

Teaching young children in English in multilingual contexts

All Lexis Education's professional development courses are intended for classroom teachers and are comprised of a Tutor Training and a Teacher Course. The Tutor Training is an intensive train-the-trainer program that is delivered in

Host schools and other sites around the world to small groups of up to 20 teachers. Licensed tutors then deliver the Teacher Course, providing their school with cost-effective, school-managed professional development.

Aims

Teaching young children in English in multilingual contexts is a professional development course for teachers. The course materials present strategies and discuss issues which consistently address the fundamental relationship between language and learning.

- Relevant for all teachers with young students (aged 5–8 years) who are learning through a language that is not their primary language.
- Develops an understanding of the support needed for those young learners for whom English is a second language to be successful learners.
- Provides strategies for effective teaching and learning and promotes whole-school approaches.

Young children beginning schooling are embarking on their developmental pathway of learning to use language in schooling contexts, such as reading and writing. This makes them more reliant on spoken language and a range of other meaning-making resources, such as visuals (both static and animated) and sound (music and sound effects). With this in mind, the aims of the course are to:

- develop teachers' understanding of the notion of meaning-making and how we can use that to inform the kinds of scaffolding that will build the meaning-making capacity of students in multilingual classrooms
- develop teachers' understanding of the need for explicit teaching practices that will build up students' repertoires of meaning-making resources so that they can be successful learners
- provide a positive context for teachers to reflect critically and openly on their teaching and develop shared understandings about scaffolding in order to improve the effectiveness of whole-school collaboration.

Teaching young children in English in multilingual contexts

provides teachers with an opportunity to engage in rigorous and sustained professional development. Consequently, it is possible to seek credit towards further postgraduate studies from tertiary institutions around the world.

Structure

Teaching young children in English in multilingual contexts has the following features:

- It is organised into 7 modules for a total of 18 hours face-to-face.
- Each module has activities and readings to complete before the next module.
- Total teacher commitment is equivalent to at least 40 hours of professional development.

The course provides a collaborative and engaging adult-learning environment, where there are opportunities for whole-group discussion, small-group activities, classroom implementation, classroom-based research, and reading of relevant articles.

Content

MODULE 1

Meaning making in multilingual contexts

In this first module, we begin with an exploration of meaning-making as a way of discussing the challenges that our students face in schooling contexts. From there, we consider how we develop language, our most complex meaning-making system, by looking at the role of parents and caregivers in the early stages of language development and reflect on the implications as teachers. We experience a lesson in an unfamiliar language as a way of looking at supportive scaffolding practices.

MODULE 2

Scaffolding learners

In this module, we are introduced to an explicit teaching and learning cycle that will be an informing framework for the rest of the course. We consider the notion of scaffolding and consider three broad levels: macro-, meso-, and micro-scaffolding, and the role each plays in providing the support students need in order to take up the meanings expected of them in the early years of schooling.

MODULE 3

Getting active with language

This module deals with actions and the language of hands-on activities. The focus is, therefore, on the procedure genre and, through small teaching and learning cycles, we learn how to develop students' understanding of how a procedure is structured. We also learn how students can analyse the language patterns of these texts in hands-on ways such as through patterned questions and colours.

MODULE 4

Understanding stories

In this module, we work with the generic structure of narratives. Stories are a dominant genre in early childhood settings, yet the meanings—visual and verbal—in these texts can be highly complex. However, as we see, the complexity also makes stories a rich source of opportunities for the development of language and learning.

MODULE 5

Learning the language of stories

The focus in this module is on the language of narratives. The specific aspects of language considered are the resources for: locating events in time and place; describing, classifying and qualifying; and expressing actions, thoughts and sayings. The module concludes with activities around the evaluation of settings, characters and events in narratives.

MODULE 6

Learning to explain how things happen or are done

In this module, we build on previous work on procedures by considering how we can provide a macro-scaffold for students to begin developing control of two new genres: procedural recount and explanation. The activities include moving into more technical fields, recounting accurately, learning to behave scientifically, and explaining how wastewater is treated.

MODULE 7

Planning for meaning-making success

In this final module, we bring together all the understandings developed in the previous modules and apply them to a program of work that participants intend to deliver. Participants will share this program with others in the course and, in doing so, will be modelling the importance of opening up our pedagogical practices to our peers.

For more information:

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