Using ICTs to support learners of EAL

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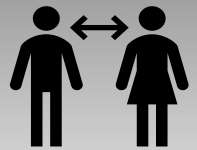
Induction



- Use Google Earth to find out about learners' backgrounds and orient them in their current locality. See the EMTAS Moodle for ideas.
- Gather background information using SEGfL's free online tool. It translates questions about the learner's background into a range of languages (with audio if required).
- Find out about the computer literacy of the learner of EAL and their family, their literacy skills in their first language(s) and the ICT equipment used at home.

Access to the curriculum

- Facilitate collaborative work and ad hoc conversation through apps that provide two-way oral translation eg MS Translator and/or use of AI eg Copilot/Gemini.
- Support access to instructions and English-only texts through online translation.
- Encourage the use of apps/online tools for instant access to dictionaries, thesauri or word clouds eg Dictionary.com and Wordsift.
- Use Widgit symbols (with translation) or The Noun Project to make meaning more explicit, illustrate instructions and generate glossaries.
- Audio-visual materials can be sourced on TrueTube and the BBC Teach YouTube Channel videos.
- Encourage participation through the use of polling tools like Socrative and Plickers.

Blended learning

- Encourage pre-reading of curriculum-related topics in first language by using the drop-down list of languages at the top of a Wikipedia page. Consider using Simple English Wikipedia for learners ready to pre-read in English.
- Rehearse key vocabulary using a tool like Quizlet or ask AI such as Copilot, Gemini, etc to make flashcards/wordlists and activities using them.
- Signpost to online repositories for home-based pre-learning of curriculum-based content eg BBC Bitesize, Oak National Academy or BBC Teach.
- Teach learners/parents how to change YouTube subtitles to their first language and then send links to relevant videos.

Speaking & listening

- Develop oracy in any language by using oral recording devices.
- Use talking avatars like Chatterpix and Voki to promote oral confidence.
- Encourage oral play and storytelling using apps such as Puppet Pals.
- Use Keezy, Audacity, Clipchamp or Microsoft's built-in Sound Recorder to provide oral support and/or to capture children's academic talk digitally.

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Reading & viewing

- Provide books with Talking Pens by borrowing from the EMTAS Resource Centre or purchasing from websites such as Mantra Lingua. Many dual/multilingual eBooks are also available for free online.
- Use translation tools such as Google Translate (including Google Lens for translation of texts) and Microsoft Translator.
- Enable text-to-speech on PCs/Tablets eg Helperbird (Apple) or Immersive Reader (MS Word).
- Provide a pen reader eg a C-Pen so learners can listen to print read aloud – some versions translate too. Exam reader pens are also available.
- Convert printed sources into digital ones using apps such as Google Lens, Microsoft Lens or AI such as Copilot, Gemini, etc.
- Use graphic versions of key texts or create your own using apps like Venngage.

Writing

- Set up keyboards for typing in first language on PCs and digital devices.
- Bridge more formal prose with tools that encourage the production of shorter chunks of language, (eg comics such as Comic Life), the use of infographics and images (eg Canva and the Noun Project) and video annotation (eg Clipchamp, Adobe Spark Video or Movie Markup).
- Record thoughts/speech prior to writing using audio recording devices/apps.
- Stimulate writing through media-rich experiences eg video prompts from the Literacy Shed or virtual experiences like Google Arts & Culture.
- Use digital supports for reading and writing eg Crick software or online glossaries and dictionaries such as the Longman Dictionary or Cambridge Learner's Dictionary.
- Encourage use of speech-to-text tools as a short-cut to typing for learners who need it, eg the *Dictate* option on Microsoft Word or apps such as Speechnotes.
- Provide access to inclusive writing tools eg Book Creator and AI assistants such as Grammarly or teach students how to check their SPaG/register using AI.

Health warning

- Remember learners and their families may not be literate in their first language(s), IT-literate, and/or may not have full access to technology at home.
- ICTs should complement, rather than replace, mainstream teaching.
- Always check the safety of new online sources or use search tools like Kiddle.

Links

- More information on using ICT to support learners of EAL is available in the ICT section of the EMTAS Moodle and in ICT-related articles on the EMTAS Blog.

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