The ESL Teacher as “Productive” pedagogical mentor

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What do we want for EAL students in the mainstream?

The optimal mainstream learning environment for EAL students is one characterised by high cognitive challenge supplemented by high pedagogical support (including differentiation) for learning language and content (Bunch, Abram, Lotan & Valdes, 2001; Cummins, 2000; Gibbons, 2009; Kaje, 2009).
# Students from Language Background Other Than English (LBOTE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Region</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hunter/Central Coast</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illawarra &amp; South East</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New England</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Sydney</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riverina</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S/W Sydney</td>
<td>63.9%</td>
<td>65.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western NSW</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Sydney</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>38.0%</td>
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</table>

Source: NSW Department of Education and Training
Research Question

How do mainstream primary teachers in non-metropolitan Australia respond to refugee EAL students in their classes?

* i) What knowledge of Second Language Acquisition research and attitudes do they draw on to determine their classroom practices with refugee EAL students?

* ii) What classroom practices do they employ with refugee EAL students?
Methodology

Qualitative
Using a variety of data gathering strategies
* semi-structured interviews
* field notes
* classroom observations
One full school term in two schools in the chosen non-metropolitan area.

ii) What classroom practices do they employ with refugee EAL students?
Classroom observations

* Guided by the NSW Quality Teaching Framework elements and dimensions to determine which pedagogies supportive of the learning of EAL students were occurring in the classrooms. (The scale ranges from 1-5 with 5 being the highest score).
Queensland Productive Pedagogies

**Intellectual quality**
- Higher-order thinking
- Deep knowledge
- Deep understanding
- Substantive conversation
- Knowledge as problematic
- Metalanguage

**Recognition and valuing of difference**
- Cultural knowledge
- Inclusivity
- Narrative
- Group identity
- Active citizenship

**Supportive classroom environment**
- Student direction
- Social support
- Academic engagement
- Explicit quality performance criteria
- Self-regulation

**Connectedness**
- Knowledge integration
- Background knowledge
- Connectedness to the world
- Problem-based curriculum

New South Wales Quality Teaching Framework Dimensions

Why use the NSW QTF?

* Consistency with the body of research on Productive Pedagogies
* “can be sustained organisationally” (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2003, p. 7)
* A number of recent studies in New South Wales (Gibbons, 2008; Hammond, 2008; Hammond, Gibbons, Michell, Dufficy, Cruikshank & Sharpe 2005-7; Rushton, 2008) have noted the correspondence between elements in the QTF and what research has shown to be optimal pedagogies for teaching EAL students in mainstream classes.
“pedagogy focused on producing deep understanding of important, substantive concepts, skills and ideas. Such pedagogy treats knowledge as something that requires active construction and requires students to engage in higher order thinking and to communicate substantively about what they are learning” (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2006, p. 10).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elements selected</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Higher Order Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Metalanguage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Substantive Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• (BICS/CALP, Mode Continuum, explicit focus on form, CUP, Comprehensible Input, Output)</td>
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</table>
“pedagogy that creates classrooms where students and teachers work productively in an environment clearly focused on learning. Such pedagogy sets high and explicit expectations and develops positive relationships between teachers and students and among students” (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2006, p. 10).

Elements Selected

- High Expectations
- Social Support
- Explicit Quality Criteria

(BICS-CALP, Explicit focus on form, Comprehensible Input)
“pedagogy that helps make learning more meaningful and important to students. Such pedagogy draws clear connections with students’ prior knowledge and identities, with contexts outside of the classroom, and with multiple ways of knowing or cultural perspectives” (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2006, p. 10).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significance</th>
<th>Elements selected</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cultural knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inclusivity</td>
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(CUP, Identity Affirmation, BICS-CALP, Comprehensible Output)
So what did we find out?
QTF Observation Results (Scale of 1-5)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QTF Dimension and Elements</th>
<th>Susanna</th>
<th>Margot</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intellectual Quality</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Higher Order Thinking</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Substantive Communication</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Metalanguage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Quality Learning Environment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• High Expectations</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>Social Support</strong></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explicit Quality Criteria</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Significance</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cultural Knowledge</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inclusivity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During a class discussion Margot was observed to say quietly to one EAL student “What did you write? Don’t tell us [the class] yet, but you’re going to tell us in a minute.”

Field notes taken in Susanna’s class also state of her “[She] seems to look for opportunities for [EAL student] to get something right in front of the whole class.”
Teachers sought to include the EAL students in activities through both their actions and their public comments in the classroom.

For example, Margot in response to an answer to a mathematics problem provided to the class by one of her EAL students said “Good girl! That shows you can take your knowledge and apply it. Well done!”

In a similar way, Susanna was observed to say in a whole class situation of one of her EAL students “You’ll see all the clever things that she can do. She’s a pretty clever girl.”

Being fully included in all curricular activities as they were in these classrooms is a very positive thing for EAL students, and is in contrast to some reports in the literature of EAL exclusion or the ‘dumbing down’ of activities for them (Verplaetse, 2000; Walters, 2007).
“Does having EAL students in your class affect the way you teach the class as a whole?”

* **Susanna** said only that she had to “*take into account that as are all ESL kids translating constantly in their heads so therefore they’re tired*”

* **In contrast Margot** replied “*Not really*” and later commented that having Sudanese refugee EAL students in the class was “*not a [pedagogical] problem at all.*”
Areas of potential within existing practices from QTF data

- The data demonstrate that both teachers made significant efforts to meet the psychosocial needs of these students and included them in all curricular activities. In doing so they created conditions conducive to EAL students’ learning which, unfortunately, were not capitalised upon through teachers’ pedagogical actions or pedagogical differentiation for these students.
A positive environment is often understood as a caring, safe and supportive classroom. Students, parents and teachers recognise the value of a positive classroom environment. However, where the classroom carries the general concern for supporting students further to become supportive of learning, above and beyond generally positive, the outcomes demonstrated by students will be enhanced” (NSW Department of Education and Training, 2003, p.13)
What about the Curriculum Cycle as an area of potential?
Pluses

* It is being implemented

* Teachers are familiar with its broad stages

* This provides a platform for talking about the QTF elements in relation to the Cycle and the corresponding SLA theories
Areas of challenge

* **Field building** - substantive communication, higher order thinking, background knowledge, cultural knowledge
* **Teaching of sentence level grammar during modelling** – metalanguage, explicit quality criteria
* **Written**, modelled joint construction - explicit quality criteria
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<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25. T. That could be a good introduction as well. So, think about that. Then the next part tells students you, in the middle part you’re describing spiders. So what’s it [the website] tell you? That you have to have?</td>
<td>25-33 Modelling [all oral] [while teacher does not act as scribe she provides evaluation of the students’ contributions]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. T. And if you’re doing an animal you have to have?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Ss. [reading] Appearance</td>
<td>QTF-Metalanguage-sentence level grammar (Expanded noun groups)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. T. What does that mean? [asks various ESB children by name]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. S. What it looks like</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. T. Exactly. The next thing is [habitat, movement, behaviour, life cycle-answers as to meanings given orally by ESB students, but none is written ].</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. T. The very last bit of your information report is?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.T. Conclusion where you’ve got a summary or a comment. And it says that’s optional so you don’t always have to have a conclusion, but it’s always good.</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 34. S. Thanks for reading? | **34-41 Joint construction**
|   | [all oral] |
| 35. T. Now. Do you say that sort of thing? Not in an information report. They won’t give you marks for doing that. So what sort of comment would you make if you’ve written all about spiders? At the end, a short comment? | [while teacher does not act as scribe she provides evaluation of the students’ contributions] |
| 36. S. Spiders bite | **QTF- Substantive communication**
|   | written modelling of the move from BICS to CALP |
| 37. T. All spiders? | **QTF-Metalanguage**
|   | sentence level grammar |
| 38. Ss. No | **Explicit quality criteria** |
| 39. T. Who can give us one? |   |
| 40. S. Some spiders are venomous and some aren’t |   |
44. T. Today you’re going to write an Information report for me about dinosaurs, but you’re going to use this sort of a format for it [example text]. So we start with an ...?

45. Ss. Capital

46. T. We always start with a capital. How do we start?

47. S. We start with the title and with a comment.

48. T. Right and it’s going to be on dinosaurs. So you’re going to start with the title and the introduction where you make a statement about dinosaurs. Now the middle part is where you have your ...? What do you have?

49. S. Information?

50. S. Facts?

44. Introduction of field

44-50 Deconstruction Revision of text type schematic features [all oral]

[while teacher does not act as scribe she provides evaluation of the students’ contributions]

QTF- metalanguage-sentence level grammar, Background knowledge, Substantive communication
| [Students start talking to each other at their desks about dinosaurs and the task while T responds to telephone] [Ss. indistinct general chatter] | 52 S seek to build field QTF – Substantive Communication, Explicit Quality Criteria |
| 52. S. [to other Ss] Is the [indistinct] a dinosaur? | 54 [Teacher does not allow children to do their own field building with each other] |
| 53. T. I want you to use information out of your head. |  |
| [students continue speaking] |  |
| 54. T. [To class] You don’t need to talk about what you know about dinosaurs. Will you listen please? You are not going to be talking about it! Your draft book, please! |  |
So, what can we do?

* Get to know your appropriate QTF and/or think through how to explain its relationships to SLA theory (and your specific teaching context)

* Introduce ideas about appropriate pedagogies from QTF (or similar) in the context of extending, expanding on existing positive practices

* On-going, collaborative process
  * Staff meetings
  * Planning opportunities
  * In class opportunities
  * Develop “Critical Friendships”
Critical (and friendly!) reflection on pedagogy

NSW QTF
A guide to ...

Productive Pedagogies
Classroom reflection manual

## South Australian Teaching for Effective Learning Framework

**unleashing learning potential**

### Leaders create learning opportunities with staff

**Domain 1 Learning for effective teaching**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.1</th>
<th>1.2</th>
<th>1.3</th>
<th>1.4</th>
<th>1.5</th>
<th>1.6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>understand how self and others learn</td>
<td>develop deep pedagogical and content knowledge</td>
<td>participate in professional learning communities and networks</td>
<td>engage with the community</td>
<td>discuss educational purpose and policy</td>
<td>design, plan and organise for teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Teachers create learning opportunities with students

**Domain 2 Create safe conditions for rigorous learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2.1</th>
<th>2.2</th>
<th>2.3</th>
<th>2.4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>develop democratic relationships</td>
<td>build a community of learners</td>
<td>negotiate learning</td>
<td>challenge students to achieve high standards with appropriate support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Domain 3 Develop expert learners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3.1</th>
<th>3.2</th>
<th>3.3</th>
<th>3.4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>teach students how to learn</td>
<td>foster deep understanding and skilful action</td>
<td>explore the construction of knowledge</td>
<td>promote dialogue as a means of learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Domain 4 Personalise and connect learning**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4.1</th>
<th>4.2</th>
<th>4.3</th>
<th>4.4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>build on learners’ understandings</td>
<td>connect learning to students’ lives and aspirations</td>
<td>apply and assess learning in authentic contexts</td>
<td>communicate learning in multiple modes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Principles of Learning and Teaching P-12 (PoLT) and related components state that students learn best when:

- The learning environment is supportive and productive
- The learning environment promotes independence, interdependence and self-motivation
- Students’ needs, backgrounds, perspectives and interests are reflected in the learning program
- Students are challenged and supported to develop deep levels of thinking and application
- Assessment practices are an integral part of teaching and learning
- Learning connects strongly with communities and practice beyond the classroom

These principles can be used by schools, teams of teachers and individuals to reflect on practice and support professional dialogue to strengthen pedagogical practices. The Principles of Learning and Teaching P-12 Unpacked section provides detailed explanations and teaching examples for each of the six principles.

- The Principles of Learning and Teaching P-12 Unpacked

Learning connects strongly with communities and practice beyond the classroom.

**Productive Pedagogies™**

A useful reference to explore the principle in another context is through Productive Pedagogies™ developed by Education Queensland. Productive Pedagogies™ derive from the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (QSRLS, 2001), the commissioned research undertaken for Education Queensland by the University of Queensland. Productive Pedagogies™ are:

- Recognition of difference
- Connectedness
- Intellectual quality
- Social support

### CONNECTEDNESS

**Connectedness to the world**
- lessons have value beyond the moment
- a connection to the larger social context within which students live

**Problem based curriculum**
- students are presented with a specific real, practical or hypothetical problem (or set of problems) to solve

**Knowledge integration**
- knowledge is connected across subject boundaries, or subject boundaries do not exist

**Background knowledge**
- lessons provide explicit links with students’ prior experience; eg. community knowledge, local knowledge, personal experience, media and popular culture sources


