# Transcript

**For Teachers by Teachers: Assessing EAL Students on the Continuum**

Duration 21:15

The views expressed here are those of the individuals involved, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Victorian Academy of Teaching and Leadership.

Welcome to the Assessing EAL Learners on the EAL Developmental Continuum series, which will focus on Foundation to Year 2 EAL learners. The scenario we're working through today is the A1 stage for reading at standard. Before we have a look at the scenario relating to A1 stage EAL learner, there are a couple of key items to highlight and discuss in relation to this scenario. The first of these is the EAL Developmental Continuum, in particular the A stages, which is central to the assessment of the EAL learner in this scenario. Then we'll have a look at the key documents housed within the EAL Developmental Continuum which are specific to the reading samples which the teachers have used to assess the student against. Finally, we'll look at Professional Learning Communities approach, which the school implements to build professional trust amongst teachers as they go about their daily work, planning and evaluating the strategies they employ to support student learning growth. Let's take a look.

In Victoria, we use the EAL Developmental Continuum to assess EAL learners' development of English. This can be found on the Department of Education and Training web pages. The EAL Developmental Continuum is used by primary and secondary schools and new arrival programs such as English language schools and centres. The EAL Developmental Continuum consists of threes stages of EAL learning. A stage for Foundation to Year 2, B stage for Years 3 to 6, and S stage for Years 7 to 10.

Within the A stage of schooling, there are two stages, A1 and A2. As the EAL Developmental Continuum is a fine-grained assessment tool, it has what are called sub-stages within the stage to enable teachers to identify student progress. So for example, A1 stages consists of A1.1, beginning of the stage, A1.2, progressing towards the standard, and A1.3, at standard. These A stages and sub-stages exist for speaking and listening, reading the viewing, and writing, as well. At the at standard, the description outlines what a student should be able to do to achieve the standard. This description comes directly from the VCAA EAL companion to the AusVELS document. Teachers report to parents against the standards. Schools currently using the EAL Developmental Continuum are also preparing for transition to the new EAL curriculum.

This year, in 2020, is a transition year. Details about the new curriculum can also be found on the website. The example we're reviewing today is the A1.3 at standard reading sample. This means the student has reached the end of the A1 stage for reading. In the scenario, teachers will be discussing the evidence of the student's ability against the indicators described in A1.3 for reading. Prior to the meeting in the scenario, teachers use resources which can be found on the EAL Developmental Continuum website under A stages, reading and viewing, work samples. The specific recording referenced in the video is at A1 at standard for reading. Directly above the video is the assessment context rubric. The rubric contains the highlighted indicators demonstrated in the video.

The teachers also had access to the transcript which sits just below the video on the webpage. The transcript describes the student and teacher's speech patterns and utterances which is very useful for identifying the linguistic features the student can complete independently and those which they still require support for. Each teacher annotated their own assessment rubric as they reviewed the recording. These were brought to the meeting in the scenario for discussion.

In the assessment context document, there is an overview of the student's learning history. Take a moment to reflect on the questions that are posed underneath the student information. The assessment context provides an outline of the teaching and learning sequence that has taken place leading up to the video of the student reading and recounting the story. Take a moment to reflect on the prompt questions which appear on the screen. In the assessment context is the rubric which lists all the progress indicators for A1 stage at standard. This also contains the video account for where to find the evidence.

The blue highlights are what is evidenced in the video recording. The indicators of progress are aligned to the A1 at standard for reading. The questions on the screen are designed to prompt your thinking and to assist you to plan for how you might utilise this kind of rubric in your moderation sessions or your professional learning with staff.

And last but not least is the Professional Learning Communities approach that the school implements. Does your school use a PLC approach? PLCs are an integral part of the framework for improving student outcomes and focus on excellence in teaching and learning. The inquiry cycle is guided by key questions at each phase.The inquiry cycle is based on the phases of the FISO improvement cycle. The questions help focus the work of teams at each of the phases. Let's now move to the scenario.

This school has just completed a PLC inquiry cycle and is reflecting on the progress a particular student, Wahida, has made. The discussion centres on the next steps in the learning for the student and whether she is best placed to be moved to stage A2 or to remain on stage A1 for reading. Wahida has been videotaped reading with the EAL teacher and participating in activities to recount the story. The professional learning team, facilitated by Samantha, is considering the evidence gathered to evaluate the progress she has made. The team uses a protocol, "I notice, I wonder," to evaluate the evidence and to discuss the next steps.

This scenario is a common problem of practice for teachers of EAL learners, especially at the A stages of the EAL Developmental Continuum for Foundation to Year 2. The conundrum is when to move students along the Developmental Continuum... ..so from A1 stage to A2 stage, and what are the key considerations. This slide outlines the steps the team took to arrive at their decision.

In the opening scene of the video, we see Samantha, the team leader of the F-2 team, facilitating the meeting. Samantha outlines the purpose of the specific meeting. The team's undertaken an inquiry or an action research over the past six to eight weeks and they've monitored the impact on student learning and it's apparent that there are a few students that may require a revision of their stage of development, having shown growth. This meeting is about these students. In particular, we will focus on Wahida's progress.

Decisions will be made today about whether or not she's ready for A2 stage in reading. The structure that we see in this video is typical of professional learning teams and their approach to working, using data and evidence to drive the conversations and using protocols like the "I notice, I wonder" to collaboratively work through the evidence, ensuring that parties contribute and have a voice. The teachers also undertake specific roles in the meeting, for example, taking minutes.

- Hi, everybody. We've just concluded our inquiry cycle and I've identified a couple of EAL students that appear to be ready to move on to the next stage of the EAL Developmental Continuum. Today we'll start by talking about Wahida and we have a video sample of her reading with her EAL teacher at stage A1 standard for reading. And you've both had an opportunity to view the recorded reading and use the assessment context document, which is the rubric that we use to assess the students' reading.

Today's meeting is to discuss and evaluate if, in fact, the students are ready to be moved to the next stage for reading. We will then use our school's process to implement the decisions we arrive at today and notify the parents and the student of their progress... ..progressed to the next stage of reading. So let's begin with Wahida. And I need somebody to take minutes in this meeting. Who can do that?

- I can do that.

- Thanks, Nadia.

- In the second scene, we see the team leader facilitate the discussion with the use of a number of reference materials. The discussion focuses on the evidence from the video and the assessment rubrics that teachers have used to assess Wahida's work. Samantha introduces the use of the protocol for this, the "I notice, I wonder," and teachers take turn in listing the identified evidence against the progression indicators.

- So we'll begin with Wahida and we'll use the protocol for this, "I notice and I wonder." And Kate, as Wahida's class teacher, we might start with you. What was something that you noticed or something that you wondered about?

- Using the context assessment, I noticed that Wahida, in the indicators of read some environmental print and familiar words in context, for example, recognising names, some letters, common signs and logos and numbers, at 1 minute 36, she actually tried to read with the EAL teacher and pointed to each word.

- I also noticed that, in the linguistic structures, that Wahida demonstrated an understanding of some basic conventions of book layout. For example, she was able to point to a word, a letter and the title when the teacher asked her to do so.

- I noticed in the maintaining and negotiating communication section, she was able to decode unknown words using initial sounds and other early decoding skills, and she was reading sentences on the page independently and beginning to self-correct.

- I also noticed that in the linguistic structure and features section with identifying sounds, she used the sound and was able to say the sound for the letter T and I. That was about between 49 seconds and a minute.

-  I also noticed that in text responses, Wahida understood simple ideas in the story that was read aloud to her and she was highly supported by the visuals. She was also able to retell the story in sequence using the illustrations to help her. And she was also able to use some of the key vocabulary and phrases from the story. For example, she used first, second and third little pig and not in the hair of my chinny-chin-chin.

- I noticed that she could identify characters and sequence the story and she was starting to use some time markers, like first and second, and she was able to identify which little pig did what. I think we have an agreement that there's lots of examples of things that Wahida can do for the A1 standard in reading.

- Using the protocol to guide the discussion means that everyone has an opportunity to contribute their thinking about what's going on for Wahida.

The wonderings assist the class teacher and the group to think about the implications for moving Wahida to the next stage in the continuum. Consideration is given to the gaps or what is still being developed. The protocol helps to also identify what teachers are thinking about and it gives them a voice and enables them to articulate what they'd like more information on.

- I think it's important to also identify if there are any things that Wahida struggled with or was not able to do. In this space, we will ensure that we reference the assessment context and the A stage indicators, as there are some things that Wahida is unable to do. We may also need to consider if there's any information or evidence that we still need.

What are some gaps that Wahida might have?

- I think Wahida may need to demonstrate more evidence of the conventions of print, for example, left to right, top to bottom, and one-to-one correspondence. I just wonder how developed these skills are in her.

- Yeah, thanks, Nadia. I'd really like to see her read an unseen text, as well, to be able to better gauge her level of independence in her decoding. I just wonder how much independence she really has in her reading.

- Yeah. I noticed that she could name some of the letters, but I wonder if she could determine the function of the capital letter. So let's look at the A2.1 beginning to see if there's any information here that can help us.

- Yeah, I think there is in that A2.1 beginning because she's following and reading simple texts with her teacher, she's making some attempts using initial sounds, but she's mostly reliant on the illustrations.

- Yeah, I feel that Wahida seems to be quite scaffolded by the teacher and I'd like to see her being a little bit more independent with her reading going forward.

- So it seems that there's some evidence that she's starting to work in A2.1. However, she may need to be given more opportunity to develop this independence.

- In order to arrive at their team decision, teachers also use indicators of progress in the next stage, that is A2.1, to check if Wahida's skills are beginning to emulate these descriptions.

- So it seems Wahida is beginning to show the A2 beginning skills and behaviours, and from her background as an EAL learner, this would be the next step in the student's learning. Would you agree?

- Yeah, look, I agree. I think so, too. I think what we can add in here is that since completing the inquiry cycle, we've been working on the phonics aspect of Wahida's reading and using running records to monitor her progress with this. So she seems to be taking more responsibility with sounding out her words, and some unknown words, too, and is self-correcting a bit more regularly.

- OK, so that's great. So let's organise for her to be moved up to the 2.1 stage for reading.

- The school has a whole-school process which teams refer to when making decisions relating to progressing EAL students. This is an example of the checklist that the school uses.

- So, following our school process, then, we've had our PRT discussion with the class teacher and we've had input from the EAL teacher, as well. Kate, are you OK to notify the parent and the EAL teacher?

- Yep, sure. I'll make the arrangements to call mum with an interpreter or an MEA and then I'll work with the EAL teacher to speak to Wahida and show her the next level, the A2.1 stage. I'm sure she'll be really excited, actually, about her progress because she's keen to learn.

- Fantastic.

- In the last scene, we see the team supporting the class teacher by identifying and discussing new student goals. Actions and next steps are also confirmed.

Let's identify and discuss some goals from A1 that the student might still need help with and discuss goals from A2 that are part of her next steps.

- Yeah, I think it's important, like I said before, to continue to develop Wahida's independence as a reader.

- Yeah, I also think it's important to continue with the decoding and attempting to read unknown words with initial sounds for Wahida.

- Mm-hm. So that's great that you have some next steps to help support Wahida.

Are you OK with us to move the student now, Kate?

- Yes.

- For our PLC moderation, we chose to use the "I notice, I wonder" protocol. What other protocols do you use and for what purposes do you use them?

- The new EAL curriculum. The VCAA released the Victorian Curriculum F-10 EAL in December of 2019. The curriculum with support resources is available for optional implementation in 2020. From 2021, all Victorian government schools will be required to use the Victorian Curriculum F-10 EAL. There are some key documents listed at the bottom of this slide which may assist schools with the implementation process.

Since 2013, the curriculum document for Victorian government schools has been the EAL Companion to AusVELS. The EAL Companion was published by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority and outlined a learning focus and achievement standards for students in stages that articulated into the English curriculum. The department published the EAL Developmental Continuum F-10 to support teachers reporting against the achievement standards of the EAL Companion at progression points where students had not yet reached a standard. in which schools may continue to use the EAL Companion to AusVELS as their curriculum document, or may opt to implement the Victorian Curriculum F-10 EAL in full or in part. The Victorian Curriculum F-10 EAL 2020 Reporting Tool has been developed for those schools choosing to implement the Victorian Curriculum F-10 EAL. Those schools continuing to use the EAL Companion to AusVELS may continue to use the EAL Developmental Continuum for reporting purposes.

The Victorian Curriculum F-10 EAL 2020 Reporting Tool is derived from the EAL Developmental Continuum P-10 and allows teachers to report against the sub-stages towards standards in the same way as the EAL Developmental Continuum P-10 does. From the beginning of 2021, all Victorian government schools will be expected to use the Victorian Curriculum F-10 EAL. Schools will be expected to assess the progress of their English-language learners against the achievement standards of the Victorian Curriculum F-10 EAL. The department will provide an EAL Reporting Tool to allow teachers to report the progress of students towards those standards. This tool will be based on the EAL Developmental Continuum and developed further during 2020.

- Our thanks go out to Kate Plant, Nadia Shilton and Samantha Jennings Macloud for their support and assistance with the resource you have just viewed. If you would like to discuss any of these ideas further, we welcome you to register for one of the webinars via the Bastow website.