

RESPONSES FROM PEOPLE WHO REGISTERED

The situations the pandemic has led to:

- Limited migration. Pause on migration
- Fewer EAL students entering Australia due to border closures
- Many families stranded overseas leading to a great decrease in the number of EAL students.
- Decline in EAL/D student numbers due to border closures affecting all those services that are connected with supporting people migrating or immigrating to Australia.
- Loss of newly arrived international students and massive budget cuts to EAL programs.
- Lack of explicit face-to-face teaching / No face-to-face teaching
- online delivery
- Distance and disconnection.
- Isolation
- Interrupted learning for children due to lock downs
- the on-again off-again business of snap lockdowns meaning the learners are in and out of the classroom/blended learning/remote learning environments

What do you see as being the negative effects on EAL Teaching and Learning from the pandemic?

Personal / social interactions

- Lack of people-to-people contacts
- Learners not participating as actively in learning experiences outside the home
- Loss of interactions in English
- Community connections slower to build due to isolation/fear.
- Cancelled school camps - missed opportunities for new friendships, Aussie experiences and success outside of the classroom.
- Delayed/missed opportunities to include EAL families in school activities, e.g. fetes, Harmony Day, assemblies.
- The lack of dialogue and interaction. These are many and varied including:- Person to person- face to face. So many skills are learnt in context- social learning along with formal aspects of language. Language is such a complex skill to learn you need to have inter-relationships and modelling etc.
- Some students will miss out on their preferred learning style.
- Difficult for New Arrivals to build social skills and friendships when in remote learning.
- Maintaining the social aspect of school and teach social school has been challenging.
- Teachers focus on other things so not building the student teacher relationship. EAL student seen as "another thing to deal with".
- Reduced level of personal engagement with students.
- adult students miss face-to-face practice
- Lack of connection, limited opportunities to develop confidence in speaking.

- Building relationships
- reduced contact with teachers and fellow classmates for students
- Lack of interaction, less engagement
- Human interaction and informal sharing of ideas.
- Students not able to come together face to face - zoom or call meetings are meaning students are missing out on that close connection of being together as a small community
- Loss of face-to-face connection and worry about students being isolated.

Online learning / learning from home / remote learning

- Lack of interaction in English as reliant on cameras and microphones being turned on.
- Inequality of opportunity for EAL students and families, e.g. access to technology and in-class support.
- limitations on delivering lesson
- Students having minimal knowledge in technology and the lack of appropriate devices to use in EAL online classes.
- Relies on students having the technology. Access and equity issues. Not all have the office space for quiet area for home learning. Creating the best learning environment assumptions are made in the home space. Not everyone has these resources and tools.
- No face to face and being able to see the work done, being able to correct work and give instant feedback.
- Student participation in large groups.
- Keeping students engaged.
- increasing the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students - especially lack of access to digital technology and digital literacy
- Engagement challenges in the online space.
- Difficulty in maintaining intensive English language programming for New Arrivals who have little English or digital literacy.
- Difficult to teach language in remote virtual context. Difficult in a new arrivals context for students to settle in Australia effectively and feel the purpose of learning English when they haven't needed it so much.
- Often hard for the families to support their child's learning as their English is not great.
- Not all students are tech savvy or like learning online-especially at lower levels of English.
- The challenges that delivering language classes online presents such as accessibility, connectivity and changes in communication modes.
- providing engaging learning online over an extended period
- Difficulties students' experience participating in online learning. Digital literacy can be a barrier to learning as can access to laptops etc.
- Issues around technology.
- limited understanding of IT by parents and many children,
- limited understanding of content taught due to limited face-to-face teaching time,

- poor [internet] connectivity
- limited supervision due to household arrangements and environments
- often low support of home learning as children usually cannot articulate the goals to their parents.
- Inconsistent learning environment. Lack of family support.
- cannot afford internet connections
- ICT not to family advantage as do not understand how to connect or use devices.
- Family culture impacts learning at home.
- Phone calls [to learners] highlight the English still required to acquire but make it difficult to explain without effective visuals.
- 1 - lack of understanding of how online learning works in general and then it's applicability to EAL teaching models. (i.e. simultaneous vs a-synchronous learning, EAL teaching models are bias towards simultaneous learning). This lack of understanding leads to unrealistic expectations of both teachers' and learners' interactions with content and ability to progress. (especially re: classroom size, lesson flow/structure, and access to/fluency of online technologies)
- Online learning is challenging for lower level students
- Last year I taught beginner and level 1 and online was quite successful. This year I'm teaching initial and it's more frustrating for students due to lower IT and language skills. So lower the language skills the harder to keep them engaged online if you have not had one on one time to get the technology sorted.
- hate being behind a screen so much like to be able to use movement in the classroom for learning. Very challenging for low level learners.
- For many EAL students, lack of access to devices and internet is also a huge problem.
- in community organizations, digital resources have never been adequately funded by the workplace, so 18 months on, we are still trying to catch up to provide an adequate standard of teaching
- perception that online teaching is somehow less than face-to-face/in person teaching, particularly regarding compensation and level of work put into preparation and delivery of content. Many employers think that compensation should be less than a face-to-face lesson and that you should be able to include more students in your lessons.

Learning

- students tell me they don't improve their English skills as much as they would by learning face to face
- Extensive periods of lockdown led to some students stagnating rather than gaining confidence in using English.
- Increasingly using typing rather than handwriting, when handwriting is essential for VCE exams.
- They [learners] seem to slip through the gaps during remote learning periods due to not understanding tasks, inability to work independently and difficulty communicating with the teacher independently.
- Technology - some of our EALD students may either have minimal or no access to technology;

- increasing the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged students - especially lack of access to digital technology and digital literacy
- Lack of continuity and engagement for students
- keeping all students engaged and trying to support students who are missing their fellow students and teachers
- Optimal learning achieved by face to face learning, comprised by the online platform-students cannot see and hear easily.
- Teacher not able to pick up student non verbal cues well on zoom platform.
- Loss of face to face connection with staff meaning it's more difficult to check how EAL students are going in mainstream classes.
- Not having the point of need support in the classroom as easily as if it was face to face and the student not being able to learn from peer modelling and support as they could in the classroom.
- Very challenging for elderly beginners with limited English and/or limited digital literacy skills and no children at home to help them.
- Also, Afghani students may find the loss of face to face peer support particularly difficult with the events unfolding in Afghanistan at this time.
- Assessments online don't work well.
- Assessment challenges,

EAL teacher expertise, employment and availability

- EAL teachers may be lost due to the necessity of finding "a job" and then never come back.
- Personally I am developing my own online skills so have not yet advanced to break out rooms.
- effective teaching with lack of technical knowledge, availability
- No jobs for NAP teachers!!!
- No International students at University. Loss of job.

Programs - disruptions and changes

- Uncertainty about the future because of the pause on migration
- Sometimes our specialised EAL program had to be suspended in order to help my EAL students complete work set by classroom teachers.
- As cluster educators we have not been able to visit schools to support EAL as much as we usually would. It has been harder to keep tabs on the comings and goings and progress of these students as well as their teachers.
- Lack of certainty about tertiary pathways.
- changes to teaching staff, changes to programs,
- Loss of momentum - schools may get out of the habit of referring to NAP [New Arrivals Programs].

Personal wellbeing

- These students are already generally high on our wellbeing radars, especially new arrivals.

- Increased racial abuse of students of Chinese appearance - need to support students who often don't tell you what they are subjected to.
- Family stress. Split families. Divided parents.
- Children in the care of non-family members for extended periods.
- International students who don't know when they can go home and if they do go home, whether they can return.
- Engagement of students regards to student mental health.
- increased screen time. Student wellbeing.
- well-being and connection during remote learning
- Risk of Covid exposure if staff delivering learning packs or students are on-site.

What do you see as being some of the more positive effects on EAL Teaching and Learning?

Access

- Access through Zoom or other online platform has enabled many learners to participate where previously they may have been put off by travel time, distance etc.
- Students who are not coming to school can have online as learning option. May suit learning style of student. Online, allows learning to continue. Provides social contact.
- I have been able to work with a wider range of students because I have been able to transition to online teaching.
- More 1-1 support.
- Provides flexibility for students with access.

Learning / learning skills & approaches

- Focused
- A positive effect is that students may become more independent and take initiative to learn. Eg. learning and using new technologies, which gives students. confidence when they have been successful in using them.
- Increased student resilience and independence which supports transition to post-secondary pathways.
- Some students were brought in to school and had extra support / attention during lockdowns.
- Connection to be able to monitor learning progress however limited.
- Collaborative learning,
- Some students have benefitted from coming into school during lockdowns where they have been able to work in smaller groups and more intensively with an educator as compared to normal.
- flexibility and building digital literacy skills in learners
- Some students have thrived without distractions and having parental support for learning. Some students have very quickly become more independent learners.

- [Adult] students are perhaps familiarising themselves with technology even with the help of their children.
- The new way of teaching and learning allows all students to learn in different ways of content and skills
- Those students able to participate experience significant peer and teacher support in difficult circumstances. Developing digital skills.
- adult students learn to use technologies
- Some students learn better online in some areas
- Student and family IT skills improved
- children have been exposed to a range of digital literacy tools.
- Adaptability and resilience.
- Continuation of learning despite the pandemic and students are becoming more technologically aware.
- Students have had to learn zoom/ internet platforms of learning. They have incidentally shown persistence, employability skills like being organised, checking phones for msg, independence to complete work online or at home learning.
- A greater supportiveness and better awareness of the different circumstances of their online classmates - materially, digitally, emotionally - which has noticeably enhanced learning, team spirit and productivity in some of the classes.
- empathy/compassion
- Exposure to using technology, improving skills in speaking and listening via telephone or via webcam

Changes to / impacts on programs and teaching

- Having a small amount of online study allows for variety in delivery.
- Greater focus on improving the learning outcomes and fostering language acquisition for the developing and consolidating students.
- Online instruction has driven more explicit teaching, eg. use of visuals, recorded lessons which can be replayed, clear learning intentions to provide focus.
- real life/essential online skills embedded by necessity in remote learning
- Targeted teaching. Depth.
- creativity and focus on wellbeing and engagement.
- We can still deliver content mostly efficiently to students.
- I do one on one on the phone given students' lack of devices and data and poor digital literacy. It can be beneficial for students in practicing their speaking and getting individual feedback and support for all activities.
- Despite all the frustration I think it's been a fantastic opportunity for both teachers and students to move into the 2020's IT world which carries with it many English language opportunities.
- we have tried to create a balance between both online and f2f as online for some students is a good option. I think it's also been able to provide much needed community support and engagement during difficult lockdown times. It has also provide great exposure to online activity creation and tools for EAL.

- Scaffolds and support that are needed are implemented for all. More time allowed to complete the task without distraction.
- More ready email or Video/Technology access to tools to support student
- Challenging but it has been good to dispel the idea that learning can be done online and to raise the status of teachers and professionals
- The time and cost of travel for students. Less impact on Family life
- Bouncing back after remote learning

Professional and personal relationships

- NAP [New Arrivals Program] teachers in mainstream schools and settings - great relationship building between NAP and their local schools, great resource for mainstream schools and excellent experience for NAP teachers.
- Online connections among EAL teaching community with colleagues supporting each other across schools/regions/countries.
- We all share a common bond and work well as a group under the circumstances,
- perhaps increased connection with mainstream colleagues.
- Flexibility, new opportunities
- empathy

Connections with / knowledge of learners and their families

- Engagement with families at home
- Greater awareness of issues facing migrants, e.g., need for clarity/translation of govt communications, access to technology for online learning,
- peer empathy for students separated from family due to closed borders.
- Family involvement in learning, e.g., parents joining online classes, parents in home country joining parent teacher interviews online.
- Use of technology to include parents who are overseas, eg. Live streamed and recorded Year 12 graduation assembly.
- Through online learning, we have a clearer picture of what students understand or what they don't
- Had a greater opportunity for one-to-one assistance with the neediest children as with the classroom teacher's assistance I was able to juggle classes and timetable. There were some children I met with every day.
- Teachers are able to develop closer relationships with their EAL students due to more 1-1 meetings.
- Teachers have a better understanding, in some cases, of a child's homelife and the home environment, children have increased conversations with parent(s) or caregivers (sometimes even with help of Language Loop)
- We all share a common bond and work well as a group under the circumstances,
- more time with family
- Students and family appreciate the school environment and impact on learning English.

- can stay in touch even though teaching is remote

Teachers' learning and their skills

- More engagement with technology
- Teachers being more efficient, precise in their instruction language and are more creative in their lesson planning
- Seeing the professionalism and dedication of the EAL teaching profession
- The wonderful online webinars from various organisations
- Digital literacy improvement for both teachers and students.
- Time to reflect on EAL/D practices.
- Having soft copies of students work makes it easy to correct and make comments,
- Development of new teaching strategies and resources.
- Teachers being driven to be more creative in delivery using more images and technologies to support language acquisition.
- Refinement in the use of online platforms.
- Forcing providers to develop their Online delivery models to cater for EAL students, particularly those with low level English skills
- staff professional growth.
- creativity
- provided a context for us to review with new eyes, what we value in education and pedagogy.
- I think we are becoming more aware of the uses technology can have in teaching EAL, particularly online, and we are becoming more aware of the problematic (and commonly held) view of online teaching.
- increased technology skills for teachers and students
- Adaptability and resilience.
- Gaining skills and confidence teaching EAL students online
- Becoming more innovative with technology and learning new ways to apply it in the EAL classroom.