

Assessment of EAL and LAL Learners

Introduction: Assessment

In this section, the term *EAL* is inclusive of both EAL and LAL Kindergarten to Grade 12 programming, unless otherwise indicated.

The policies and practices related to the assessment of students who are learning EAL and LAL draw on general assessment policies and practices in Manitoba, as well as research and practices specifically concerning EAL, LAL, bilingual education, and additional-language learning. This section begins with a discussion of Manitoba Education’s general policies and beliefs concerning assessment, and follows with a more detailed discussion of policies and effective practices concerning the intake process, assessment, and ongoing monitoring of EAL and LAL learners.

General Assessment Policies and Practices in Manitoba

This discussion on assessment practices applies to all Manitoba students, including EAL learners. The sections that follow this one apply specifically to EAL learners.

Manitoba Education believes that the primary goal of assessment is to support and improve student learning. The goal of education is to maximize achievement for all students and to empower them with the skills and attitudes for lifelong learning. Assessment can help to achieve those goals.

The continual assessment process of gathering evidence of student learning is integral to instruction and learning. When assessment information is used by students, teachers, and parents to inform next steps in teaching and learning, it can increase motivation, engagement, and student success. This information can also be used by the broader educational community to monitor student achievement, celebrate success, and ensure that appropriate supports for continued learning are provided.

Identifying the purpose of any assessment is critical to its effective use. Assessment serves three main purposes: assessment *for* learning, assessment *as* learning, and assessment *of* learning. These purposes relate to different aspects of the learning process to support and improve student learning in distinct ways.

When EAL learners have age-appropriate schooling, it is not usually appropriate to refer to subject-area expectations from lower grade levels.

Assessment *for* learning helps gain insight into what students understand so they can appropriately program with differentiated teaching strategies and learning opportunities to help student progress. By consistently checking for understanding, students’ misconceptions can also be identified and addressed. Assessment *as* learning refers to processes where students assess their own knowledge, skills, and learning strategies in order to develop their understanding and refine their learning strategies. Considering these two purposes together, teachers and students collaborate to set and revise learning goals and adjust teaching and learning strategies to work toward the achievement of those goals and subject-area outcomes.

Assessment *of* learning evaluates whether or not students have met curriculum goals or expectations of their individualized programs. It provides evidence of achievement to students, parents, and teachers. Assessment *of* learning supports learning when it is used to celebrate success, adjust future instruction, and provide feedback to the learner. At the school, divisional, and departmental level, assessments *of* learning can be used to ensure that appropriate supports for continued learning are provided. The province collects data on student achievement from both provincially mandated classroom-based assessments and end-of-year summative assessments. These assessments support learning by

- providing feedback to students, teachers, and parents about student learning
- helping to determine the need for changes or student-specific interventions
- providing information about trends to assist with decision making about resources and support
- providing the public with general information about student achievement to sustain confidence in the education system

Educational literature and research show a focus on classroom-based assessment, specifically formative assessment*, which occurs as part of everyday instruction that supports learning.

* Formative assessment is defined by many as information gathered by teachers through a variety of methods and used with students during and after learning to plan and adjust teaching and learning. As such, it encompasses assessment *for* and *as* learning, as described earlier.

The following are commonly identified as contributing to effective assessment:

- Clear learning intentions, expressed in terms students understand, with explicit success criteria and work samples
- Active student involvement in setting performance expectations, self-assessment, planning and adjusting learning strategies, and monitoring and communicating progress
- Provision of specific, descriptive feedback (from teachers, peers, and self-assessment) that leads students to reflect on progress and next steps to achieve the learning goals
- Use of assessment evidence gained through observation, conversation, and student work in order to plan and adjust instruction

When these elements are incorporated into daily classroom practices, research shows that student achievement improves.

Periodically, it is necessary to use assessment *for* learning to check for progress to date in order to provide information for student evaluation (grading, promotion, selection of programming). Some refer to this as summative assessment. Whether assessments are classroom-based or provincially developed, assessments must be aligned with the learning goals and be fair, accurate, and reliable. This assessment process involves collecting and interpreting evidence of student learning and making decisions about each student's ability to apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they are developing. Clear criteria for success are necessary, both for supporting learners in demonstrating their understanding and skill and for supporting the teacher in making valid and reliable judgments about student progress and achievement. Evidence gathered through the formative assessment processes can be helpful in arriving at summative judgments when evaluated against the criteria that define current reporting levels or grades.

Assessment has a profound influence on student motivation and self-esteem, which are critical influences on student learning. When the focus of assessment is on learning, providing specific feedback helps the student move forward in manageable steps, and assessment builds confidence and success. When students experience success and are part of collecting and communicating evidence of success in their learning, their motivation and willingness to persevere increases.

However, assessment can also cause students to disengage. Struggling learners may experience assessment as evidence of failure, which confirms negative beliefs about themselves as learners. Assessment must focus on clear, manageable learning intentions and be conducted in a safe classroom climate that values risk-taking, eliminates threats, and enhances students' beliefs about themselves as learners.

Research shows that assessment practices promote learning, especially when students are involved in goal setting and self-assessment and when they are underpinned by a belief that every student can improve. In contrast, this research also suggests learning is inhibited when there is too much emphasis on marks and grading and on comparing students' progress to peers, rather than on feedback for improvement.

Teaching and learning processes should be informed by assessment strategies that are interwoven through planning and instruction that follows a feedback cycle.

Assessment *for*, *as*, and *of* learning all serve valuable and different purposes. The challenge is to find an appropriate balance. Traditionally, the focus of classroom assessment has been on assessment *of* learning. Research and experience suggest that shifting the focus to assessment *for* and *as* learning practices increases student achievement, motivation, and empowers students to become self-directed, self-managing learners. Through the process of these assessment practices students understand themselves as learners in order to take increasing responsibility for their learning.

Purposes of EAL Assessment

Assessment of EAL learners is a more complex undertaking than assessment of proficient English speakers because it involves documentation of both language proficiency and academic achievement (Gottlieb, 27). The assessment of EAL learners parallels that of non-EAL learners, but it is more critical because the differences in language, culture, life experiences, and educational background may hinder the collection of accurate data while, at the same time, that data is needed to inform instructional and evaluative decisions. Almost all forms of educational assessment involve language. Even in tests that rely on performance or non-verbal skills, language is commonly used in directions or in the mental formulation of a response. For example, mathematics may appear to rely on symbols and thinking more than language, but skills are often assessed through questions that use abstract or unique terminology or word problems. The more teachers and specialists understand the interplay of culture, language, and learning, the more they will understand the complexity of assessing EAL learners (Trumbull et al.).

Furthermore, abbreviations such as *EAL* may lead to stereotypes that blur differences among students (Lenski et al.). Understanding each student's unique profile will increase the opportunity for success.

“How do you know when they ‘got it’? When don’t they get it, even though it might seem as if they do? What is evidence of understanding?”

– Grant Wiggins (2004)

EAL assessment provides information to

- assist in developing an appropriate program
- evaluate the effectiveness of the teaching program and learning activities, and make decisions concerning both short- and long-term curriculum and program planning
- identify students' strengths, needs, and challenges as multilingual learners
- monitor and measure linguistic and academic progress
- determine whether changes are needed in instructional approaches, content, and associated language development activities
- help students participate in learning processes by giving constructive feedback that encourages them to reflect on their learning
- inform other teachers of student progress
- inform parents of student progress
- meet divisional and departmental EAL funding and accountability needs

All appropriate EAL and LAL assessment policies, protocols, and practices benefit EAL and LAL learners and teachers.

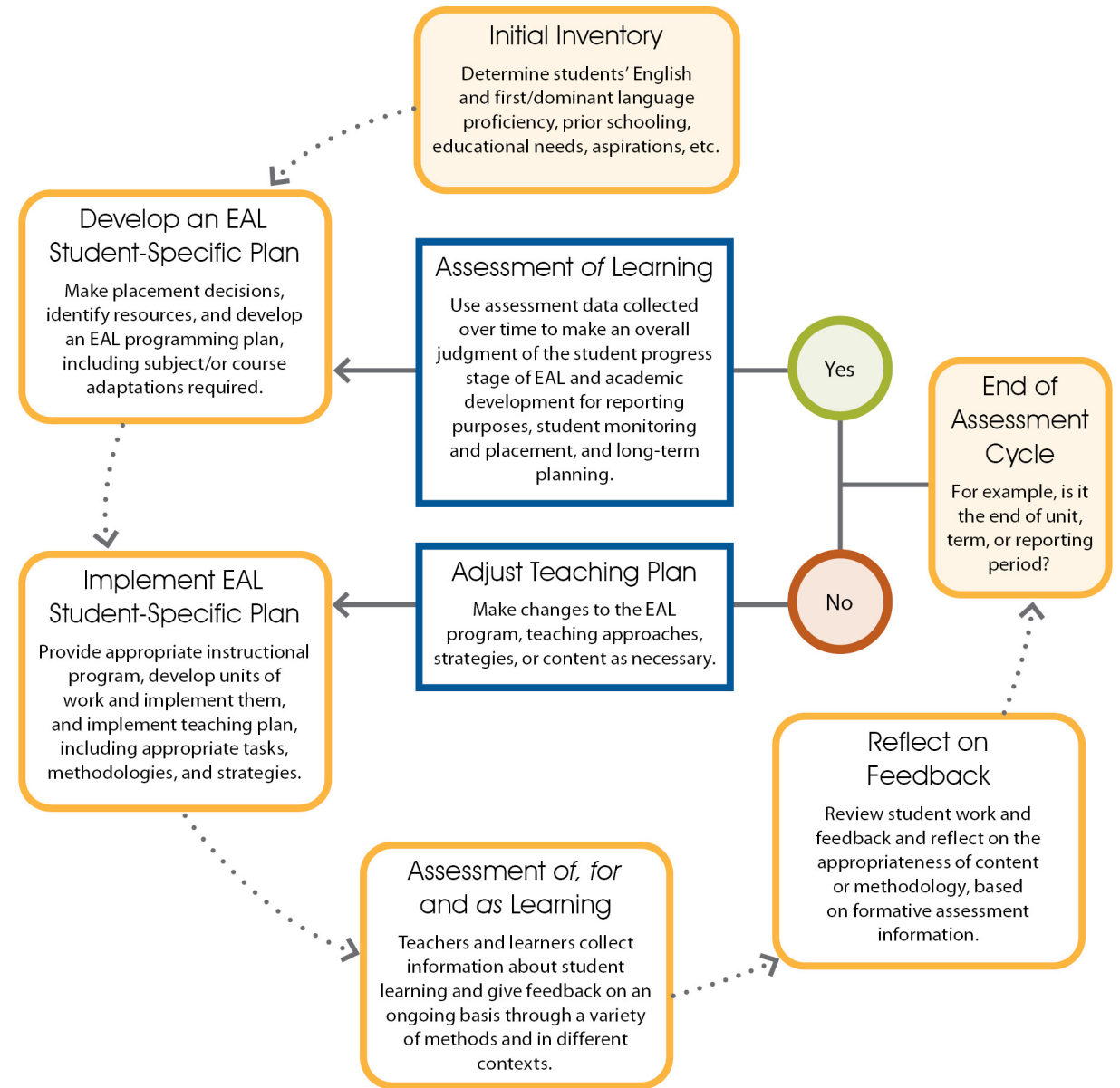
Familiarizing EAL Students and Families with the Manitoba Approach to Assessment

Ways of assessing a child's development and educational progress are embedded in cultural contexts (Trumbull et al.). Because many newcomer EAL students and their families come from educational backgrounds that are very different from the Manitoba context, they may not be familiar with the assessment cycle as practised in schools here. For example, they may be coming from educational systems that place heavy emphasis on summative assessment (e.g., marks), which determine educational opportunities and the student's future early in their lives. Parents may not be accustomed to the student personal growth and achievement learning goals being included on progress reports. Students may need to learn the process of peer and self-assessment and the purpose of feedback without marks in the learning and assessment cycle. In addition, classroom teachers need to clarify for themselves and students the balance between EAL learning goals and their subject-area outcomes in assessment (e.g., refer to the section on page 17 entitled *Balancing EAL Progressions and Subject-Area Learning* that refers to E-designated course planning).

Schools should ensure that students and parents understand the purpose of various assessment activities and that information about progress is communicated in clear and meaningful ways.

Assessment in the EAL Teaching and Learning Cycle

EAL assessment can be seen as occurring in interrelated phases, and their relationship to EAL teaching and learning cycle can be depicted as follows:



Principles of EAL Assessment that Assist Learning and Inform Instruction

1. An Integral Part of Instruction and Learning	2. Continuous and Ongoing	3. Authentic and Meaningful Language Learning Processes and Contexts
Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is meaningful to students • leads to goal setting • fosters transfer/integration with other curricular areas and application to daily life • reflects strategies used • uses a wide variety of strategies and tools • reflects a definite purpose 	Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • occurs through all instructional activities (observations, responses, logs) • occurs systematically over a period of time • demonstrates progress towards achievement of learning goals 	Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focuses on connecting prior knowledge and new knowledge (integration of information) • focuses on authentic literacy contexts and tasks • focuses on the application of strategies for constructing meaning in new contexts
4. Collaborative and Reflective Process	5. Multidimensional — Incorporating a Variety of Tasks	6. Developmentally and Culturally Appropriate
Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourages meaningful student involvement and reflection • involves parents as partners • reaches out to the community • focuses on collaborative review of products and processes to draw conclusions • involves a team approach 	Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses a variety of contextual strategies, tasks, and tools • is completed for a variety of purposes and audiences • reflects learning intentions 	Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is suited to students' developmental levels • is sensitive to diverse social, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds • is unbiased
7. Focused on Students' Strengths	8. Based on How Students Learn	9. Offer Clear Performance Targets
Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifies what students can do and are learning to do • identifies competencies in the development of knowledge, skills and strategies, and attitudes • considers preferred learning styles • focuses on celebrations of progress and success • provides for differentiation • provides information to compare a student's performance with previous performances 	Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • uses educational practices based on current learning theory and brain research • fosters development of metacognition • considers multiple intelligences and learning styles • uses collaborative and co-operative strategies • considers research on the role of memory in learning • reflects current models of language learning 	Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encourages student involvement (setting criteria, measuring progress, working towards outcomes and standards) • encourages application beyond the classroom • provides a basis for goal setting • provides students with a sense of achievement • provides information that compares a student's performance to predetermined criteria or standards

The EAL Intake Process

Guidelines for EAL Intake Process for EAL and LAL Learners

It is important that schools and school divisions develop EAL policies, protocols, and practices that define EAL programming models, roles and responsibilities, supports, and resources available, regardless of the number of EAL students registered. Clear and well-developed policies and protocols help ensure that EAL learners receive appropriate and effective programming. They need to address all aspects of the short- and long-term educational planning and programming for EAL learners: from their initial intake to the point where they are at an age- and grade-appropriate level of English language development and fully integrated into the classroom and school.

School-wide protocols for EAL learners include the following:

- identification of EAL learner and registration
- gathering information about the student's background using the EAL intake process (available on the EAL portal of the Manitoba Professional Learning Environment [Maple] at https://app.mapleforem.ca/en/sign_in (login required) /Wiki/EAL Intake Process Documents): initial reception, orientation, and meeting with student and family initial English language and mathematics inventory
- EAL student-specific plan
- age-appropriate placement
- appropriate programming
- ongoing monitoring and transition to regular programming
- exit from EAL support
- parental involvement—informed decision making

The use of the provincial EAL intake process and division-wide assessment protocols and tools for assessing EAL language proficiency, along with the use of the EAL Stages, across schools and divisions in Manitoba, will promote consistent understandings about students and their learning.

“Teachers provide students with opportunities to have input into the criteria for success. Exemplars also help them to understand the conditions of quality. Students, at appropriate points, make choices in how they demonstrate their learning.”

– Kevin O'Connor & Damien Cooper

Reception and Orientation

When EAL students first arrive in a school, it is important that as much information as possible be shared by the student, family, and school. Schools should develop a protocol to welcome new EAL students and their families, to ensure that they receive and understand the information they need about the school, and to make sure the school is able to collect the information it needs for planning. School personnel who make the first contact with new families should be aware of the reception protocol and be prepared to welcome them.

School divisions and schools should establish a team that is responsible for the reception of EAL learners and their families and for their inclusion into the school community. Depending on individual school circumstances, the team may comprise administrators, teachers, and support staff. A member of the team should be responsible for providing essential orientation information to the learner and family. It is helpful to have this information available in printed form so that newcomers are not overwhelmed with a great deal of information all at once. It is also helpful to provide this information in the learner's first language.

Allow ample time for the reception interview to give students and parents a chance to feel comfortable and to begin building a trusting relationship.

Orientation information may include the following:

- basic information about the school community and the structure and routine of the school day and year
- the names of the principal, the classroom/subject-area teachers, and the EAL teacher, where available
- the telephone numbers of the school, of relevant community organizations, and of bilingual contact persons and interpreter services if available
- a description of support services available from the school division
- a description of important school norms and rules, such as those outlined in the code of conduct, and information about lunch times and facilities, bus schedules, and emergency procedures
- a description of the Manitoba school system
- information about the roles and responsibilities of parents in Manitoba schools

“Every assessment is an assessment of language.”

– American Educational Research Association et al.

A copy of the Orientation Checklist is in Appendix A. A fillable PDF of the Orientation Checklist can be found in Maple at https://app.mapleforem.ca/en/sign_in (login required) /Wiki/EAL Intake Process Documents.

The classroom teacher, the EAL teacher, or a designated person should introduce the new learner to classroom learning partners or learner guides. If possible, include someone who speaks the newcomer's language and who will help orient the learner to the school and its routine. Some of the things that students and families need to know include the following:

- washroom signs and locations
- how to find particular places in the school
- emergency procedures such as fire drills and lockdowns
- time allotted for various activities, such as recess, lunch, class change
- how to find their way to their class or to another location where they can go if they are lost or feeling unsure (a card with a room number and name may be helpful)
- the names of a few key adults and students
- the location of siblings' classrooms
- how to open and close their locks and lockers
- school expectations about absences, lates, notes, dress code, and behaviour (age appropriate)
- lunch and breaks—location, procedures

- getting home—bus, walking route, location of a phone
- school supplies

In addition to information about religious, cultural, educational, and family backgrounds, there are other important factors concerning a student’s background that need to be considered because they may affect learning. Such factors include their

- level of proficiency in English
- proficiency in other languages, especially first, dominant, or home language literacy
- prior schooling experience (e.g., whether or not they had interrupted schooling and for how long)
- refugee or immigration experiences
- trauma due to war, relocation, and cultural factors
- health, physical, and other characteristics that may affect learning
- interests and skills
- long-term educational or career goals

A fillable PDF of the Initial Meeting Form can be found in Maple at https://app.mapleforem.ca/en/sign_in (login required) /Wiki/EAL Intake Process Documents.

Initial EAL Intake Process

The initial intake process is designed to determine appropriate programming needs by gathering the following critical and detailed information about each EAL learner when they first register at a school:

- educational background
- level of proficiency in English
- home language(s)

This information provides schools and teachers with important insights and factors that can affect student learning and success.

Although the goal is to place students in classes as quickly as possible, it is important to ensure that thorough and accurate information is collected to support teachers receiving new EAL students. Ideally, information from the initial intake process should be gathered formally and informally over a period of one to two weeks.

New EAL learners will need time to feel comfortable in their new environment and develop trust with teachers and students in their class. Much of this information should be collected during the first days and weeks in school. It is also important to maintain and update the information over time. As students relax in their new setting, there is an opportunity to gather further insights into their strengths and needs. Time spent getting to know the students in the beginning will result in a better understanding of their skills and needs. This information will support teachers in planning effective learning experiences to develop EAL students’ language and academic proficiency. Initial decisions may need to be adjusted as more ongoing assessment information is obtained and EAL educational planning proceeds.

For Early and Middle Years learners, a more thorough assessment of language and learning may occur after they are placed in an age-appropriate classroom. Observation of learners as they participate in reading and writing tasks and in mathematics activities, interact with peers, and respond to new tasks and learning situations will provide important information about the learner’s development and language competence.

For EAL students entering Senior Years, it is important to determine their literacy and numeracy skills, general content knowledge, interests, and long-term career and life goals before scheduling courses. Even so, initial scheduling for EAL students should aim for flexibility to adjust to emerging information.

Either the family or the school should arrange for an interpreter and, when feasible, have relevant documents translated.

“When we co-construct criteria with students (or adults), we help them understand the learning destination, access prior knowledge, understand and use the language of assessment, and scaffold future learning.”

– Anne Davies

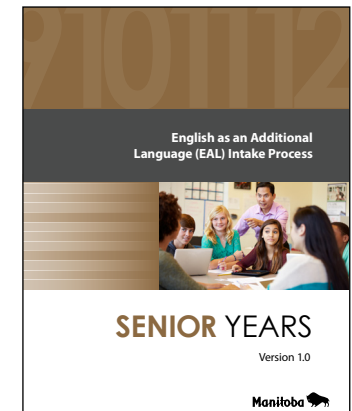
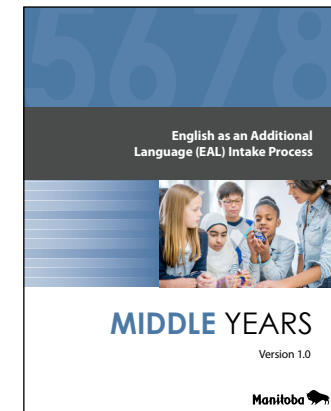
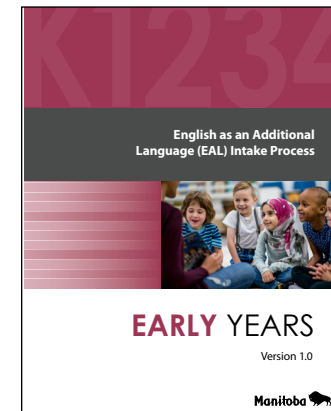
This intake process should include the review of any educational documents that the learner may bring or may be able to access. If documents are not accessible, information should be gathered from the learner and/or the parents/guardians about previous schooling, including details of the number of years of schooling completed and any significant interruptions in the learner's education (e.g., in the case of refugees). Immigration documents should be requested in order to be certain of the student's residency status. The family should be asked to provide the name of a contact who speaks English so the school has an emergency contact.

EAL learners arrive with a variety of literacy experiences. Some have well-developed literacy skills in other languages. Others, who may have had limited, disrupted, or non-existent educational opportunities, may not have developed grade-appropriate literacy skills in any language. Determining the learner's level of literacy in another language will help clarify the level of support the learner will require while learning English. If interpreters and dual language materials are available, these services and resources will be helpful. Learners' proficiency in using their home language in initial writing tasks also provides information about their literacy skills.

In an initial intake process, a writing task in the student's dominant or home language will help determine literacy in that language. Elizabeth Coelho states in her work for the Ontario Ministry, "Where possible at least part of the initial intake process should be conducted in the student's first or dominant language (e.g., the language previously used for schooling) to allow a broader view of his or her linguistic development and academic background." (Ontario Ministry of Education).

It may be helpful to undertake an inventory of students' first or dominant language proficiency, as well as to develop a profile of other possible language experiences. This is especially important with beginning learners who have limited English-learning opportunities and students from war-affected and interrupted schooling backgrounds. Some students may have spoken one language with one parent, another with a grandparent, and another at school. They may or may not have some degree of literacy in their dominant language. They may have receptive knowledge of other languages if their family has moved several times. All of these language experiences can affect oral language and literacy development. Informal and formal assessment of a learner's first or dominant language will provide important programming information. Interviews with the student and family are especially important.

The EAL inventory tools and the EAL Progressions/LAL Phases can help identify students' stages of English language development. The EAL Inventory tools (inventories on vocabulary, listening and speaking, reading, writing, and mathematics) can be found in Maple at https://app.mapleforem.ca/en/sign_in (login required) /Wiki/EAL Intake Process Documents.



Appropriate Placement

Early and Middle Years learners should generally be placed in the grade that is appropriate for their age, rather than in a lower grade based on their level of academic functioning in English. Learners' academic development and social development are enhanced in an environment where they are able to engage in learning processes alongside their peers. Information gathered from learner records, from parents/guardians, and through the initial intake process will help identify what type of EAL programming would be most appropriate for the learner.

Senior Years students should generally be placed in courses that reflect their previous academic achievement, background knowledge of a subject area, and English language skills. For example, while a SY Stage 2 EAL student with a strong Grade 10 Mathematics background may be successful in a Grade 11 Pre-Calculus course, the same student may need an E-designated Grade 11 History course. LAL students will need more time and intensive specialized supports to gain foundational literacy and numeracy skills that are essential for academic success and continued supports as they transition into EAL and general programming.

To determine the course credits that Senior Years students have completed prior to coming to Manitoba, especially in the case of LAL students with interrupted schooling, refer to the Manitoba Education guidelines *Evaluating Non-Manitoba Course Completions for Senior Years Credits: A Guide for School Administrators* at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/op_credits/. Students who are not studying specific EAL courses may still require careful sequencing of courses, differentiation, and ongoing monitoring.

For students arriving with a background of interrupted schooling, consideration should be given to both their educational needs and a placement at an age-appropriate grade level. This determination must be made on the basis of each student's circumstances. (For more information regarding grade placement of LAL students, refer to the Manitoba Education guidelines *Evaluating Non-Manitoba Course Completions for Senior Years Credits: A Guide for School Administrators* at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/docs/policy/op_credits/.)

Student-Specific Plan for EAL Learners (EAL SSLP)

Appropriate educational programming for most students consists of the expected learning outcomes in the grade-level/band subject-area provincial curriculum. EAL students require student-specific EAL learning goals in addition to or instead of the expected subject-area learning goals. Planning for EAL students incorporates the learning goals within the EAL Progressions as well as a range of instructional supports for addressing student diversity, such as differentiated instruction, adaptation, and individualized programming (see *Student-Specific Planning: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Individual Education Plans* at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/iep/index.html).

In this case, an EAL student-specific planning process should occur especially for LAL learners and EAL Stages 1 and 2 students. An EAL SSP will indicate language learning goals based on their LAL Phase or EAL Stage, as well as subject-area goals. The subject-area goals may be grade/band level, or they may support an acceleration of foundational learning for students with gaps in that subject area.

When the learning goals for EAL students are derived from Manitoba's EAL Progressions or LAL Phases and are different from the regular subject-area learning outcomes, an EAL SSP is required.

For Stages 4 and 5 of English language acquisition, the language learning goals are woven into the regular subject-area outcomes through adaptations and regular classroom learning opportunities; thus, no EAL SSP is necessary for these learners. Some learners in higher stages may require an EAL SSP to provide language supports to access the regular curriculum.

The EAL SSP should be evaluated at least annually. However, formative assessment may indicate a need to adjust the EAL SSP more often.

See *Student-Specific Planning: A Handbook for Developing and Implementing Individual Education Plans* at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/iep/index.html for more information on the student-specific planning process.

A fillable PDF of the EAL Student Specific Plan Template or a sample EAL SSP can be found in Maple at https://app.mapleforem.ca/en/sign_in (login required) /Wiki/EAL Intake Process Documents.

School divisions can name their EAL SSP according to their needs.

Formative Assessment

Once EAL learners have completed the initial intake for programming and planning purposes and an EAL SSP has been developed and is being implemented, teachers continually monitor student growth through formative assessment. Formative assessment that includes observations, conversations, and student work samples is integral to the overall teaching-learning cycle, as well as to implementing the education plan.

Assessment of English language development is a key component in the overall assessment of EAL learners' progress at school. It will also affect the assessment of learning in the other subjects. Ongoing assessment and reporting of English language learning will be based on the student's learning plan.

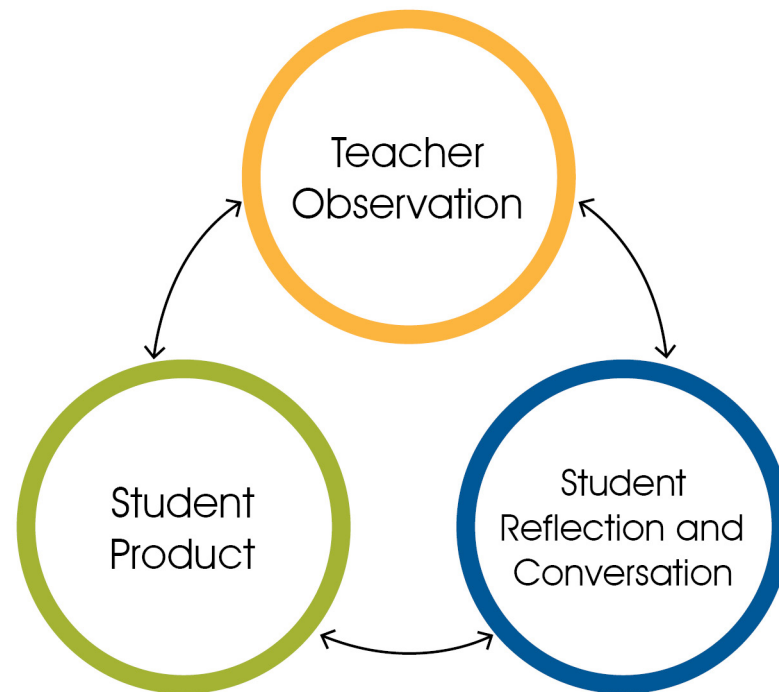
Teachers collect and record assessment information about students through a wide range of assessment activities. The information can relate to the language learning goals of the EAL programming or courses, as derived from the EAL Progressions or LAL Phases, and also to affective factors such as students' confidence, motivation, and learning styles.

The EAL Progressions and LAL Phases provide the basis for ongoing formative and summative assessment. Although students may be at different EAL Stages in different skill areas, an assessment of overall progress of EAL development may be reflected as a single stage designation. Therefore, a student may be assessed as an "entry EAL Stage 2" learner or a "late LAL Phase 2" learner.

Whether conducting assessment *for* learning or assessment *of* learning, a teacher needs sufficient evidence of a student’s mastery of language learning goals. Teachers can use a process known as triangulation of data to collect evidence of student learning using three different sources:

- teacher observation in class
- conversation with the student or student reflection
- student product, such as projects, tasks, tests, etc.

EAL teachers and classroom teachers will find they are constantly assessing their students’ English development and evaluating their own instructional practice as they listen to and watch their students in the classroom and as they plan programs and units of work. The process of planning, assessment, and program evaluation is interactive. The information is used by teachers to include certain elements in their program or to further adjust their units of work based on their overall perceptions of the students’ needs and abilities.



Student Assessment Using the EAL Progressions or LAL Phases

The EAL Progressions and the LAL Phases with their learning goals and descriptors are the core tools for assessing EAL development. For an individual student,

- locate the student on an EAL or LAL learning continuum at any point in time, and thus indicate the amount of progress that has already been made in learning English, as well as how far the student may need to “travel” before they reach a level of English language development that is appropriate for their age and grade
- assist in assessing learning in different subject areas other than EAL by ensuring that the stage of English learning is considered when assessing content learning

At the class or whole-school level, this assessment can

- indicate the spread of students across the stages—both in and across classes, provide information for organizing and prioritizing EAL programming, and highlight the need for a particular EAL teaching focus in the program
- identify classes that would benefit from collaborative planning or team teaching
- assist in assessing the effectiveness of the EAL programming from term to term or from year to year by monitoring the progression through the EAL Stages/LAL Phases of students of comparable background

A Whole-School Approach to EAL Assessment Using the EAL Progressions and LAL Phases

EAL learning is a long-term process that takes place through rich learning experiences and participation in activities in the school and larger community. This necessitates an approach to EAL assessment that is consistent across the whole school and ideally across the division. Progress can then be monitored regularly in ways that are meaningful and that can identify areas of concern.

Using the EAL Progressions and LAL Phases and descriptors for monitoring student progress (see Early, Middle, and Senior Years EAL Progressions), teachers can

- gradually develop individual student profiles through formative assessment, remembering that students may demonstrate different proficiencies for receptive and productive uses of language (e.g., listening, speaking, reading, writing)
- confer with other teachers, including specialists, to confirm that indicators are regularly demonstrated in a number of different contexts
- record (e.g., in student booklets) the contexts in which particular behaviours have been observed and the dates of the observation

The indicators given may not perfectly describe each individual student. For example, the language examples given may not always be entirely appropriate for particular students, or the context of use may not be relevant. However, it is the essence of the examples that is important.

The descriptors in the Progressions are written as end-of-stage learning goals that students may achieve along with content-area outcomes or in other contexts. These goals are summative descriptions of learning; a student must demonstrate the skill consistently in different contexts over time before it can be said that they achieved a particular learning goal.

Assessment *for* and *of* EAL learning requires that teachers know their students well, have observed them over time, and have collected relevant and accurate data to inform and communicate about next steps.

It is important to

- observe students in a variety of informal and formal classroom situations, in conversation, and when working with other students and adults (assessment *for* learning)
- talk to them about their own learning, where they think they are doing well, or where they feel they need extra help or need to try harder (assessment *as* learning)
- have students demonstrate their learning (e.g., projects, tasks, and tests)

By providing information collected over time, this process of mapping student progress helps teachers make a balanced judgment. Once the evidence of learning is collected, the targeted EAL goals can be considered in order to assess whether they accurately summarize what students are able to do (assessment *of* learning). This information could be used to describe whether the student is just beginning to meet the goals in the stage or has *achieved* or *met* the goal. Assessment of EAL learning can also be made through the EAL SSP, using the EAL expectations provided in this document.

Time, Student Learning, and the EAL Progressions/LAL Phases

Educators recognize that students develop at different rates and some students require more time to achieve specific outcomes. English first-language students are generally expected to meet grade-level expectations on a relatively continuous basis, and EAL learners are expected to develop English language skills asynchronously from English first-language learners. Therefore, EAL students will not initially be at age-/grade-appropriate levels of English language development. An initial “silent” period of a few weeks or even several months is common, while students absorb the patterns of the language, new culture, and gain confidence.

While the EAL Progressions and LAL Phases prescribe no explicit timeframe, it is expected that students will move through the early stages more quickly than the later stages. For example, students are likely to move through Stage 1 of EAL more quickly than Stage 2. The time taken by an individual student to progress through the EAL Stages will be influenced by many factors, such as

- extent, intensity, and type of EAL support provided
- support from home
- educational background
- cultural expectations
- literacy in first or dominant language
- similarity between first language and English
- learning styles and ability, personality, and motivation
- anxiety, trauma, and health
- socio-cultural distance between the first culture and Canadian culture

For example, LAL learners will generally develop formalized aspects of the language at a slower pace than EAL learners with strong prior literacy skills. The cumulative demands of developing literacy and developing foundational science, mathematics, and other subject-area knowledge and skills mean that students, while in an accelerated learning process, simply need more time to successfully integrate the volume of language and academic learning required. More time might include extending learning beyond the regular school hours and time frame (e.g. homework club, summer program).

It is important that students progress through LAL Phases and/or EAL Stages. The time a student takes to progress through the stages is a factor to consider when assessing the overall progress of that learner. By observing the learning patterns of other EAL learners (including those from a similar background), having discussions with other teachers, and taking into account the student’s background, teachers are able to come to an overall assessment of whether or not an individual student is making satisfactory progress in learning English.

It is also important that there is a common interpretation of the learning outcomes of the subject-area curriculum frameworks and the learning goals of the EAL Progressions. Working within a strong collaborative structure in the school to develop a continuum of services is important in meeting the needs of EAL students.

As much as possible, assessment of content-area learning intentions should provide options for students to demonstrate their knowledge in ways that are not bound in language tasks.

Monitoring and Recording Student Progress

Record keeping is an essential part of a good EAL assessment program. Teachers are constantly making both formal and informal judgments about student progress. It is important to record the assessments in a manner that provides a comprehensive picture of student progress, grounded in evidence. Keeping annual records of student achievement as they progress through the EAL Progressions/LAL Phases helps inform long-term planning across grade levels and subject areas.

Planning for Assessment

Effective teachers constantly use assessment information when making decisions about teaching and learning needs in their daily interactions with students. Allow sufficient time and provide opportunities for learning to take place before any decisions are made about student achievement. To enhance each student's ability to demonstrate learning, teaching strategies and assessment should access prior learning.

At all levels, and particularly in Early Years, language is integrated with care. Learning intentions should be balanced and sequential to meet the demands of language learning and literacy. The EAL student-specific plan can help to ensure that subject-area foundations are appropriately addressed and evaluated.

Planning for assessment is an essential part of this process. In planning for assessment, teachers need to ensure that they

- include a variety of assessment strategies in their teaching programs to provide multiple sources of information about student achievement
- develop a manageable system of keeping records that can provide a rich mixture of observations and evidence of student learning
- use the data they have collected to make judgments about student achievement in relation to the Manitoba curriculum frameworks of outcomes for specific subjects
- develop with other school personnel a common interpretation of the learning goals within the EAL Progressions

"Effective feedback is concrete, specific, and useful; it provides *actionable* information. This, 'Good job!' and 'You did that wrong' and B+ are not feedback at all. We can easily imagine the learners asking themselves in response to these comments, *what specifically should I do more or less of next time, based on this information? They have no idea. They don't know what was 'good' or 'wrong' about what they did.*"

– Grant Wiggins (2012)

Within schools, teachers can develop common interpretations by discussing their assessments of students' work, developing assessment criteria together, or keeping files of representative student work.

Across schools, teachers discussing and assessing sample student work together in teacher networks can develop common interpretations.

Assessment Formats

Teachers need to keep records that give them comprehensive information about student progress, and that allow them easy access to the information they need to report on student progress. Such records could include

- information on student progress towards achieving the learning goals of the EAL Progressions
- anecdotal and/or descriptive records
- individual progress sheets
- dated, and perhaps annotated, collections of student work, such as drawings, writing in English or in their first language, and completed worksheets
- lists of books read by students, perhaps with teacher annotations about students' reading or comprehension of the text
- video or audio recordings of students during activities or in conference situations
- student self-assessment
- checklists of specific vocabulary
- student reflection and self-assessment

The kinds of records kept should combine to form a comprehensive set of cumulative information that can be used for subsequent reporting.

Teachers could also develop their own assessment resources or record keeping to suit their style of working, planning, and reporting.

EAL Assessment and Subject-Area Curriculum Frameworks

EAL students should be held to the same high expectations of learning as other students and should reach learning outcomes in the various subject areas consistent with other students. However, given that instruction for individual students should be based on their stage of EAL development and their educational and cultural backgrounds, appropriate and valid assessment of their subject-area progress should take these factors into account.

Planning for Combined EAL and Subject-Area Assessment

When students are studying in various content areas, they also learn social and academic language. Beyond learning vocabulary and grammar, they will need to use language in particular communicative contexts (“**notions**”), and they will need to use it for particular purposes (“**functions**”) in those contexts. As an example, context or notions of performing a science experiment with a partner require several language functions, such as

- collaborating
- formulating hypotheses
- proposing alternative solutions
- describing, inferring, and interpreting data
- predicting, generalizing, and communicating findings

The complexity of language that students are using in particular situations will vary. In earlier stages, students may be using formulaic structures or interlanguage structures, such as sentence frames, and they may also use non-verbal language, such as pointing or nodding, to help achieve a certain function. In more advanced stages, students will use more complex and natural collocations. As teachers plan learning experiences for students at particular EAL Stages, they will include language features that are appropriate to those stages and that naturally support the content learning or tasks. Teachers may observe the functions, vocabulary, and grammatical features that students are able to use in their classroom interactions. Observations of individual students may be recorded on checklists or anecdotally, perhaps every two or three weeks, thereby building up a picture of progress.

While EAL learners are still learning the English language, they will also be using English to learn in all the subject areas. Therefore, students’ stages of English language development will influence their overall learning. Learning new concepts and knowledge also involves learning new vocabulary and new ways to articulate and communicate what has been learned.

If students have not developed the English language skills needed to achieve expectations in a specific subject area, teachers will need to draw on learning goals from both the EAL Progressions and outcomes from the subject-area frameworks. By identifying subject-area learning goals and what language is needed to meet them, teachers can plan how students will be prepared for the language demands of the subject-area learning and how learning can be assessed given the stage of the language learner. (See also [Planning Senior Years Courses for EAL Learners](#), later in this section.)

It is crucial that student progress in understanding new content is not confused with developing the ability to express that understanding through conventional English or through culturally unfamiliar assessment tasks. EAL students’ difficulties with the English language can mask their true understanding and abilities. Subject-area learning outcomes tend to use academic words such as *describe, identify, explain, discuss, compare, contrast, analyze, and evaluate*. This can make the goals sound very language-dependent, which is particularly demanding for an EAL learner who is still at the early stages of English language learning. In order to ensure that EAL learners are actually being assessed on the learning in the subject area and not simply on their ability to use English to communicate, it is necessary to determine what content and concepts students understand. Assessment is much more straightforward if the learning program has been well planned to give students a broad range of learning experiences that allow them to use language as

- sense making
- a system
- exploration and design
- power and agency

“To effectively meet the needs of each individual EAL learner, the school team must obtain sufficient information to determine the needs of the various groups of EAL students within the school, their performance in different contexts, and the strengths and weaknesses exhibited by these students. To accomplish these objectives, the school team has four major responsibilities: coordinating information gathering, interpreting information, suggesting programming, and helping teachers monitor students’ progress.”

– Else Hamayan et al.

General Assessment Principles and Suggestions for Subject-Area Assessment of EAL Learners

Typical assessment practices, especially for assessment of learning, are often highly language-dependent and teachers often question how they can separate subject-area knowledge from English language skills. The following guide, based on research by Jodi Reiss and Elizabeth Coelho, is relevant to all subject areas and may assist teachers in self-assessing their use of appropriate approaches that provide useful and accurate information about EAL students. Students should be encouraged to demonstrate their understanding of content-area knowledge in their first language.

Always

- Determine the purpose of the assessment
- Choose the form of assessment that fits the purpose
- Distinguish between language and content outcomes
- Ensure that the assessment of content-area learning does not require grade-level knowledge of language forms that are not part of the stated outcomes

A. Student Expectations/Outcomes

- Maintain challenging expectations for students while recognizing their individual EAL stage and educational background
- Focus on what will be taught and what students should reasonably be expected to know, and build assessment into the teaching and learning cycle
- Focus on the development of the individual student
- Recognize that EAL learners are on a continuum of language development and may demonstrate more or less progress in different skills (*e.g., a student may understand more than she or he can produce*)
- Focus on what the student can do rather than on what the student cannot do, while indicating targeted outcomes and areas of concern
- Give clear criteria of what is expected and valued in a good response, as some EAL students may be accustomed to different assessment processes (*e.g., open-ended tasks where a degree of analysis or reflection is required*)
- Communicate to the student and the parent from the beginning if the focus of learning and assessment is on EAL curriculum goals based on the EAL student-specific plan
- Explain that, as the student progresses, the learning intentions and balance of assessment will increasingly reflect the grade-level curriculum

B. Assessment Strategies

- Employ assessment activities across a range of tasks and contexts
- Collect data over an extended period of time (a “photo album” of the student’s progress rather than a “snapshot” of one point in time)
- Distinguish between objective and subjective assessment
- Include contextual strategies, tasks, and tools within learning experiences and sequences
- Ask students in the earlier stages of learning English to show their understanding visually (*e.g., through hands-on demonstrations or drawings*)
- Where appropriate, use graphic organizers, sequenced pictures, labelled diagrams, and maps to demonstrate content knowledge instead of essay questions that require strong writing skills
- Substitute linguistically simplified formats, such as true/false, identification, and completion questions, or reduce the number of options on multiple-choice questions, which require strong reading skills and the ability to discern subtle distinctions in wording
- Use shorter extracts of texts with simpler sentence structure
- Observe and note how students perform specific tasks or activities
- Ask questions, preferably while the students are engaged in a relevant task, as this provides contextual support
- Teach students the skills and language needed to understand how to reflect on their own learning (*e.g., journals, logs, graphic organizers*)
- Discuss and compare assessments with other teachers
- Increase the language component of the tasks as students become more proficient
- Avoid using standardized norm-referenced tests that are intended for English speakers to gather critical information about an EAL learner
- Use multi-modal, culturally appropriate texts and tasks

C. Conditions for Accurate and Equitable Assessment

- When possible, use the student’s dominant language to assess prior content learning; assess the student’s academic knowledge and not just language knowledge
- Where appropriate, ensure that tasks are graded in terms of language demands so that, while the rest of the class may attempt all questions or tasks, there will be some more accessible ones that EAL students can also perform successfully
- Give students time to prepare for formal assessment tasks
- Explain the assessment procedures, conditions, and criteria for assessment when setting formal assessment tasks (using bilingual assistance where necessary)
- On tests, consider allowing students to use a bilingual dictionary to clarify English words they are not being tested on
- Use flexible timing to allow students to process reading, thinking, and writing in their new language (*e.g., allow additional time; break one assessment task into several parts*)
- Show models of acceptable to outstanding work for performance tasks, and provide some guidance on how the task is to be presented
 - For larger presentations, such as a report, model a sample structure of what each section might contain and, where appropriate, offer some language support
 - Give sentence starters for each section or provide examples on the board of the kind of language needed
- Allow students opportunities to improve their performance (students may use the assessment task as a way of identifying areas to improve, as they need opportunities to do so)

Assessing EAL Learners in Content-Area Classes

Reflecting on my practice, I	Consistently	Sometimes	Seldom	Evidence
1. choose the form of assessment to fit the purpose (<i>e.g., distinguish between language and content outcomes; assessment for/as/of learning</i>)				
2. use the student’s first language to assess prior content learning, when possible				
3. collect data over an extended period of time (“photo album” vs. “snapshot”)				
4. focus on the development of the individual student				
5. consider outside factors, such as culture and adjustment to a new setting				
6. maintain challenging expectations for students while recognizing their individual EAL stage and educational background				
7. ensure that learning and assessment tasks are relevant to a learner’s stage of English language development				
8. give clear criteria and models of what is expected and valued in a good response or product				
9. focus on what the student can do rather than on what the student cannot do, while indicating targeted outcomes and areas of concern				
10. include alternative and authentic strategies, tasks, and tools within learning experiences, such as non-verbal tools like drawing when language limits the student’s expression of comprehension matching, pointing, using gestures, etc.				

Assessing EAL Learners in Content-Area Classes

Reflecting on my practice, I	Consistently	Sometimes	Seldom	Evidence
11. observe and note how the student performs particular tasks and activities				
12. use flexible timing to allow students to process reading, think, and write in their new language, by allowing additional time, by breaking one assessment task into several parts, or by shortening the length of the task				
13. converse with the student about their work, using first language if necessary and feasible				
14. give specific feedback on targeted outcomes for language or content				
15. allow students opportunities to improve their performance following assessment				
16. teach students the skills and the language needed for self-assessment				
17. avoid standardized norm-referenced tests that are intended for English speakers to gather critical information about EAL learners				
18. communicate to the student and the parent/guardian from the beginning if the focus of learning and assessment is on some subject-area goals and on language learning expectations (This is necessary due to the stage and educational background of the student, but it is done with the understanding that as the student gains language and content proficiency, assessment will gradually shift towards age-appropriate subject-area goals.)				

Large-Scale Assessments (e.g., the Grade 3 Reading Comprehension and Numeracy Assessment)

In many countries, assessments determine the student’s educational future and, therefore, career and economic opportunities. EAL learners and their parents may feel strong pressure to achieve well on provincial assessments and may need explanations about their purposes and their significance in Manitoba.

Although participation in such assessments is required for EAL learners, educators and parents should consider the validity and reliability of assessments that may assume a certain level of English language proficiency or understanding of Western or even mainstream Manitoba culture. Students may not be able to accurately demonstrate what they know and can do for a number of reasons. For example:

- Many students and parents have experienced different large-scale examinations in their home countries and are not familiar with the formats and procedures of Manitoba assessments.
- Learners in the early stages will need more time to process their language learning and thoughts, but may be reluctant to ask for additional time, even when it is permitted.
- Learners may have good reading skills in their own language but these skills may not be evident because the assessment tools are based on the language they are learning.
- Reading proficiency is often demonstrated through written answers; however, productive skills in a language usually take longer to develop than receptive skills, and students may comprehend more than they are able to demonstrate.
- Unfamiliar vocabulary, paraphrasing, and unfamiliar expressions in academic language may confuse students who actually “know” the answer (McKay).
- Questions or performance tasks that are designed for Manitoba first-language speakers may be embedded in cultural experiences or topical knowledge that newcomers are not familiar with (e.g., camping trips, seasonal sports, or leasing a car).
- All of these considerations will be intensified for LAL learners whose limited school experience may seriously affect performance.

These factors may result in parents and schools drawing inaccurate conclusions about students’ abilities and progress or the effectiveness of instruction. Although teachers attempt to prepare all students in their classes for large-scale assessments, additional explanation and preparation, in addition to the use of permitted accommodations, may be necessary to help learners perform at their best possible level.

Although it is not wise to judge an EAL learner’s progress against assessment criteria that are normed for first-language speakers, schools often want and sometimes need to see how the student’s English language skills compare to grade-level expectations. This information can contribute to an appropriate educational plan.

Using Student Portfolios for Assessment

Portfolios provide an excellent assessment tool for both students and teachers to document EAL competencies and proficiencies. They allow students to demonstrate growth experienced through the year with richer, more illuminating evidence. By collecting student samples over a period of time and analyzing the evidence collected, students and teachers can gain a better understanding of how well students are progressing, and they can identify strengths and successes as well as learning gaps or areas where students need to improve. Through a varied collection of artifacts, students demonstrate their language achievement. Materials gathered in the portfolio can be used for assessment *for*, *as*, and *of* learning and should reflect the EAL learning goals and/or subject-area expectations that have guided instruction and learning for that period of time. It is important that students be made aware of what materials are to be used for what purposes and that they have a voice in deciding which elements of their work they may wish to include in the portfolio.

Portfolios developed with EAL students should include a variety of work, including both oral and written texts the student has created in the form of audio and video recordings, multimedia texts, and print texts. Observation checklists, learning logs, self-reflections, peer observation forms, teacher comments, and tests can also be included. The use of an electronic portfolio system may be of value. Students may wish to include materials they have created in their first language to demonstrate their proficiency and to encourage their continued development in that language (Coelho). They may also appreciate the opportunity to select one or two weekly journals or reading responses to be included in the portfolio. Students should be given an opportunity to reflect on their choices and the progress they see. The EAL teacher may also choose to include elements from the students' other classes in order to show the language development. Therefore, some collaboration between EAL teachers and subject-area teachers may be necessary. This collaboration will provide a broader and more accurate reflection of EAL students' everyday and academic language development.

If the portfolio is used as part of the summative assessment process, marking can be assigned by renewing individual pieces, using a set of pre-determined criteria to look at the portfolio as a whole or using a combination of both (McKay). Feedback on individual items will be more useful to students for their future learning. Criteria for assessing portfolios should always be shared with students to guide them on what is expected. Because the use of portfolios may be a new experience for many EAL students, appropriate and outstanding exemplars will be helpful.

"If you are using this assessment with a student who is an English language learner, you will need to be sure that the student speaks English well enough to understand the directions and introduction, enter into a conversation with you, process the print, and understand the text."

– Irene C. Fountas &
Gay Su Pinnell

Communicating Student Learning

Useful communication about EAL learning occurs long before report card time and communicates more than the grades students have achieved. Communication can be about

- growth (improvement from a starting point)
- progress (in relation to an endpoint)
- achievement (what the student can do at this point)

Reviewing Student Progress

Ongoing review and evaluation of learner progress and a flexible approach are necessary to ensure that EAL learners' programming continues to be appropriate and relevant. The classroom teacher and, where available, the EAL teacher can monitor academic progress, language acquisition, and social integration. Learners may appear to be completely integrated into general programming within two or three years, but their progress should still be monitored until they have demonstrated English proficiency that is similar to their English-speaking peers. Students may demonstrate proficiency in social language, but their academic language, reading, or written skills may not have reached grade-level competency.

At least annually, each learner's progress should be reviewed through an assessment of English language proficiency, as outlined in their student-specific plan. If the learner is not progressing as expected, it may be necessary to assess their needs further and to adjust programming and supports accordingly. With focused EAL support, the learner can probably make steady improvement toward catching up with peers. If the EAL student begins to function at the appropriate age/grade level, they may need further language supports as the demands of grade-level concepts and tasks increase.

Some EAL learners may have learning difficulties that are not related to a lack of knowledge of English or to gaps in their schooling. Because language and learning are so interconnected, it may take some time to discern what is a natural variability in the rate of language acquisition, a learning disability, or both. Sanchez-Lopez suggests that if a struggling learner only receives a short period of comprehensible input during the day but is in a learning environment that is incomprehensible the rest of the time, it will be difficult to know the cause of the struggle. She suggests that schools be proactive and look at a range of supports as soon as difficulties are detected. Students and parents need to be involved in decision making when exploring options. For more information, see *Communicating Student Learning* by Manitoba Education at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/docs/csl/.

When communicating on report cards, grades should reflect the most recent and consistent evidence of learning by a student with respect to content addressed from the beginning of the course. This requires the teacher's professional judgment. Greater consideration of the most recent and consistent evidence of learning shows the cumulative nature of learning and that it improves with support and effective practice.

For more information, see *Manitoba Provincial Report Card Policy and Guidelines* by Manitoba Education at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/docs/report_card/index.html.

Reporting Progress

Assigning marks or other summative measures presents the same ethical dilemmas as assessment of EAL learners in general, due to concerns for validity, fairness, and equity (Trumbull et al.).

See the provincial curriculum documents for requirements for reporting the progress and achievement of EAL learners who are following grade-level curriculum for a specific course, subject, or grade. Performance scales, where appropriate, are used to indicate the learner's levels of performance in relation to the identified learning goals. Where Senior Years learners are enrolled in EAL school-initiated courses (SICs), E-designated subject-area courses, and/or provincial Senior Years EAL courses, percentages are used to report learner progress; however, schools may also include additional, more concrete descriptions of student progress towards their EAL goals. In courses bearing an E course designation, the percentage will reflect the balance between language goals and content outcomes (see [E course designation](#) later in this section).

Some Kindergarten to Grade 8 EAL learners may initially be unable to follow the provincial curriculum in some subject areas due to their beginning stage of English language proficiency. In those cases, progress reporting should indicate that their work is focusing on learning English within the context of the subject area. Classroom assessment resources developed specifically for EAL/LAL learners should be used to assess their learning and to prepare progress reports. Consider giving more emphasis to more recent achievement data. English language learners often accelerate rapidly in their achievement, as their increasing English language proficiency better allows them to demonstrate their learning, and this later evidence will more accurately reflect their ongoing progress.

Progress reports should contain information describing what the learners can do, areas for further growth, and ways of supporting them in their learning. It is important that parents be informed of their child's progress in social and academic language competence as part of the regular reporting process. Communicating with families and students about assessment is sometimes difficult because of the educational terminology and different cultural beliefs about purposes and methods of assessment. Wherever possible and appropriate, interpreters should be provided for parent-teacher conferences.

Classroom teachers have the professional obligation to report the progress of EAL learners whom they have personally instructed, assessed, and evaluated. Where an EAL specialist contributes to some portion of the learner's educational programming, the specialist may provide written information on the learner's progress for inclusion with the classroom teacher's report.

Planning Senior Years Courses for EAL Learners

Senior Years EAL Planning

The ideas presented in this section are for Senior Years students; however, these suggestions may be helpful to students in Kindergarten to Grade 8 who require planning that includes subject-area learning intentions and EAL curriculum learning goals. Senior Years EAL and LAL students will benefit from specialized EAL, LAL, E-designated course(s), and appropriate adaptations in subject-specific courses.

EAL students need to be provided with appropriate learning experiences and instructional supports. Successful planning is based on an accurate assessment of the student's current language proficiency and prior learning, as well as the development and implementation of an EAL student-specific plan. This plan should specify the courses in which students will be enrolled.

Balancing EAL Progressions and Subject-Area Learning

Both EAL and LAL students in early stages of English language proficiency may take Senior Years provincially developed courses with an EAL ("E") designation with the exception of courses designed for LAL students. The E course designation is applied to educational experiences designed to focus on EAL learning goals in the context of the subject area, based on the student's assessed level of EAL proficiency.

"Understanding is revealed when students autonomously make sense of and transfer their learning through authentic performance. Six facets of understanding—the capacity to explain, interpret, apply, shift perspective, empathize, and self-assess—can serve as indicators of understanding."

– Grant Wiggins & Jay McTighe

The E course designation

- requires an EAL student specific plan (EAL-SSP) for each student
- signifies that the learning expectations of a course have been substituted to facilitate English language acquisition
- assists the student in making the transition into general high school programming with the F, G, or S designations

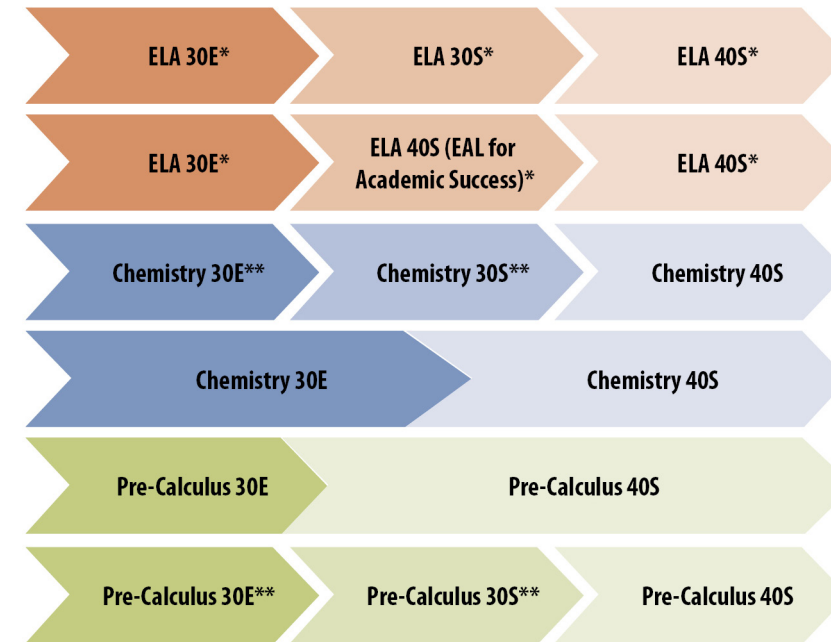
The E-designated course assumes that the student has prerequisite content-area learning in the subject but is in the early stages of English language acquisition. The focused EAL component of an E course designation provides the context for students to develop general English language subject-area language, and grade-level content-area learning. Content-area courses that have a strong activity-based component (e.g., physical education, art, music, foods, etc.) will provide contextualized opportunities for language development.

LAL students will need planned learning experiences that intentionally build foundational academic concepts that are critical for success in general high school courses based on the LAL Phases and appropriate subject-area learning. The foundational academic concepts can come through specialized LAL department-developed or department-approved curricula. E-designated subject-area courses will help LAL students gain content-area background. As students gain content-area concepts, they will need ongoing literacy and numeracy supports even though their oral language appears to be stronger. When the curriculum expectations and goals of a specific course are substituted to accommodate the special learning requirements of individual EAL students, the E course designation can be used. In this case, significant adaptations are defined as *changing curriculum goals*. Learning intentions are designed specifically to develop basic interpersonal communication skills, cognitive academic language proficiency, and subject-area knowledge to prepare EAL students for success in high school courses where English is the language of instruction. E-designated course learning intentions are identified before a student begins the course(s) but they may be adjusted based on student progress.

When the subject-area curriculum outcomes remain largely the same but differentiations are made in instructional strategies, processes, reading level of texts, or time allowed, the course receives the regular F, S, or G designation.

The E course designation is intended to transition students to grade-level high school programming. Courses with the E course designation, while meeting graduation requirements, may not meet various post-secondary entrance requirements. Schools should ensure that EAL students achieving a Grade 12 Diploma have been prepared with the credits required to meet entrance requirements of post-secondary education, training, or work situations they intend to pursue.

To ensure EAL students are academically prepared for post-secondary options, it is highly recommended that students do not graduate with Grade 12 courses using the E course designation. Some possible pathways that prepare older EAL students for 40S courses start by registering the student in subject-area courses with a 30E designation. Paths may differ for individual students depending on their academic background and their EAL proficiency.



* A student may hold more than one ELA credit at the 30S and the 40S levels; they can be at the E or the S level. ELA 40S *EAL for Academic Success* cannot be used as the required ELA credit for graduation. It can be an optional credit.

** A student may not hold credit for both 30E and 30S courses in any subject area except ELA.

E course designation provides students with the opportunity to continue the development of their English language skills and foundational knowledge in a specific subject area. Therefore, courses with an E course designation weave together EAL curriculum goals and selected subject-area expectations. Learners at Stage 1 of EAL development who require a greater degree of language support and instruction goals will draw more from the EAL domains rather than from the subject-area learning expectations. As students progress in their language development, instruction will increasingly focus on academic EAL language skills and developing subject-area knowledge, values, and skills and are appropriate for their grade level.

The E course designation is intended to provide EAL students with appropriate programming and the benefits of a variety of high school learning experiences, as well as to facilitate their successful transition into non-EAL classes. The E course designation does not set time limits to meet learning expectations. Due to the nature of the learner and the course, it may take longer than a term or a semester to complete the course. Although the time to complete these courses varies, the expectations for learning achievement cannot be compromised. The goal is to enable students to transition more easily into general high school programming with the F, G, or S designations.

Assessment of learning for an E-designated course is based on the individual student’s EAL SSP, which combines EAL and subject-area learning expectations set for that student based on their level of language proficiency.

The EAL designation is not to be confused with the modified (M) course designation, which involves curricular modifications that take into account the learning requirements of students with significant cognitive disabilities. The student services team needs to be involved in the process of deciding whether or not to provide the student with an M course designation.

The EAL designation is not to be used as an afterthought when a student has been unsuccessful in meeting the curricular outcomes. Use requires planning.

Planning for E-Designated Course Learning Goals and Subject-Area Expectations

Planning for an E course designation occurs prior to an EAL student or group of students beginning the subject-area course. Drawing on the learning goals and descriptors of growth for the student’s stage on the EAL Progressions, teachers need to consider the foundational content of the course and how language development and subject-area knowledge and skills will be taught and assessed.

The learning focus of the course with an E course designation is on the four domains of the EAL Framework and the subject-area knowledge, values, and skills appropriate for a particular stage of EAL development. Teachers need to set learning intentions with aspects of their grade-level

subject-area curriculum that will be taught with adaptations or that needs to be rewritten or revised, considering big ideas and essential learnings. It is important to consider the breadth, depth, and complexity of topics that are used in a course with an E course designation. Students in Stages 1 and 2 of EAL development require a high degree of scaffolding with general and basic subject-specific vocabulary, key language structures, and possibly foundational subject-area concepts. Students at Stage 3 need to expand their academic language skills in order to communicate about more complex and abstract topics and tasks.

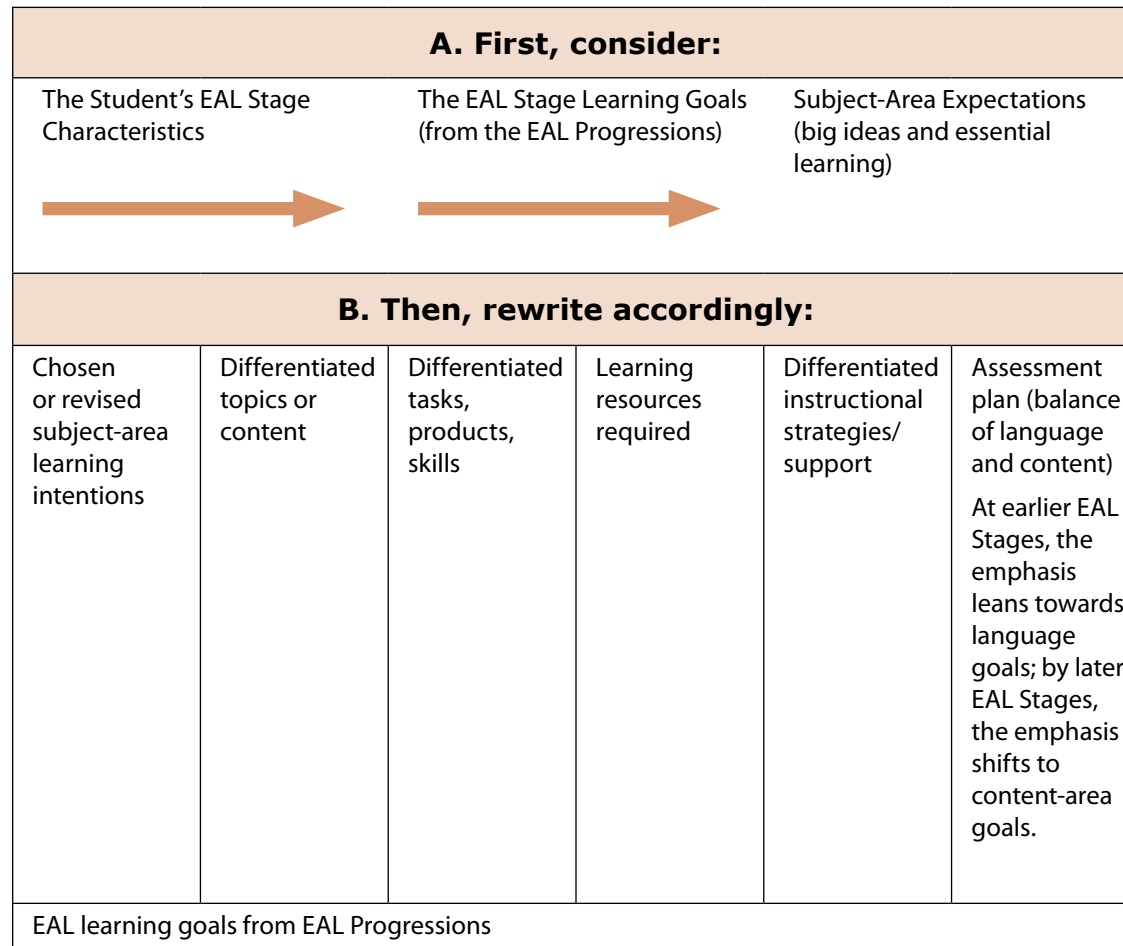
An EAL student-specific plan is required for all students registering in an E-designated course.

As students continue to develop EAL skills and move towards grade-appropriate language skills, greater focus will be placed on academic language and subject-area goals. When planning for an E-designated course, consider the table below, which provides a suggested balance of EAL goals and subject-area expectations for each stage of language acquisition. The subject-area portion is based on big ideas, essential learnings, and foundational skills.

Planning for EAL and Subject-Area Learning across the EAL Stages		
Stage	Possible Instructional Balance	Course Designation
1	Subject-Area Outcomes EY and MY: EAL	E
2	Subject-Area Outcomes SY: E-credit	E
3	Subject-Area Outcomes (with adaptations) EAL	E or F, S, G
4	Subject-Area Outcomes (with adaptations) EAL	F, S, G
5	Subject-Area Outcomes (with minimal adaptations) EAL	F, S, G

As a balance of these expectations indicate, Stage 3 learners *could* be and Stage 4 or 5 learners *should* be achieving the majority of the subject-area expectations in a course with continued support for EAL learning; these students receive the regular F, S, or G course designation. A student who begins a course with an E course designation may make rapid progress in language learning and meet the majority of subject-area expectations by the end of the course; in this case, the course designation changes to the regular designation. For example, a student who begins History 30 with an E course designation and demonstrates the majority of History 30S outcomes by the end of the semester receives a History 30S credit.

The following chart summarizes the factors involved in planning for a Senior Years subject-area course with an E course designation. This same process can be used for any grade and content area. When the emphasis in the course shifts to a majority of content-area goals, with ongoing considerations for language learning, the regular designation is appropriate.



- For more information on E-credit designation, please refer to *Towards Inclusion: A Handbook for English as a Second Language Course Designation, Senior 1-4* (1996).
- Manitoba Graduation Requirements https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/policy/gradreq/docs/grad_req_en.pdf
- Please refer to *Towards Inclusion: A Handbook for Modified Course Designation, Senior 1-4* (1995) for programming for EAL students with significant cognitive disabilities.
- Also refer to *Manitoba Provincial Report Card Policy and Guidelines* at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/assess/docs/report_card/full_doc.pdf