

MODULE 1

Strengthening the role of the teacher aide/bilingual tutor in the school

Introduction

It is useful for teacher aides/bilingual tutors to clarify their roles in discussion with the management and the teacher/s they are supporting. The best use of teacher aides/bilingual tutors occurs when the teachers and the support staff have a shared understanding about:

- the importance of encouraging students to access *The New Zealand Curriculum* through using their first language to understand and process information and to explore ideas
- the organisational factors that make the use of teacher aides/bilingual tutors more effective
- the practical approaches and strategies that teacher aides/bilingual tutors can use to facilitate learning.

Bilingual tutors are often used in other roles, such as to liaise between the families and communities and the school, or to address problems with students at school. However, this handbook provides a model for professional development only for the learning support role, so that teachers and schools can recognise the value of teacher aides/bilingual tutors and plan to improve student achievement by creating effective ways of working together.

Module 1 Task Think, Pair, Share

Purpose: This strategy helps students to be independent by giving them time to find out what they think or know about a topic before relying on others. The “wait” or “think” time that is part of Think, Pair, Share has been demonstrated to be a powerful factor in improving student responses to questions (**see Module 6 Supporting Questioning**). The students first work individually saying or writing down their ideas. Next they share their ideas with a partner and then with a larger group or whole class.

A **bilingual tutor** could help students say or write their ideas in first language before attempting to use English.

Individual task

Complete the checklists shown in Resources 1A and 1B by yourself, and then discuss with the coordinating teacher.

Workshop task

Complete checklists with partner, then use Think, Pair, Share to compare your responses and situations.

Good practice

Making the best use of a teacher aide/bilingual tutor requires good communication between the senior management, the teaching staff and the learning support staff. It's important for everybody to be clear from the start about what the teacher aide/bilingual tutor is going to do, and whether this role is in addition to, or separate from, a school-community liaison role, especially if there is a differential in pay rates between the two roles.

Resources

The *Refugee Handbook for Schools (ESOL Information for Schools Folder)*

Next steps

1. Complete the task templates below.
2. After completing 1A and 1B templates, suggest two ways that your role in the school can be strengthened.
3. Use these suggestions to develop an Action Plan for using the professional learning in these modules. (Refer to Resource 1C which is a template). This plan should be discussed with and monitored by a coordinating teacher over the rest of the year. Keep the Action Plan, so that it can be changed or added to at the end of each module.
4. Use Resource 1C to compare further the role of a teacher aide/bilingual tutor with role of a bilingual liaison person.

Module 2 is about ways of working as a teacher aide/bilingual tutor.

Preparation: Meet with the class teacher (primary) or one of the subject teachers (secondary) to set up a regular time to discuss upcoming topics. You could record this information in a journal documenting and reflecting on your work with those students.

Module 1 Role checklist

Resource 1A

<p>1. Educational and professional background</p> <p>a. What did you do before you became a teacher aide?</p> <p>b. Have you been involved in this kind of work in a different situation?</p> <p>c. What made you want to be a teacher aide?</p> <p>d. What skills do you bring to this role?</p> <p>e. Have you been previously involved in any professional development for being a teacher aide? e.g ELA training or the 'Home School Partnership'?</p> <p>f. How has previous training helped your work in the classroom?</p>	<p>If yes, what kind of work?</p> <p>No / yes, when?</p>
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<p>2. Role in the school</p> <p>a. What do you see as your role in the school?</p> <p>b. What do you see as your role in the classroom?</p> <p>c. Do you see your role mainly as developing teachers' resources or supporting students' learning or both?</p> <p>d. Do you have other responsibilities at school?</p> <p>What are they?</p>	
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<p>3. Support received from school</p> <p>a. What support do you receive from your school managers or teachers?</p> <p>b. How are you supported in your role?</p> <p>c. Who provides support?</p> <p>d. Do you get any planning time with the person to whom you are responsible?</p> <p>e. Are you involved in the planning of your programme? In what way?</p> <p>f. Are you given a programme to use?</p>	
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<p>4. Use of first language with students</p> <p>a. What is the purpose of having bilingual teacher aides at school?</p> <p>b. Do you use your first language in your work?</p> <p>c. How do you use it? (e.g. for discipline / for teaching?)</p> <p>d. How do you feel about using your first language in the classroom?</p>	
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5. Use of students' first language and attitudes to maintaining students' L1

a. How do you feel about students using their first languages in the classroom?

b. Do you support/encourage students in using their first language in the classroom/school? If so, how?

6. Support for students' listening and speaking

a. What is your role in supporting students with listening and speaking?

7. Support for students' reading and writing

a. What is your role in supporting students with reading and writing?

b. Do you use any first language resources to support children in reading and writing? Which ones?

8. Most satisfying part of the role

a. What is something that you have done with students that you are proud of?

c. What do you find most satisfying in your work?

9. Difficult aspects of the role

a. What do you find most difficult in your role at school?

b. Do you have any frustrations or issues?

10. Are there any other things that you would like to mention?

Identifying and Describing Teacher Aides' Existing Work Context <i>(Circle the relevant bullet point and provide responses, as appropriate)</i>	
1. The teacher aide works in:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a mainstream classroom • a bilingual classroom • In a group withdrawal situation • a combination of situations including: _____
2. The teacher aide works with:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students in junior primary classes (years 1-2) • students in middle primary classes (years 3-4) • students in senior primary classes (years 5-6) • students in intermediate schools (years 7-8) • secondary school students in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – mainstream junior secondary classes/ reception classes (ESOL only), – mainstream senior secondary subject classes (years 11-13) – homework or after-school study support programmes
3. The teacher aide works with:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnically homogenous groups of students including: _____ • ethnically diverse groups of students including: _____ • a range of groups including: _____ • individual students including: _____ • ORRS funded students • new migrants • students requiring Foundation literacy support, including development of alphabet knowledge
4. The teacher aide works:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in collaboration with the class teacher; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – supporting students in completing class tasks – by translating instructions for new migrants – by performing organisational tasks such as resource preparation – by... • independently of the class teacher; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – by supporting students with basic literacy skills including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – by operating independent literacy programmes such as 'Rainbow Reading', 'Talk to Learn', 'Self Pacing Boxes' and... – by...
5. The teacher aide has opportunity to use first language with students.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, has opportunity and/or encouragement to use L1 • No, has little opportunity and/or encouragement to use L1.
6. The teacher aide uses L1 for behaviour management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, mainly • No, not often

<p>7. The teacher aide uses L1 for teaching and learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes for instruction with classroom content. • No, rarely
<p>8. The teacher aide has opportunity to share cultural expertise with students and/or staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes, when... • No, because...
<p>9 Please list any other relevant points in relation to the teacher aide's work context.</p>	

- Make a list of things that need to be done as a result of completing the checklists, Resources 1A and 1B, and discuss these with the coordinating teacher, e.g. Using L1 for teaching and learning as often as possible.
- Then fill in the action plan below for 3 of these suggestions with the coordinating teacher and review at the end of the year to record progress. Two suggested examples have been done.

Action Plan

Goal	Who will do this?	By when?	How do we know we have met our goal?
Example: Using L1 for teaching and learning on a regular basis when I work with students	Bilingual tutor with support from coordinating teacher	End of term 3	Bilingual tutor starts every session by reviewing the previous session in first language and ends each session by summarising key points in L1.
Example: Using the <i>Picture Dictionary for New Learners of English</i> to make sure students know these words.	Teacher aide	End of term 3	Students know all words in dictionary and use a variety of ways to learn vocabulary.
1.			
2.			
3.			