

Introduction

Welcome to Module 2 of Working with English Language Learners: A handbook for learning assistants (WELLS).

In this module, you will think about what you already know about the learners you work with. Often, learning assistants who come from the same cultural background or who work closely with ELLs, have deep knowledge of their language and cultural backgrounds, and the communities that they come from. When learning assistants and learners have trusting relationships, effective teaching practices are strengthened and have more impact. Taking time to get to know learners; treating them with respect as members of their families, and recognising their rich cultural backgrounds helps to develop relationships that support learner growth over time.

It is helpful to think about where learners are at with their English language and literacy learning, their formal education background, and whether they are from a New Zealand born, migrant, or former refugee background. You can draw on this knowledge of the learner when you are planning with classroom teachers and supporting learners. You will also learn about common labels used when talking about ELLs, and the impact of their use.

When thinking about ELLs' backgrounds, we can make links with the first ESOL principle 'Know your Learners' which asks two key questions:

- What do you know about your learners' language skills?
- What do you know about their prior knowledge?

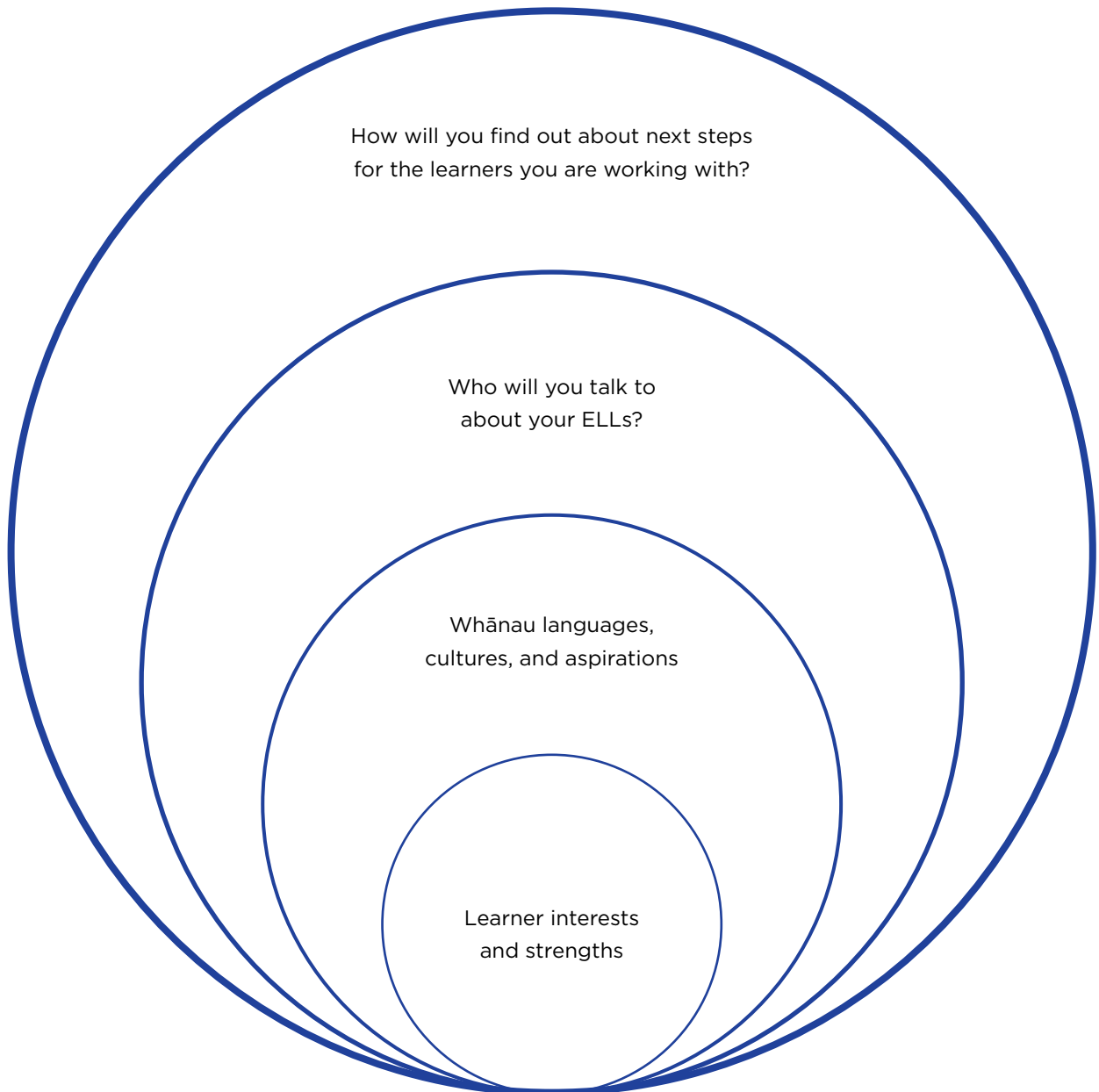
Module 2 Task 1:

Know your Learners

Students learn best when they are able to connect new learning to what they already know. Think of a learner you work with and use the graphic organiser in Task 1 to help you to reflect on them, and what they bring to their learning. This could include language and cultural background, family and community, and their values and aspirations. This background knowledge of your learner will enable you to make connections between what they bring and their learning goals, and can be helpful when planning for learning activities or experiences with the classroom teacher.



Module 2 Task 1: Know your Learners



Understanding the Impact of Labels

Within English-medium education and the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) field, a number of labels are used to describe learners who are in the process of learning in a second language. 'ESOL' refers to what schools do to support these learners at school. The Ministry of Education (MoE) uses the term 'English Language Learners' (ELLs) when referring to the learners themselves and this is the term you will see used in many of the Ministry ESOL resources.

ELLs need to be recognised for all of the language and cultural resources that they bring with them to school. These include everything they are able to understand and produce in their heritage/first language and in English. Within the Bilingual Education field, these same learners are referred to as 'Emergent Bilinguals'. The term 'Emergent Bilingual' highlights the learner's potential to develop their bilingualism; it does not suggest a limitation or a problem in comparison to those who speak only English (Garcia, 2009). The term 'Emergent Bilingual' will be used throughout the modules to refer to students who are in the process of acquiring English as an additional language.

Emergent Bilinguals may:

- speak their heritage/first language/s.
- speak more than one language.
- speak community varieties of English and have different levels of 'School-English' proficiency.
- have varying levels of formal education.
- come from a range of backgrounds, e.g., migrant, former refugee background, international fee paying.

Emergent Bilinguals may be at a **receptive** stage of English language learning, where they may understand English but not speak it, or, they may understand their heritage/first language, but not speak it (receptive bilingual). Alternatively, they may be **productive** speakers of their heritage/first language **and** of English (fully bilingual). In multilingual societies, there are many different community language groups, who often speak different varieties or types of English that are not the same as 'School-English' e.g., 'Hindi-English' or 'Pacific-English'. Learners' opportunities for success are strengthened when their community varieties of English are treated with as much respect as 'School-English'. If languages are used to communicate within families and communities (e.g. church, mosque, temple, community events etc.), then they are important and valid languages.

Module 2 Task 2: Term and Definition Match – ESOL Labels

Purpose: A Term and Definition Match is a task that supports learners to discuss and express their understandings of key topic vocabulary. This task can be used by:

- a small group where learners collaboratively match the terms with their definitions to complete the whole set.
- giving individuals one term **or** definition, and then finding their partner with the matching term or definition.

Photocopy the following table. Cut out each term/acronym and definition. Work independently or with a colleague to complete the table again.

Module 2 Task 2: Terms and Definitions in the ESOL/Bilingual Field (Pasifika Teacher Aide Project, Workshop 1)

Term/Acronym	Definition
L1	First language
L2	Second language
HL	Heritage language (may be spoken by parents or grandparents, but not always by their descendants)
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ELL	English Language Learner
EB	Emergent Bilingual
Bilingualism	Having capability to understand and/or speak two languages
Multilingualism	Having capability to understand and/or speak more than two languages
Receptive bilingual	Understands heritage language but speaks dominant language OR understands dominant language but speaks heritage language
Productive bilingual	Understands and speaks heritage language and dominant language

Contributing to Teacher Planning

Classroom learning can be strengthened when learning assistants support classroom teachers to plan activities for their learners.

Why is your contribution to teacher planning important?

- You can report back to the classroom teacher about any progress learners have made with you in your small group/individual sessions.
- You can identify and discuss the strengths and needs of your learners.
- You can set goals together for your learners and prioritise actions.
- You can explore available resources together.
- You can support key transition points (e.g. group changes, changing classes, changing year levels, change of teacher etc.).

Planning with Classroom Teachers

The questions below might be helpful as discussion points when contributing to classroom planning:

- How are our learners going?
- What are our learners' strengths and needs?
- Have we provided an opportunity for whānau voice and perspectives on this issue?
- How are we valuing the languages and cultures of home?
- What resources would be suitable and accessible for us to use?

Recapping Key Vocabulary: Module 2

Term	Definition
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)	Programmes or personnel that a school provides to support learners who are acquiring English as an additional language. The term 'ESOL' should not be used when referring to learners.
Emergent Bilingual (EB)	Learners who are in the process of acquiring a second language while at the same time, maintaining their heritage language.
Receptive bilingual	Learners who may understand but not speak a heritage or additional language.
Productive bilingual	Learners who understand and speak their heritage language and the target language e.g., English.
Language register	A register is a variety of language used for a particular purpose or in a particular communicative situation e.g., School English/community varieties of English, chiefly language/common language.

Resources

ESOL Principles

<https://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Learning-about-my-students-needs/Knowledge-of-English-language-learning/ESOL-principles/Principle-1-Know-your-learners>

Garcia, O. (2009). Emergent Bilinguals and TESOL: What's in a name? *TESOL Quarterly, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages*, 322–326.

Ministry of Education (2008). *English Language Learning Progressions*.

<https://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Planning-for-my-students-needs/Professional-support-for-teachers-and-teacher-aides/English-Language-Learning-Progressions>

Ministry of Education (2009). *Supporting English Language Learning in Primary Schools: A resource for mainstream and ESOL teachers*.

<https://esolonline.tki.org.nz/ESOL-Online/Planning-for-my-students-needs/Resources-for-planning/Supporting-English-Language-Learning-in-Primary-School-SELLIPS>

Ministry of Education (2020). *The Statement of National Education and Learning Priorities (NELP) and the Tertiary Education Strategy (TES)*. <https://www.education.govt.nz/our-work/overall-strategies-and-policies/the-statement-of-national-education-and-learning-priorities-nelp-and-the-tertiary-education-strategy-tes/#priorities>

Va'atele Education Consulting (2021). *The Pasifika Teacher Aide Project Workshop 1: Supporting Oral Language Development*. Ministry of Education.

Coming up: Module 3

Module 3 is about how people learn an additional language.

Preparation: Think about how a bilingual brain works. If you are bilingual, think about how you learn new content and what helps you to make sense of your new learning.