

# TESOL

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**ACCESSING THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM:  
TOOLS FOR TEACHERS OF EALD LEARNERS**

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## **ACCESSING THE AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM: TOOLS FOR TEACHERS OF EALD LEARNERS**

# BACKGROUND

- Rollout of Australian Curriculum
- Recently approved and released National resource for working with EAL/D children
- States & Territories use their own scales
- Impact of the National resource on teachers' curriculum plan and assessment of learning?
  - EAL/D = English as an Additional Language or Dialect

# THE MAIN RESOURCES REFERRED TO IN THIS STUDY ARE:

- ESL Scales (AEC, 1994)
- ESL Scope and Scales (SACSA)
  - Replaced in 2013 by the Language and Literacy Levels.
- ESL companion to the English VELs (VCAA, 2005)\*
- ESL continuum for the VELs (DEECD, 2007)
  - Now known as the “EAL continuum”
- EAL/D companion to Australian Curriculum (ACARA, 2012)
- ESL Bandscales (McKay, Hudson & Sapuppo, 1994)
- Bandscales for ESL learners (Education Queensland)
  - Since renamed the “EQ Bandscales for EAL/D learners”
- NLLIA ESL Bandscales (McKay, 1992)
- Bandscales for ATSI Learners (Education Queensland, 1999)

# PAST AND RECENT RESEARCH

- 1990s - many teachers, even ESL teachers, did not know of or use the scales
- In response to the “literacy crisis” many continua and scales were released for English first language
- In NSW (2013) - ESL the most pressing professional development need
- Internationally - little known about how scales are actually used

# PROCEDURE

- 2012 – Stage 1 – online survey
- Teachers in ACT, SA and Qld
- 43 questions – free response and multiple choice
- Late 2013 - Stage 2 - interviews

# QUESTIONS

- Do teachers know of the existence of scales and standards for EAL/D learners?
- How do schools and teachers respond to and use the scales?
- Are mainstream and EAL/D teachers using the new National Resource, and in which ways?
  - EAL/D = English as an Additional Language or Dialect

# EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS

Setting	Sub-category	Number
Mainstream PS		7
Mainstream HS		14
Special ESL school		18
	Pull out classes	14
ESL specialist in school	Parallel classes	13
	Team teaching	25
Other		27
Total		118



# PRE-SERVICE QUALIFICATIONS

Qualification	Qld	SA	ACT
4 year B.Ed.	11	5	28
Bachelor degree + Dip. Ed.	14	3	8
Bachelor degree + 2 year Master/Bachelor of Teaching	3	2	4
Other qualifications	9	2	13
No qualification	0	0	1

# PD OR UNI STUDY IN TESOL?

Course undertaken	Number
ESL in the mainstream (2 'for Early Years')	43
Teaching ESL Students in Mainstream Classrooms	22
Graduate Certificate in TESOL	20
Graduate Diploma in TESOL	8
Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults	4
Teaching English to New Arrivals	2
How language works	6
Masters of Education/TESOL/Applied Linguistics	6
Other	26
None (19%)	20

## ALSO FOUND IN NSW

- Only 27% received training in ESL before entering the workforce
- Only 30% had received professional training in ESL
  - Study by Watkins et al (2013)
  - Survey of ~5,000 teachers in all settings

# WHAT MEASURES DO YOU REPORT AGAINST FOR ENGLISH?

ACT	EAL/D teachers	Mainstream teachers
Regular mainstream English syllabus/ PM Benchmarks/ Australian curriculum (English)	9	19
ESL scales	5	3
ACT EALD moderation tasks/language performance ratings/ EALD program manual/ ACT BSSS ESL framework	4	3
I don't write reports/NA or no response		
EAL/D companion to Australian curriculum	3	1

# QUEENSLAND

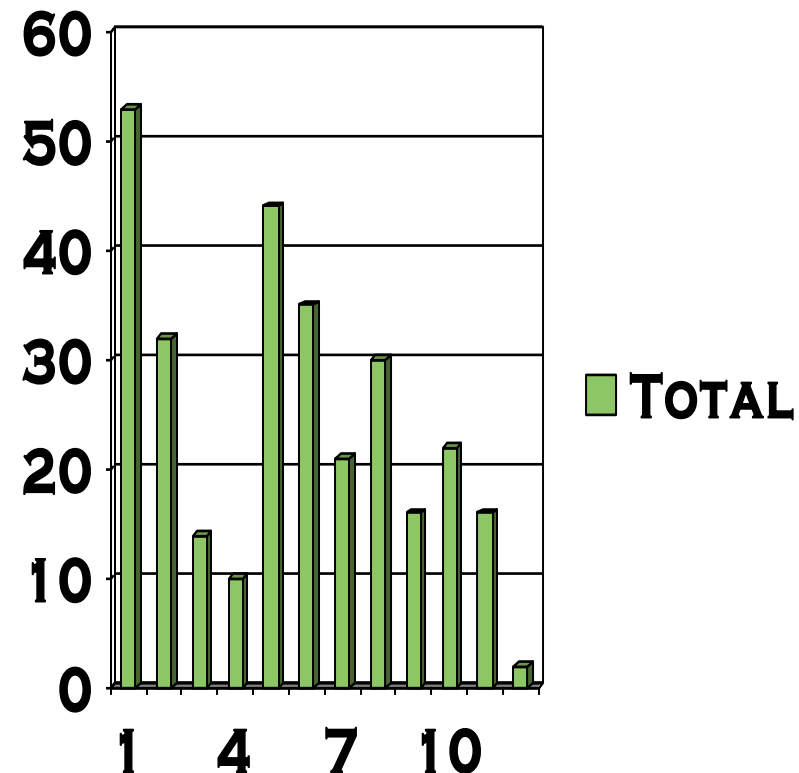
EAL/D resource	EAL/D teachers	Mainstream teachers
Qld Bandscales	12	1
NLLIA ESL Bandscales	7	1
Mainstream English A-E	1	0
N/A or no answer	0	3
ISQ Bandscales		1
Both Bandscales and A-E (A-E for school, Bandscales for district)	6	1

# SOUTH AUSTRALIA

EAL/D resources	EAL/D teachers	Mainstream teachers
SACSA ESL Scope and Scales	4	6
Achievement Standards (A-E Grades)	1	1

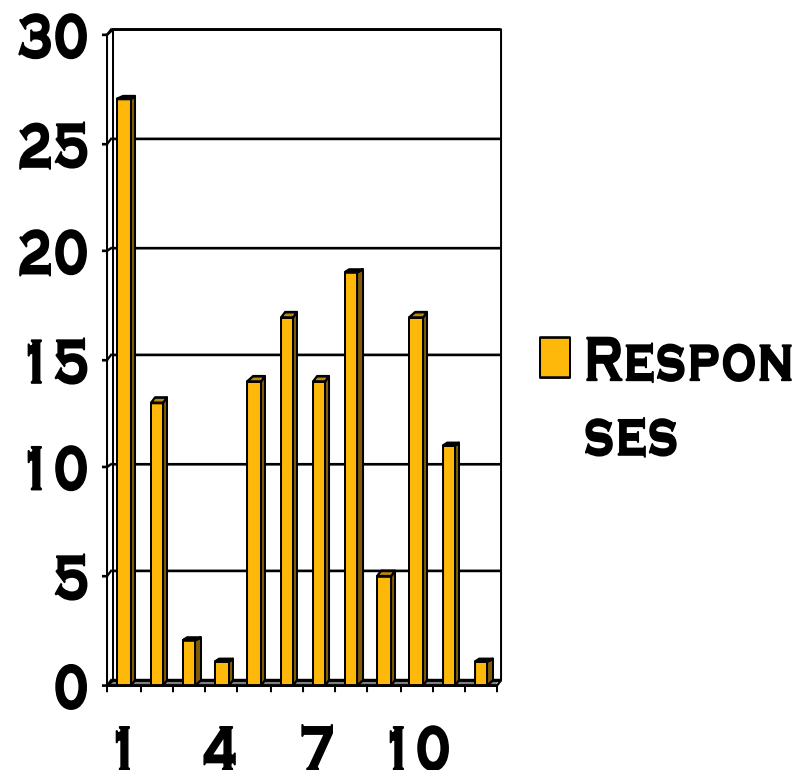
# ASSESSMENTS RESPONDENTS HAVE HEARD OF

1. ESL Scales
2. ESL Scope and Scales (SACSA)
3. ESL companion to the English VELs
4. ESL continuum for the VELs
5. EAL/D companion doc to Aus Curric
6. ESL Bandscales
7. Bandscales for ESL learners
8. NLLIA ESL Bandscales
9. Bandscales for ATSI Learners
10. NLLIA Bandscales Ver 2
11. NLLIA Bandscales Ver 2 pre-scales (low literacy)
12. other



# ASSESSMENTS RESPONDENTS HAVE USED

1. ESL Scales
2. ESL Scope and Scales (SACSA)
3. ESL companion to the English VELs
4. ESL continuum for the VELs
5. EAL/D companion doc to Aus Curric
6. ESL Bandscales
7. Bandscales for ESL learners
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# PURPOSES FOR USE OF SCALES

Purpose	Not important	Quite important	Very important
to monitor progress	3	28	32
to inform classroom practice	2	30	31
to report to parents	11	30	22
to make decisions about each child's future	9	26	28
to provide information for the teachers at the child's next school	5	27	31
to provide information for the school principal	7	31	25
to provide information for the education system at a State level	9	27	25
for discussions with the student's mainstream teacher about progress	4	30	30

# REASONS FOR NOT USING THE SCALES?

- Most teachers are not familiar with the scales - used by school's EALD teacher only
- Once students are in mainstream they are assessed against mainstream criteria. Comments on student progress take note of EAL/D factors
- Use of a scale is mandatory for moderation, but optional at a school level.
- Our students are at the higher end of the Bandscales. As such they can be reported on using criteria for subjects that also provide comments on word choice, ability to express themselves clearly ...

# NEED TO KEEP TEACHERS INFORMED

- I had heard about the ESL scales when doing a prac at a primary IEC\* whilst at uni. When I became a teacher librarian I realised that we didn't have a copy in the school so I bought one and referred it to our ESL teacher. She was unaware of them at that time but commented how useful they were. As far as I know, she is the only person at our school who uses them.
  - \* Intensive English Centre

# IT'S COMPLICATED!

- Ed Dept, school principal and teachers in the school are familiar with the ACT ESL moderations tasks and understand the meanings of the scores 1 - 5 and their implications for funding and staffing. The EALD document is useful to me as a teacher - to assess levels, assess progress and plan future work. There is a strong focus on First Steps at our school and I am meant to be using that - however, it is not always relevant to the EALD students needs. (sic)

# RETURNING TO OUR QUESTIONS

- Do teachers know of the existence of scales and standards for EAL/D learners?
  - 90% of respondents had heard of them BUT
  - Nearly half have no or little knowledge of their use
  - 25% had never used one
- How do schools and teachers respond to and use scales?
  - to monitor progress,
  - to inform classroom practices
  - for discussions with the students' mainstream teacher about progress
  - for funding purposes
- Are mainstream and EAL/D teachers using the new National Resource, and in which ways?
  - See results from interviews, following

# QUEENSLAND TEACHER 1 (HS)

- “in Queensland it hasn’t been mandated...is it’s pretty much up to the school to decide whether they’re going to use those documents or not...we are actually working off those documents, so we as a unit are probably more compliant than the English Department...in Education Queensland, we’re still reporting on Band Scales. That’s the document that’s up on the Education Queensland website, that’s the data that we’re being asked to send in

# QLD TEACHER 2 – INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

- So one of the reasons behind trying to become more familiar with this and then share it with staff, was to raise awareness and understanding of these children, the presence of these children in classrooms, but the thing that I really love about the resource is the considerations and the strategies. So anyway, we did that in our January PL days.

# QLD TEACHER 2 – INDEPENDENT SCHOOL

- because personally and professionally I don't believe that four Scales are enough.
- *You need to regard this continuum, emerging for example, doesn't equate to Band Scales 1 and 2.* I didn't want them to think that eight Scales fit neatly into four, so I was quite adamant in getting that point across,



## QLD TEACHER 3 - PRIMARY SCHOOL

- I've also found it really helpful for working with teachers, to explain where their child is at, because they just say they're hopeless, they don't know anything, and then you can show, *Well they're not actually that hopeless, they can already do this, and this is where we're going next,* and you can give them some sort of guidance as to what they can do to help

# ACT TEACHER 1

- I think it will actually be easier because I think one of the things about the Scales was that they were really complicated, and nobody actually really understood them very well, and people who had qualifications in ESL had some understanding of how they worked, but mainstream teachers didn't really, because the language was so academic, and it was such a complicated document, I think that it was just too hard to explain it to mainstream teachers, so they never really knew where their students were really at.

# ACT TEACHER 1

- With this document having the four sort of areas or stages, I suppose, with the more simple, more standard English kind of names, and just more easily understood English, I think not only will it help EALD teachers, but also mainstream teachers, and also talking to parents about it, because I think the language will be more accessible

## ACT TEACHER 2

- I think at this school we've got a lot of kids who are ESL, so at the beginning there's sort of guidelines for class teachers, which is really useful for sort of tuning them in, and things like the fact that you need to do the foregrounding making sure the kids have the understanding of what you're talking about, a context for it, and the vocabulary, and that sort of thing is really useful...I would say hopefully 75% would know it exists, and I would say 50% would have actually used it with me.

## ACT TEACHER 2

- when it came out as a draft we had a look at it as a school, so I was asked to do a presentation about it...I think what it did was it made everybody use the same language...sort of what they'd been to college with, or what they'd heard around, but it also made them focus on thinking about their EALD students as not so much of a deficit now, they don't have English, but more about what do they bring

# CONCLUSIONS

- Lack of knowledge and use of scales reported 20 years ago is confirmed
- This can disadvantage EAL/D students
- Need for professional learning
- The new resource has potential for greater uptake and use, especially among mainstream teachers

# IMPLICATIONS

- Teacher educators need to alert our pre service and in service teachers to the existence of EALD resources and apprentice them into their use.
- Thanks for listening!
- Questions?