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WJE 2006: Call for papers: Pacific education, Research and practice

The Waikato Journal of Education is a well-established peer reviewed publication that has quality articles on a range of topics related to education.

New Zealand has a strong presence in Pacific education, and Pacific communities have a strong presence in New Zealand schools. However, opportunities for publication of Pacific research in mainstream journals are limited. Therefore, this call for papers seeks articles that focus on Pacific education; both research and practice. Pacific research is reflective of the traditions of the past, as well as the present and future. It often embodies different paradigms, perspectives and critical stances that are not always captured in mainstream research and aims to benefit Pacific communities. Articles will be welcomed that theorise about Pacific research, report on research projects, report on an innovative practice or initiative, or a combination of any of these. As well as traditional manuscripts, the journal welcomes submissions in other formats, such as short stories, poetry and drawings.

Submissions please to Timote Vaoleti (vaoleti@waikato.ac.nz) and Jane Strachan (jane@waikato.ac.nz), School of Education, The University of Waikato, PB 3105, Hamilton. Please submit 3 blind copies and a separate page with author/s contact details by 30 April 2006. Electronic submissions also accepted for consideration.

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PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE LITERACY PRACTICE FOR EAL STUDENTS IN NEW ZEALAND CLASSROOMS¹

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ABSTRACT *The New Zealand Ministry of Education has recently identified the need for teachers to be prepared to meet the needs of English as an additional language (EAL)² students in New Zealand schools more effectively. This paper offers a number of principles to guide policy, practice and teacher development. The paper draws on Alton-Lee's (2003) best evidence synthesis of quality teaching for diverse students, and Franken and McComish's (2003a, 2003b) observations and analysis of provisions for EAL students in New Zealand schools. The principles, grounded in second language and literacy acquisition research, point to the need to provide particular enabling conditions for the literacy development of EAL students if they are to achieve as well as their English-speaking peers.*

KEY WORDS

EAL, Language and literacy, ESOL programmes

INTRODUCTION

The New Zealand Ministry of Education's literacy initiative (part of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategy), in place now for some six years, has effectively targeted teachers of students in years one to four. It has, more recently, extended research, policy and professional development into later primary and secondary education. The brief of the strategy has very much been to improve the teaching of literacy in mainstream or 'everyday' classrooms. As the Ministry of Education states: "While there will always be some students who need specialist teaching at some stage of their literacy journey, most students will become successful readers and writers if they experience high-quality teaching in their everyday classrooms" (Ministry of Education, 2004a, Definition of Literacy section, ¶2).

The Ministry, possibly in response to significantly low literacy achievement levels reported for students who are not first language speakers of English in such international studies as PISA (OECD, 2001), has identified the need to address effective teaching of literacy for EAL students. It states, "Within the context of the Literacy Strategy, the language and literacy programmes for students who are speakers of languages other than English are also being reviewed, refined, and expanded so that the particular needs of specific groups of students can be met more effectively" (Ministry of Education, 2004b, Changing Focus section, ¶3).

This paper is timely in that it outlines a number of principles of good literacy practice for EAL students. The principles are referenced to research in second

language acquisition. This is appropriate and possible given the broad understanding of literacy that underpins the Literacy Strategy which is as follows: “Literacy is the ability to use and understand those language forms required by society and valued by individuals and communities” (Ministry of Education, 2004a, Definition of Literacy section, ¶1).

In addition to providing a much needed second language perspective on literacy, this paper also seeks to bring together understandings from several sources (Alton-Lee, 2003; Franken & McComish, 2003a, 2003b) that offer insights into issues relevant to EAL teaching. The principles are derived from the broader examination of school practices, classroom pedagogies and curriculum planning related to EAL students in New Zealand schools (Franken & McComish, 2003a, 2003b). Franken and McComish (2003a) sought to identify categories of good practice that relate specifically to addressing the language learning needs of EAL students as discussed in Franken and McComish (2003b), and nest those within broader considerations of effective provisions for diverse students (Alton-Lee, 2003). Appendix 1 sets out the way in which principles of good practice from these different sources have been integrated. For the purpose of this paper, the principles relating more specifically to literacy acquisition have been selected and are listed below. They are as follows:

1. School practices and policies are inclusive of all languages and cultures and build on these as resources for learning.
2. EAL curriculum goals, resources and pedagogical practices are aligned with other curriculum teaching and school activities.
3. Goals for EAL learners are age appropriate and are not limited to performance in easier contexts or on easier objectives.
4. Student learning strategies and styles from other language backgrounds and educational contexts are built on constructively.
5. Students are given sufficient exposure to language input and opportunities to use language.
6. Learners are given language opportunities that allow for significant repetitions and expansion of use.
7. Learners are given explicit and focused instruction on all aspects of language.
8. The specification of content of EAL teaching is comprehensive and based on research in second language learning in school contexts.
9. In particular, academic vocabulary development and a knowledge of a wide range of academic genres are targeted.

The paper discusses each of the principles in depth and provides examples of the way in which programmes can, and in some cases do, put these principles into practice. Examples of practice are drawn from Franken and McComish (2003b), which analysed data relating to ESOL³ provision from two sources: verification reports⁴, and on-site interviews and observations. School reports from 126 primary,

16 intermediate and 52 secondary schools were analysed, while interview and observational data was gathered from 12 primary, 3 intermediate and 8 secondary schools.

1. School Practices and Policies are Inclusive of all Languages and Cultures and Build on Those as Resources for Learning

Both general language proficiency and literacy skills in students' first languages should be regarded as resources to support the learning of, and learning in, English. There is official support for maintaining and using first languages other than English in New Zealand schools. For instance, *English in the National Curriculum* discusses English for students from language backgrounds other than English and recommends that "the first language and culture of each student should be incorporated in English programmes" and that "students should initially use their first language and move between that language and English" (Ministry of Education, 1994, p. 15). This statement effectively places the first language (L1) as a temporary bridge to English. However, there is a considerable research base that promotes a more prominent and sustained role for the first language alongside English as a second language, the development of academic and formal uses of the first language as well as of English (Corson, 1990), and the establishment of basic literacy skills in the first language before that in English continues (Crandall, 1997, Cummins, 2000). This is particularly the case where there is little linguistic distance between the L1 and the second/additional (L2) language (Elder & Davies, 1998).

In bilingual approaches the use of the students' first language is encouraged because it is considered to facilitate language and conceptual development in general, thus leading to improved educational outcomes. Facility with academic and formal uses of language is important in terms of accessing and articulating content learning. The continued development of literacy skills in the first language has particular benefits for second language literacy.

It would seem in New Zealand, as in Britain (Harris, 1999), the expectation in most schools is that maintenance and development of first language proficiency and literacy is largely a community or family responsibility. Bilingual language and literacy development is not directly supported in most schools to any extent, and is not seriously factored into learning contexts and goals as a permanent aspect of a student's educational programme (Franken & McComish, 2003b).

Franken and McComish (2003b) found that, in most schools, the bilingual educational experience is very limited unless there happen to be numbers of students from the same country in the same class who continue to work together in their first language. However, there are some schools which support students in their early years of schooling with bilingual assistants or teacher aides who speak the children's first language, so that English language learning and access to curriculum learning can be developed through fluency in the child's first language. This can be particularly effective when the class is relatively homogenous in terms of first language background. Bilingual teacher aides, if closely connected to the local community, can strengthen school and community networks, particularly if they have extended roles in community liaison or homework centres, for example.

Some New Zealand secondary schools have developed special curriculum area classes for EAL students with bilingual staff, or staff who have expertise in second language teaching as well as in the curriculum area. These teachers tend to use a number of the features associated with sheltered instruction⁵. However, based on numbers provided by schools in the verification reports, only about 10 percent of teaching staff in secondary schools (most of whom are teacher aides) are reported as being bilingual (Franken & McComish, 2003b).

Other secondary schools put together programmes of support that approximate to the approach Crandall (1997) considers to be the second most effective; that is, late-exit bilingual education + sheltered instruction + second language instruction. The students receiving this type of programme are relatively recent arrivals with a full education to that point in their first language, plus some prior learning of English as a foreign language. At school here, they receive second language instruction by ESOL teachers, and they are also taught by bilingual teachers in some content areas, who provide some bilingual language use, build on the first language knowledge and also provide a form of sheltered instruction.

These initiatives aim to use the first languages and literacy skills of students to access curriculum content and ultimately aim to develop proficiency in English, not bilingual proficiency or biliteracy.

2. EAL Curriculum Goals, Resources and Pedagogical Practices are Aligned with other Curriculum Teaching and School Activities

Curricular integration is an important characteristic of quality second language teaching (Corson, 1988). What this means for language programmes is that EAL organisation, goals and instruction should be aligned and integrated with other curriculum teaching and school activities, as should first language maintenance and development.

Although many schools are aware of the need for cross-curricular language development, they often find it difficult to fully align all their practices to facilitate it in the best way (ERO, 2001, cited in Alton-Lee, 2003; Franken & McComish, 2003b). To have an effective ESOL programme, the challenge for schools is to identify appropriate goals and outcomes for children in the programme which complement wider curriculum goals and which, at the same time, also recognise the particular nature of second language development. This is difficult to achieve if the most common use of funding for EAL students is in the form of withdrawal sessions managed by a teacher's aide (Franken & McComish, 2003b). While withdrawal sessions can allow for focused instruction, that instruction is not always fully meaningful in relation to the curriculum.

In-class support ideally allows for teachers and a teacher aide to work in tandem on a well planned shared programme, with shared lesson plans but with different language outcomes and with different pathways to achieving those outcomes. If schools do not have the resources to give a great deal of in-class support, it is critical that class programmes and ESOL programmes are cross-referenced. This requires a commitment on the part of the class teacher to communicate with the ESOL teacher who is organising and teaching withdrawal

sessions. The ESOL teacher has an important role in providing feedback to the class teacher.

One of the most effective ways in which alignment with curriculum can be achieved is through sheltered instruction, mentioned above. In Franken and McComish's (2003b) study, one low decile intermediate school was observed to have an effective sheltered instruction programme operating in two classes, one at year 7 and one at year 8, including both Ministry of Education-funded and foreign fee-paying students. The syllabus in each of these classes was aligned with that of other classes at the same level. However, intensive and focused language instruction complemented content instruction. Each of the classes was supported by a full-time bilingual teacher aide.

3. Goals for L2 Learners are Age Appropriate and are not Limited to Performance in Easier Contexts or on Easier Objectives

Alton-Lee observes that international evidence "emphasises the complexity of teacher expectations and affirms the principle that teachers need high expectations for all learners but high expectations in themselves do not go far enough. High expectations need to be supported by effective and appropriate pedagogical approaches" (2003, p. 20).

In the case of L2 learners, there are increased hazards for teachers in developing appropriate expectations supported by appropriate pedagogical approaches. Low expectations of educational achievement are often held for L2 learners, especially if they are not of European ethnicity (Alton-Lee, 2003; Phillips, McNaughton & MacDonald, 2000). Teachers need to recognize that students are capable of functioning at a high level cognitively but that language is a barrier to either the comprehension of the task or the production of output for the task. Research has shown that language demands can be lowered while cognitive demands remain at a high level, thus engaging students in meaningful learning (Franken & Watson, 1996; Zhang, 1987).

A further hazard in developing appropriate expectations and pedagogy in New Zealand for teaching EAL students of various ages has been the application of procedures associated with teaching reading to L1 students in the lower primary school. Analysis of verification reports and observations in Franken and McComish (2003b) indicates a heavy reliance on materials designed for teaching literacy to L1 students of English, including commercially produced reading programmes such as Rainbow readers, Sunshine readers and the Bannatyne reading programme. Programmes that were less frequently reported included the Jolly Phonics series, Duffy Books, Curriculum Concepts and the SRA series (Franken & McComish, 2003b).

Figure 1 below shows key differences between L1 new entrant students, for whom reading materials such as the *Ready to Read* series and associated practices have been designed, and beginning L2 learners of English at ages 9 and 13 who have had full education to that point in their L1. The very marked differences in their patterns of abilities and development suggest how inappropriate it may be to transfer practices designed for one group to the second group at different age levels.

Figure 1. Key Differences Between L1 and L2 Students of English

Key skills	L1 new entrants aged 5	L2 beginners aged 9	L2 beginners aged 13
Oral English vocabulary: approx. no. of words used in speech	1000 ⁶	less than 100	less than 100
Ability to comprehend spoken English	fluent	almost none	almost none
Ability to produce spoken English	fluent	almost none	almost none
Ability to read	none	becoming fluent in L1	fluent in L1
Ability to write	none	becoming fluent in L1	fluent in L1
Cognitive development	typical of 5-year-old	typical of 9-year-old	typical of 13-year-old
Knowledge base	limited	widening	approaching adult

If L2 learners in New Zealand schools often have ESOL sessions based on readers that are designed for students who are much younger than themselves, and who have a completely different pattern of language skills, it is impossible to have reasonable expectations and objectives for them. In other words, the goals are not age appropriate and are limited to performance in easier contexts and on easier objectives.

It is just as likely that teachers also hold unreasonably high expectations of the likely rate of L2 learners achieving national norms in academic uses of English. There is clear evidence that L2 students will normally take at least 5 to 7 years, or even more, to fully reach national norms in academic English (Collier, 1989; Cummins, 2001; Wong-Fillmore & Snow, 2000; Wylie, Thompson & Lythe, 2001), yet the extra ESOL funding from the Ministry of Education to schools in respect of EAL students is only available for 3 to 5 years, and ceases when they are approaching national norms. Based on the expected times to reach national norms, teachers need to be monitoring EAL students' English language development and providing support after special ESOL funding ceases.

Apart from ESOL sessions, for the majority of the school week L2 students are immersed in a classroom environment where the cognitive level is appropriate, but the language environment is so far beyond their abilities that what they are able to learn from it is patchy both for content and language. In mainstream classes the

goals for the L2 learners are age appropriate and are not limited to performance in easier contexts or on easier objectives but the pedagogical practices do not support EAL learners' full participation in this environment.

It is possible to enable L2 learners to learn effectively in mainstream age appropriate environments by the skilful use of pedagogical tools such as varied tasks, team teaching, student groupings, various types of language support, etcetera. The challenge in providing quality teaching for L2 students is to correctly address and allow for their different patterns of language skills, while at the same time enabling them to learn curriculum knowledge and skills at an age appropriate level. In Victoria, Australia, the ESL companion, which provides age and second language appropriate objectives for EAL students and sits alongside the mainstream English Curriculum and Standards Framework, actually allows for teachers to avoid searching for outcomes at the lower levels of the English Curriculum and Standards Framework (see www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/curriculumatwork/esl/es_assess.htm).

4. Student Learning Strategies and Styles from Other Language Backgrounds and Educational Contexts are Built on Constructively

When second language learners enter New Zealand classrooms they bring with them strategies and styles from other languages and cultures. This provides an opportunity for teachers to build constructively on these existing skills as well as introducing them to practices typical of New Zealand and English speaking contexts. For example, Escamilla and Coady (2001) found that bilingual English/Spanish school students were sometimes penalised because their English writing reflected unrecognised Spanish genres and patterns of discourse. If, however, teachers engage with the students and their communities over their writing, such differences will not go unrecognised. Rather than eradicate the L1 discourse pattern, it can be developed and analysed comparatively with related English discourse patterns. This has the added advantage of equipping the student with metacognitive strategies and enables a fruitful cross referencing of the two languages.

Students who enter New Zealand schools after a number of years of education in another country will undoubtedly also have a number of learning strategies common to their culture or their educational environment. In particular, teachers should be aware that in many countries there is a much more highly developed tradition of second language learning than in New Zealand, and students and their families may bring some unfamiliar but successful strategies with them. For instance, in some countries there is a tradition of imitation, memorisation and repetition in education. This was once a feature of English speaking education also but is rarely used now. The fear is that such practices result in mindless learning, and that students may repeat chunks of text without understanding. However, provided students do move on to engage meaningfully with what they memorise, these memorisation strategies can be very helpful for both language and content learning. The challenge for the teacher again, is not to seek to eradicate things that learners already know but to help them to use these skills productively in a new

environment. At the same time it is important that students are assisted to develop strategies which are highly valued in our culture, such as interacting with the teacher on curriculum content, expressing opinions and generating questions.

5. Students are Given Sufficient Exposure to Language Input and Opportunities to Use Language

Research in second language learning has concerned itself largely with three facilitating conditions for second language acquisition: input, interaction and output (e.g., Swain, 1995).

Within this research history, it is generally agreed that students need language input that is comprehensible and provides access to meaning. Much teaching in classrooms continues to be teacher led and, therefore, exposes students to large quantities of oral input over the course of a school day (Keum & Lewis, 2000). However, much of this input is not particularly comprehensible to EAL students, not only at the level of grammar and vocabulary, but also at the level of discourse (somewhat predictable and conventionalised ways of interacting in classrooms), and at the level of pragmatics – the way in which language is used to carry out specific speech acts such as to request or to apologise. Written text, as a more stable and permanent record of language, must be seen as a major source and maybe more desirable form of language input. Hence reading must be regarded as a source of language learning as well as a skill in itself. This places the onus on teachers to carefully select reading material that will fulfill the criterion of being comprehensible and at the same time just beyond the students' level of proficiency (Krashen, 1985). Given the importance of input of a particular nature, a surprisingly infrequently used procedure in ESOL programmes is the use of student generated/teacher modified texts. The procedure of a student text being modified or reformulated by a teacher and used as input parallels the oral procedure of recasting which has received considerable attention in the second language acquisition (SLA) literature (see Nicholas, Lightbown & Spada, 2001, for a review).

In addition to much suitable input, students need opportunities to use language to which they have been exposed, and they need to do this in interactions that force them to test and refine their output under the communicative pressure of having to negotiate meaning. However, what seems to be lacking, particularly beyond the junior primary school, are opportunities to use output and to engage in interaction. The mainstream teachers observed by Franken and McComish (2003b) did not use a wide range of teaching techniques to enhance comprehension or student output. What was observed in these classes matched the findings of a small study of twelve mainstream classes, each with some EAL students, in a New Zealand secondary school (Keum & Lewis, 2000, p. 5). In order of frequency, the main activities in these twelve Year 12 classes were: following spoken explanations, answering oral questions, following spoken instructions, completing worksheets, note-taking from teacher talk and correcting work by listening (Keum & Lewis, 2000).

6. Learners are Given Language Opportunities that Allow for Significant Repetitions and Expansion of Use

As mentioned above, one basic principle of second language acquisition is the exposure to sufficient and accessible language input. Language learning also requires frequent use (through both production and comprehension) of language items. To help students achieve this, teachers must ensure that learners repeatedly engage with targeted language items. This means that for a teacher the approach to language development and language teaching content is not a linear one. For example, on the level of a simple pairing of words with meanings (expressed in translations, definitions or visual images, for example) some word-meaning pairs may be learned immediately but, in general, 16 or more repetitions may be required before the pairing is permanently learned (Schmitt, 2000, p. 137). These repetitions must be spaced correctly – over a period of days and weeks – in order to make learning permanent.

Students must also be given opportunities for expansion in use of language items. For instance, with the case of word learning, more than a simple pairing of form with basic meaning is involved. Words have a range of meanings, conceptual relationships, collocations, conditions for appropriate use and structural patterns associated with them. It takes time and repetition to expand the initial basic word knowledge into a full working knowledge of all aspects of each word (Nation, 1990). Similar principles apply to learning the structural resources of a language, at the level of the sentence and of larger texts such as discussions, narratives, descriptions of objects or processes and so on.

The teacher then has the task of providing for appropriately spaced repetition, at the same time as constantly expanding the scope of language items covered and introducing new items – both in production and comprehension, and in expanding and varying contexts. In other words, students are progressively put in situations where they expand their knowledge of language by using it in a range of different contexts. They are assisted to meet the challenges of these contexts and to develop appropriate linguistic responses. To achieve this repetition and contextual variation for the students, the teacher must be able to devise and control many different tasks and task arrangements. One ESOL teacher observed had her Year 10 class of recently arrived beginners working very productively with a cycle of reading, vocabulary, listening, speaking and writing tasks around short narratives plus evaluating comments (Franken & McComish, 2003b). The work was varied and useful and the students made obvious progress within the space of an hour. This was achieved through the teacher's skill in working with language tasks. She had no special materials or equipment, and the students worked on the basis of less than half a page of printed material, which the teacher thoroughly exploited. Because of her ability to teach in this way, the students were able to use new vocabulary, sentence and text patterns in reading, writing, speaking and listening. They were also interacting with each other and with the teacher.

Nystrand (cited in Abt-Perkins & Gomez, 1998, p. 11) suggests more specifically that teachers need to engage in the practice of “eliciting, sustaining, and extending student initiated contributions” in both written and spoken form, so that

students can articulate content through language in an academically appropriate way. This may be particularly important for vocabulary acquisition. Laufer and Hulstijn (2001) analysed a number of studies of vocabulary acquisition through incidental learning and concluded that what made for an effective task was the 'involvement load' of the student with the word during the course of the task. The more effective tasks involved selecting meaning from several options, looking meaning(s) up in dictionaries, doing vocabulary exercises, using words in original sentences and in writing, and negotiating meaning through interaction. In less effective tasks, meanings were given to students, students read without looking up or investigating words, and there was no negotiation or need for output.

This principle of providing for opportunities to revisit and re-use language items in increasing contexts is somewhat constrained by timetabling of ESOL classes. In primary schools where the ESOL programme is not a scheduled subject, and time can range from less than half an hour to one hour per week (Franken & McComish, 2003b), instruction is often too disjointed, too short or too spaced in time to achieve careful repetition and recycling of language items. Some schools effectively try to concentrate time in fewer sessions of longer duration during the week. For instance, one low decile primary school was observed to allocate one day of in class support for the EAL children in junior classes every week, rather than using funding to withdraw children. Other scheduling options can be to place learners into a 10-week intensive programme, which operates for half of the school day or the whole day, as one high decile intermediate school does with its phase one learners. In this school, the focus of the programme is one of acquiring general language and beginning learning through English in the area of Mathematics.

7. Learners are Given Explicit and Focused Instruction on all Aspects of Language

Exposure to English, and immersion within a classroom in which English is spoken, is not a sufficient condition for learning the language needed for academic learning. This conclusion arises from studying children in immersion programmes in Canada (e.g., Swain & Lapkin, 1982). Language items need to be targeted for attention in language learning sessions, whether they be in-class or withdrawal. Students' attention must be drawn to those items. However, this is not to be done in isolation or in a decontextualised way. Focus on forms of language (whether they be at the level of pronunciation, grammar, features of texts or genres) should be integrated with attention to use and meaning.

Lightbown (1998) states:

[R]esearch on classroom-based second language learning has shown positive results for learners who have experienced an integration of forms and meanings in their instructional environment. ...Research in intensive ESL classes with young francophone learners has shown that teachers who focus learners' attention on specific language features during the interactive, communicative activities of the class are more effective than those who never focus on language form or who do so only in isolated

‘grammar lessons’...These effective teachers tend to provide focus on form on the fly, without causing the interaction to be interrupted or learners to be discouraged. (pp. 191-192)

Language across the curriculum professional development programmes, such as LTL (Learning through Language), have enabled a number of secondary curriculum area teachers in particular to identify aspects of language form, as well as content, in their planning and teaching.

8. The Specification of Content of EAL Teaching is Comprehensive and Based on Research in Second Language Learning in School Contexts

A focus on language form at many levels can be facilitated by reference to a language syllabus or curriculum. A curriculum or syllabus for language needs to reflect research understandings about the nature of development of second language and literacy, and also needs to acknowledge all aspects of language (such as in Graves, 1996). Such a syllabus does not exist at a national level, although the Ministry of Education is currently initiating such a development.

Currently, an inability to appreciate the full range of objective needs of EAL students has led some teachers to focus on narrow concerns in the curriculum planning and assessment of EAL students, such as the focus on grammatical form through exercises manipulating decontextualised language examples, as evidenced in the observations and interviews in schools by Franken and McComish (2003b). The absence of curriculum guidelines has led some teachers to refer to curriculum documents and classroom practices intended for first language speakers of English. An example of this is the sometimes inappropriate emphasis placed on decoding of text by means of grapho-phonetic strategies, or strategies of guessing word meanings from context, for young EAL students with little working knowledge of English.

9. In Particular, Academic Vocabulary Development and Knowledge of a Wide Range of Academic Genres are Targeted

To truly enable academic learning, systematic and focused attention must be paid to the vocabulary needs of students who need to understand and produce texts containing increasingly academically specific and technical vocabulary. Many secondary schools give vocabulary learning a central role in their ESOL programmes, as evidenced both in the verification reports and in observations and interviews in schools by Franken and McComish (2003b). They commonly target specifically selected academic vocabulary in a cumulative approach. There is often some cross-curricular liaison in targeting vocabulary for EAL students.

Another important aspect of academic language is the organisation of written discourse. The recognition of and fluency with writing specific kinds of texts can contribute much to effective learning and content retention. In addition, as much assessment is made of students’ production of written texts in particular, this is an important area over which students need to have control. The coverage of different types of texts and the skills to work with those texts are usually not very well addressed. It is possible to construct a syllabus organized around types of texts or genres, as is done in one high decile intermediate school. The main work in this

respect in the secondary school is done in the English classes but very often the ESOL classes are scheduled instead of English. In the other curriculum areas, the learning is usually thought of in terms of vocabulary and concepts, and the main texts the students meet are the teachers' spoken explanations, plus short paragraphs or sentences.

CONCLUSION

Willis (2000) makes the following statement about US schools: "Historically, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds have not experienced high levels of academic success because their literacy needs often were unaddressed as they were encouraged to assimilate into the mainstream" (Overview section, ¶1). This would appear to apply equally to many students in New Zealand schools. EAL students do need particular and enabling conditions for their literacy development to proceed in a way, and at a pace, so that they can achieve as well as their English-speaking peers before too long, both in literacy related tasks and in content learning. This paper is an attempt to begin to identify and prioritise some principles and associated practices that foreground language learning and how it relates to literacy. These would, in my view, be workable principles for pre-service teacher education and teacher development.

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NOTES

¹ An earlier version of this paper was delivered at Learning Media Symposium, 27 – 28 May 2004.

² English as an additional language (EAL) is a term used to describe both students and programmes, and one that acknowledges that for some students, English may be their third or more language.

³ English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) is a term used frequently by the Ministry of Education to apply to programmes for EAL students.

⁴ Schools' processes for carrying out and recording EAL student assessments to support applications for ESOL funding, and their provision of ESOL support for the students, are checked regularly by the Ministry of Education verifiers. The verifiers' reports are one source of data for this research.

⁵ Sheltered instruction refers to "an adaptive teaching strategy to present content area material through a variety of recommended second language strategies to make the material meaningful and interesting to students" (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 1996, p. 73). Sheltered instruction also incorporates explicit and visually oriented teaching methods and materials.

⁶ This is a conservative estimate, and one extrapolated from a range of sources such as Foley and Thompson (2003, p. 10) who state: "By the age of seven years children have learnt around 2,600 words".