

Engaging low level EAL learners in online learning

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Who are our learners?

- Adults
- Aged 18 – 60+
- Refugee and migrants
- Low levels of English language (ACSF Pre-level 1)
- No / limited / interrupted formal education
- Low digital literacy confidence and skills
- Extremely limited number of learning strategies



Why engage them in online learning?

Support learners to develop:

- Basic IT skills to access digital devices and platforms
- English language, literacy and numeracy skills using digital technologies and internet
- Self-direction and increasing independence as learners in learner-centred education environments
- Digital citizenship
- *Government requirement to access services and fulfil obligations online (eg, myGov: Centrelink, Medicare, ATO etc)*



What do we mean by online learning?

- Intentional
- Synchronous
- Teacher-facilitated
- Materials are available in a digital form on a learning management system (Moodle – **myAMES**)
- Learners acquire skills and knowledge by interacting with the available digital content
- Supported by a teacher using different digital communication tools



How do we engage our learners?

- ✓ planning engagement
- ✓ expecting engagement
- ✓ supporting engagement
- ✓ solving problems
- ✓ celebrating successes



Planning engagement

have SMART expectations



Planning engagement

Course planning and design

1. Analysing learner needs
2. Selecting what needs to be learnt
3. Sequencing the elements of the course to make learning as effective as possible
4. Selection and sequencing of content has to be based on explicit objectives (curriculum)
5. Select the method (activity type) for the delivery of content to make learning as effective as possible

References:

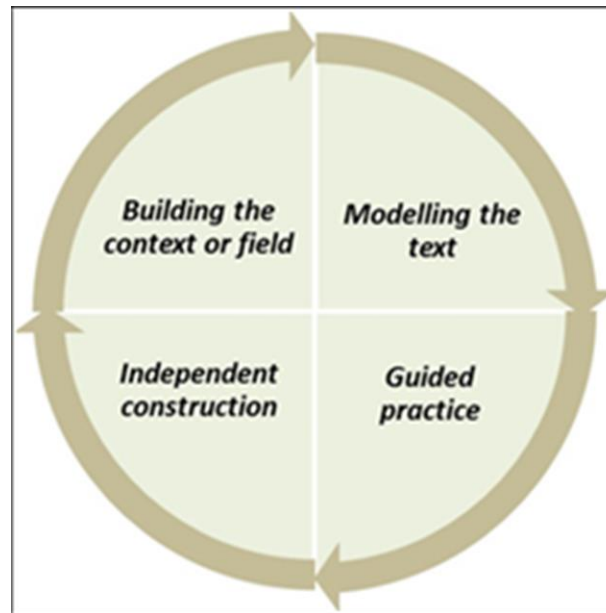
1. Feez, S. 1998 *Text-based Syllabus Design* NCELTR Macquarie University Sydney NSW
2. *Teaching-learning cycle: reading and writing connections* Department of Education and Training Victoria 10/09/2020
<<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/literacy/readingviewing/Pages/teachingpraccycle.aspx>>



Planning engagement

Teaching and Learning Cycle

Activities are carefully ordered to build up students' knowledge and abilities so that they can experience success



References:

1. *Teaching-learning cycle: reading and writing connections* Department of Education and Training Victoria 10/09/2020
<<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/discipline/english/literacy/readingviewing/Pages/teachingpraccycle.aspx>>



Planning engagement

Online course planning and design principles

- Activity types - limit the number of activity types to only those that meet agreed-upon user experience, accessibility and reporting standards
- Interactivity – all activities require learners to ‘do something’ with the target language and/or skill with the LMS providing immediate check and correct feedback
- Signposting activities - clear directions to learners through standardized icons, text and colours
- Navigation – ease of use and the same for all activities and ways to get to activities



myAmes taster

Examples of activities

Here is the link to the Course Taster: <https://ames-sandbox.mrooms.net/course/view.php?id=51>



Expecting engagement

- believe that what you are asking from your learners is possible
- having high expectations supported by strong scaffolding and explicit teaching
- anticipate difficulties and use them as learning opportunities



Supporting engagement

- Weekly videos (LMS) that ‘show and tell’
 - English language skills & topic
 - Digital literacy skills
- Video digital literacy skills tutorials sent as link to learner’s smartphone
- <https://youtu.be/7sT9hm1iZ6w>
- Zoom lessons with teacher
- Help on demand
- *Dear AMES student, this is your teacher Tanja. I can see you did not learn English online in Week 6. You can log in to myAmes today. Do you need help? You can call me on 8558 XXXX*



Solving problems

Anticipate problems and have ready-made solutions

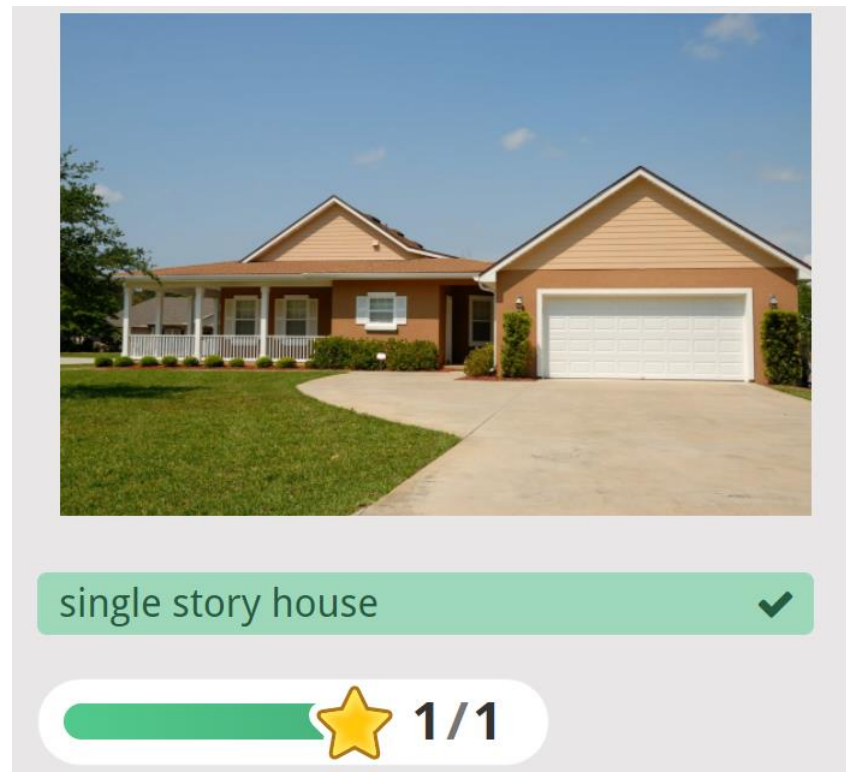
- Technical (e.g. a browser not compatible)
- Operational (e.g. log in details)
- Skills (e.g. 'I don't know how...')



Celebrating successes

Explicit positive feedback

- Built into the design of the LMS



Celebrating successes

Explicit positive feedback

- Regular acknowledgement and encouragement from teacher via different digital communication tools (eg, phone, SMS, Zoom)
- *Dear AMES student, this is your teacher Tanja. I can see you are learning English online on myAMES. This is very good.*



Digital divide

Dictionary



digital divide

noun

the gulf between those who have ready access to computers and the internet, and those who do not.
"there is a 'digital divide' between rich and poor in terms of computer use"

Definitions from Oxford Languages

Feedback

Sourced on 17/11/2020 from <https://www.google.com.au/search?>



Digital divide

Design solutions:

- Activities do not require a lot of data
- Activities designed for mobile access

Operational solutions:

- Learners had (timetabled) access to computers in our centres (pre-COVID)
- Advocacy to Jobactive has provided some learners with devices (post-COVID)

Policy solutions

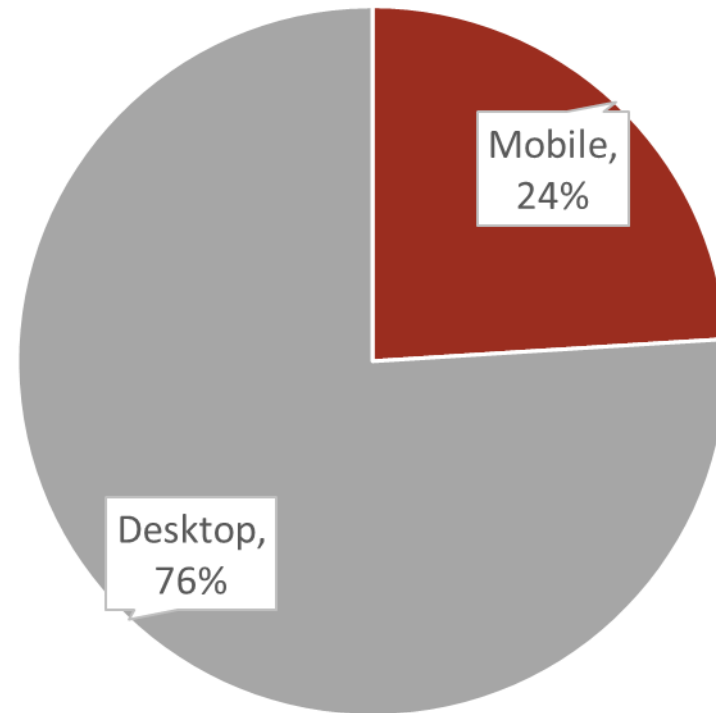
- Provide laptops with internet connections to disadvantaged learners
- Fund internet access as a basic service for all citizens



Online Learner Engagement - 2019

86,599 Total sessions

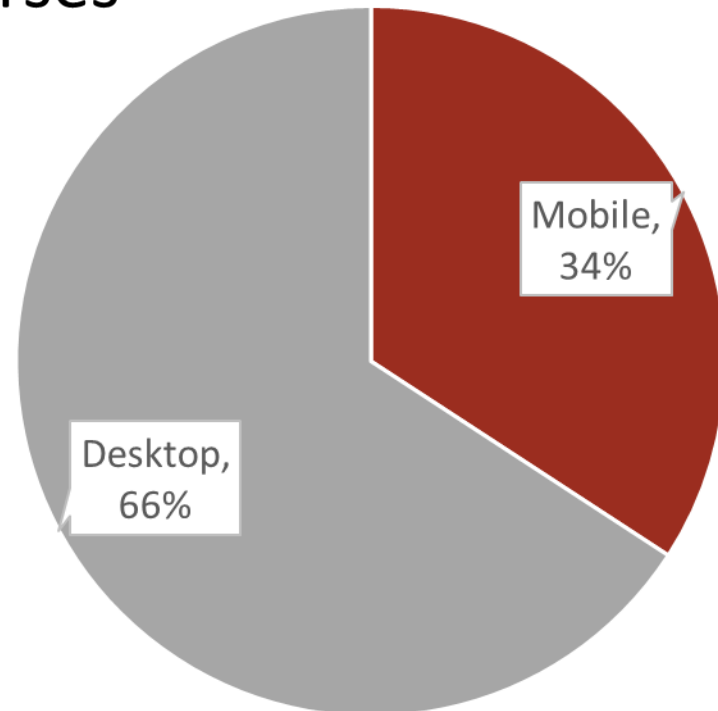
2769 Students in EAL courses



Online Learner Engagement - 2020

165,423 Total sessions

3725 Students in EAL courses



Thank you

Questions

Please ask questions in Chat

