusive learning and teaching environments for EAL/D learners in mainstream classes.

Teaching EAL/D students across the curriculum in the Australian context presents distinct challenges. The diverse range of language backgrounds requires educators to navigate varying levels of language proficiency, necessitating personalised support and differentiated instruction (Herrera & Murry, 2019). Balancing the acquisition of language skills with content mastery requires careful pedagogical planning. Addressing potential cultural biases in educational resources and assessments is also crucial to ensure equitable learning experiences for EAL/D students (Cummins, 2000). By contrast, integrating EAL/D students across the curriculum offers meaningful opportunities for empowerment within the Australian education system. Collaborative cross-disciplinary efforts enhance teachers' professional learning, leading to a deeper understanding of language learning within specific subject contexts (Hawkins, 2015).

Establishing genuinely inclusive learning settings for EAL/D learners in mainstream classes requires structural and pedagogical modifications. Strategies for inclusive teaching for EAL/D students may encompass a wide range of approaches. For instance, content and language integration strategies (CLIL) are gaining traction, as teachers collaborate to design lessons that simultaneously address content and language learning objectives (Coyle, Hood, & Marsh, 2010). Differentiated instruction, scaffolded support, task orientation, adequate resources, materials and visual aids are all essential tools to cater to the diverse needs of EAL/D students (Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2014). Culturally responsive teaching practices that validate diverse backgrounds and languages contribute to a welcoming and supportive classroom environment. Efforts to integrate EAL/D students across the curriculum also present valuable opportunities for both educators and learners. Cross-disciplinary collaboration enriches professional development, fostering a deeper understanding of language learning within

subject-specific contexts (Hawkins, 2015). EAL/D students, when provided with equitable access to learning, contribute diverse perspectives that enrich classroom discussions and encourage intercultural competence among all students.

Our first article delves into challenges around teaching of writing in Standard Australian English (SAE). Teaching EAL/D students involves multifaceted pedagogies, that typically focus on supporting students with the macro skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. However, the complexities of teaching EAL/D students in Australia are further compounded as teachers must focus on supporting students with Standard Australian English (SAE). This can be challenging for some EAL/D students, particularly when writing in SAE. Kitson and Li conduct a thorough exploration of the complexities surrounding writing in Standard Australian English for EAL/D students in their article “Exploring challenges and supports for writing in Standard Australian English for Australian secondary English as an Additional Language/Dialect (EAL/D) Students: A scoping study”. The research not only highlights the multifaceted nature of writing proficiency among EAL/D students but also underscores the importance of addressing these complexities. By shedding light on the challenges faced by these students in developing their writing skills, the study emphasizes the critical role of appropriate resources and support mechanisms in enhancing their writing abilities. Important recommendations are brought to light as a result of this research, which may have implications for future policy and practice when teaching EAL/D students writing. The outcomes of this study are relevant not only to EAL/D teachers, but mainstream content area teachers too.

The following article by Partridge and Harper extends on this conversation, by further exploring effective teaching practices for EAL/D students, focusing on new arrivals to Australia. In “Enablers and barriers for plurilingual practices: How EAL/D teachers support new arrivals in a rural secondary setting,” the authors delve into the concept of plurilingualism in a rural Australian secondary school setting. Plurilingualism was found to have positive outcomes for students, and this research offers valuable insights into the complexities of supporting plurilingual practices among students from a single cultural group. It explores the challenges faced by EAL/D teachers and the favourable

conditions that enable plurilingualism to thrive, highlighting the critical role of skilled bilingual aides in facilitating effective communication and learning. The findings have important outcomes for both EAL/D and mainstream classrooms, as supporting plurilingual practices was seen to benefit EAL/D students. Incorporating this practice into mainstream classrooms may be beneficial to students. The research indicates that stronger collaboration between mainstream teachers and EAL/D specialist teachers will assist with incorporating plurilingualism into mainstream classrooms. A key finding of this research is the need for collaborative practices between EAL/D and mainstream teachers to fully support plurilingualism.

Framed around the idea of attitudes towards diversity and, in particular, EAL/D learners in schools and mainstream classes, the third article by Veliz and Bonar examines the important but rather under-researched area of the attitudes of school principals towards EAL/D learners. Based on in-depth interviews with principals from secondary schools in Victoria and New South Wales, they explored attitudes towards diversity within educational settings, suitable pedagogical approaches, and the principals' stance on professional learning (PL) related to how teaching and leadership staff work with EAL/D learners. As recent studies have further shown (Rice et al., 2023) there is a lack of diversity within school leadership roles in Australia, and this has implications for how well the needs of students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds can be understood and catered for, especially where principals' beliefs about diversity may be influenced by systemic, structural schemas that sustain monoglossic and White-supremacy ideologies. This is closely aligned with findings that support the notion that negative perspectives or attitudes are frequently influenced by a monolingual bias or lack of awareness about multilingualism (Barnes et al., 2019).

Another key finding was the presence of a deficit perspective among some principals, primarily focusing on EAL/D students' English language proficiency as a key factor in perceiving them as less capable. Nevertheless, some principals also recognised the broader systemic issues contributing to the deficit view, including societal prejudices and stereotypes. Professional learning emerged as a key avenue for improving teacher and leader knowledge and practice, with potential benefits for both individual teachers and

the broader school community. The authors contend that effective pedagogical approaches for EAL/D students require more than surface-level adjustments, emphasising high challenge and high support, and school principals are pivotal in creating safe spaces for teachers and students from diverse backgrounds to foster inclusivity and diversity within the school community.

Relating to that theme of professional learning, Smith and Downes' article shifts the focus to examine how pre-service teachers at a Queensland university are being prepared to support EAL/D learners in mainstream classes. Through a critical discourse analysis of transcripts of five expert EAL/D teachers who shared their insights and experiences with a cohort of pre-service teachers, Smith and Downes bring to the fore examples of the presence of three main discourses related to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for working with EAL/D learners. In addition, they highlight two social concerns that need to be acknowledged, namely the dominance of an Anglo-centric approach and the prevalence of deficit discourses in education. To begin to address these concerns, they propose a translanguaging approach that promotes the use of all languages in the classroom and values cultural diversity. This research is a timely reminder of the complexities of preparing preservice teachers to meet the needs of diverse student populations, with an emphasis on making explicit the specialised knowledge and skills required for effective engagement with EAL/D students. As part of their recommendations, the authors advocate for specialised EAL/D units within initial teacher education (ITE) programs to address these complexities. They also stress the importance of ongoing collaboration between ITE programs and expert EAL/D teachers to better prepare mainstream teachers. As three educators of pre-service teachers ourselves with regular engagement in this work in initial teacher education, we can see not only the importance of this study, but also how the findings and recommendations the authors provide will be of interest to those currently working in this space in schools.

Besides the need for specialised EAL/D units in ITE programs, as advocated by Smith and Downes, Steele, Dobinson and Winkler highlight the value of teacher-researcher collaborations as a catalyst for the development and implementation of more inclusive and responsive environments that value EAL/D learners'

diverse linguistic repertoires. The authors also highlight that, despite the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity, there is a significant gap in teacher preparation programs concerning the instruction of EAL/D in Australian classrooms. They argue that prevailing educational paradigms, influenced by neoliberal ideologies, often prioritise monolingual approaches to literacy development. The authors suggest that teacher-researcher collaborations can serve as a valuable avenue for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in addressing the diverse and complex needs of EAL/D learners. The authors present a case study of their collaboration in a super-diverse primary school setting, employing 'identity texts' and arts-based approaches. Steele, Dobinson and Winkler posit that case studies emphasise the contextual nature of teaching, making it challenging for research to universally address every educational situation. They suggest that teacher-researcher collaborations can effectively tackle this challenge by developing localised approaches grounded in theory and empirical evidence. Through such collaborations, research can contribute to a more comprehensive evidence-based approach to addressing and responding to EAL/D learners' needs.

The final article in this Special Issue is situated at the intersection of school autonomy, commercialisation, and the delivery of specialised services in EAL/D education. Creagh, Playsted, Lingard, Hogan and Choi highlight the shift from centralised management to school autonomy, where principals control budget decisions, and how this intersects with the commercialisation of educational services. The paper presents survey findings from EAL/D teachers in Australia, focusing on the extent of commercialisation and its impact on delivering equitable outcomes for English language learners. The authors suggest that the use of commercial products may not align with appropriate educational practices tailored to language learning needs. Further to that, they point to the need for further research to explore the uptake of commercial products in specialist language support, examining their appropriacy and potential effects on the professional standing of EAL/D teachers. Of great interest to EAL/D teachers, educators and other stakeholders, the study suggests that commercial practices, particularly the purchase of digital resources, are prevalent in schools due to the autonomy

in budget expenditure, leading to consequences for both EAL/D students and the professional standing of EAL/D specialists. The study reveals concerns about the misuse of commercial products not designed for EAL/D learners, indicating a lack of understanding or awareness among mainstream teachers. The de-professionalisation of EAL/D teachers is highlighted, as their knowledge and skills are being replaced by these products. The authors call for further research to explore the impact of commercialization on funding, the nature of products used for EAL/D support, and the role of EAL/D specialists in influencing appropriate resource selection. Additionally, they emphasise the need for transparency in funding processes and a re-evaluation of the use of commercial products that may work against equity in education.

We are also privileged to include four book reviews in our Special Issue. The first book review is by Nurlaily. Her review of *Contemporary foundations for teaching English as an additional language* edited by Polina Vinogradova and Joan Kang Shin is a well-organised description and discussion of not only the structure of the volume but also the fundamental tenets about incorporating participatory pedagogies at the intersection of multilingualism and multimodality in the TESOL arena. In Shoecraft's review of *Pedagogical Translanguaging* (Cenoz & Gorter, 2022), we find a succinct, and yet comprehensive, overview of each chapter through which readers' attention is drawn to a clear definition of the framework of pedagogical translanguaging, the ways in which it differs from other translanguaging approaches, and the benefits as well as challenges associated with the framework in multilingual contexts. Shoecraft concurs with the authors on the increasing need for further empirical research at the intersection of translanguaging pedagogies and assessment practices. Similarly, with a focus on equitable approaches for bi/multilingual learners, Diaz Mazquiaran reviews *Plurilingual pedagogies: Critical and creative endeavors for equitable language in education* by Lau and Van Viegen (2020). In a nutshell, besides a critical description of the volume, Diaz Mazquiaran capitalises on the importance of pluralistic approaches that acknowledge the multilingual resources of speakers of minoritised languages. Finally, on the topic of inclusion/exclusion and epistemic oppression of certain student populations, Rillera Kempster reviews a timely volume entitled

*English and students with limited or interrupted formal education: Global perspectives on teacher preparation and classroom practices* by Luis Javier Pentón Herrera. The review provides a thorough description of both the structural apparatus of the volume and of the different perspectives on students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) across multiple contexts.

To sum up, this Special Issue has two primary goals. Firstly, we aimed to bring together diverse perspectives and voices from across Australia that showcase the remarkable efforts that teachers and educators are already doing to cater for the needs of EAL/D learners in schools and mainstream environments. Secondly, and while acknowledging these commendable efforts by educators, we argue that more work is needed to address the persistent challenges in providing tailored support that addresses the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of EAL/D students. We acknowledge that catering for EAL/D learners' needs in schools and mainstream classes involves more than just structural adjustments. It necessitates a paradigm shift in educational perspectives. Beyond the accommodation of linguistic diversity, there is a crucial need to challenge and disrupt dominant deficit views that may prevail in educational settings. The insights gathered from these articles illuminate the multifaceted and dynamic landscape of EAL/D education in Australia. They collectively underscore the necessity for an integrated approach that encompasses not only specialized pedagogies but also a deep understanding of the cultural and linguistic diversity present in our classrooms.

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