

PLANNING SENIOR YEARS COURSES FOR EAL PURPOSES

(Information taken from Curriculum Framework for English and an Additional Language (EAL) and Literacy, Academics, and Language (LAL) Programming, June 2011 Draft – Section 7: Assessment of EAL and LAL Learners. Available at www.edu.gov.mb.ca)

SENIOR YEARS EAL PLANNING

While the focus of this part of the document is on Senior Years students, many of the ideas and suggestions will apply to other grades. K-8 students will also participate in subject-area learning and need planning that includes content-area outcomes and EAL curriculum learning goals. The EAL-Designated Course Planning Template could also be adapted to guide the development of subject-area learning experiences that combine EAL and content learning in K-8 classrooms.

Although most EAL students acquire English language skills at an accelerated pace, they need to be provided with appropriate learning, experiences and instructional supports. As students develop English language proficiency, they will benefit from a variety of locally developed and Department-developed or –approved courses, including both EAL and non-EAL designated courses. Successful planning is based on an accurate initial assessment of the students’ language proficiency and prior learning, as well as the development of an EAL educational plan. This plan should specify the courses that students will be enrolled in, including EAL-designated, school-initiated, specialized EAL courses, and non-EAL designated courses.

Senior Years EAL and LAL student may have the opportunity to benefit from specialized EAL/LAL courses developed specifically for the acquisition of English. These may be Department-developed and –approved or locally developed school-initiated courses that draw on the EAL/LAL curriculum.

EAL – DESIGNATED COURSES

In addition, both EAL and LAL students may take EAL (“E”) – designated courses. The EAL (“E”) course designation is appropriately used for a Department-developed or –approved course for which the curriculum goals and outcomes (as outlined in the curriculum documents or frameworks for a course) have been significantly rewritten to include language and culture learning goals drawn from the EAL Curriculum framework for one or more students at a specific stage of EAL development. The EAL designation is not be confused with the M course designation, which involves curricular modifications that take into account the learning requirements of students with significant cognitive disabilities. 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.

EAL-designated courses provide students with the opportunity to continue the development of their general English language skills in a specific subject-area classroom or context. As well, they serve to assist the student in developing language skills directly related to that subject, and provide the student with opportunity to develop foundational knowledge and skills for that subject/course. Therefore, the EAL-designated courses weave EAL Curriculum goals and subject-area outcomes. Learners at earlier stages of EAL development who require a greater degree of differentiation and instruction should focus primarily on general English language development rather than on the subject/course knowledge, values, and skills. As students move towards the higher stakes of EAL development, instruction will increasingly focus on academic EAL language skills as well as developing the subject-area knowledge, values and skills that are directly related to the subject/course and that are appropriate for their age-grade level.

The EAL course designation is not intended to restrict access; it is intended to provide EAL students with appropriate programming and the benefits of a variety of Senior Years learning experiences, as well as to facilitate

their successful transition into non-EAL classrooms. The designation does not set limitations on teacher-student contact time nor on the percentage of time students spend in the classroom versus pull-out time. These factors are determined by the learning requirements of the EAL student and the class as a whole in relation to the resources available in each school or school division. The “EAL” designation is not to be applied globally to a full year of study. The EAL designation is not to be used as an afterthought when a student has been unsuccessful in meeting the curriculum outcomes. Use requires planning.

PLANNING FOR EAL LEARNING GOALS AND SUBJECT-AREA OUTCOMES

Planning for an EAL-designated course occurs before a student or group of students at a similar stage of EAL development begin the course. Drawing on the learning goals and descriptors of growth for the student’s current and next stage on the EAL Acquisition Continuum, teachers need to consider the content of the course and how language development and subject-area/course and EAL goals, tasks, and learning resources that are appropriate for the EAL stage of the learner(s). Specialized strategies for enhancing language and subject-area integration should also be noted. Lastly, an assessment plan that specifies EAL and content-area learning criteria and weighting needs to be developed.

The focus of an “E”-designated course is one developing general English language skills and subject-area/course knowledge, values, and skills appropriate for a particular stage of EAL development. Teacher need to decide which aspects of the course will be covered, which will need to be rewritten, and which will be deleted, considering the subject-area outcomes from the standpoint of essential learnings, or what students **must** know, **should** know, and **could** know. It is important to consider not only which topics or content to cover, but also to what depth and complexity.

For example, students at beginning levels of EAL development require resources and teaching approaches that provide a great deal of context and involve “hands-on” activities, as well as subject-area concepts and vocabulary that are more concrete and involve less complexity. As a result, the focus should be on developing foundational vocabulary and text patterns related to the course, and exploring essential or core concepts, language and skills. Students at later stages of their language development will have the language skills to interact with more complex texts and relate to concepts that are more abstract.

Note: Stage 1 and many Stage 2 Senior Years EAL learners usually will not have the language skills to engage successfully in general subject-area classes, except those that have a strong “hands-on” component (e.g., physical education, art, music, foods). Even these classes will require language support and preparation for safe and successful participation. LAL students will need opportunities to build foundational academic concepts before they can engage in general Senior Years courses and will need ongoing literacy support (See Sections 5 and 6).

WEIGHTING OF EAL AND SUBJECT-AREA LEARNING FOR EVALUATION PURPOSES

As an “E” designated course combines both EAL curriculum goals and subject-area outcomes, the evaluation of student learning should reflect the balance of the two aspects of learning found in the course. At the earlier stages of EAL/LAL learning, emphasis will be placed on general English language development and foundational subject-area language, especially vocabulary. As students develop greater EAL skills and move towards age-/grade-appropriate language skills, greater focus will be placed on academic language and subject-area outcomes. The table below provides a **suggested** weighting of EAL goals and subject-area outcomes for each EAL stage. The subject-area portion is based on the adapted subject-area outcomes, knowledge and skills.

Senior Years EAL Stage 1	EAL 70%	Subject Area 30%
Senior Years EAL Stage 2	EAL 60%	Subject Area 40%
Senior Years EAL Stage 3	EAL 40%	Subject Area 60%

Note: As this weighting indicates, a Stage 3 or 4 learner could be achieving the majority of the subject-area outcomes in addition to a continued emphasis on EAL learning; therefore, this student may actually receive the regular F, S, or G designation for the course. A student who begins a course with an EAL designation may make rapid progress in language learning and meet the majority of the subject-area outcomes by the end of the course. In this case, the course designation would change to the regular one.

The following chart summarizes the factors involved in planning for a Senior Years EAL-designated course, but the same process can be used for any grade and content area; when the emphasis shifts to a majority of content-area outcomes, with ongoing considerations for language learning, the regular designation is appropriate.

