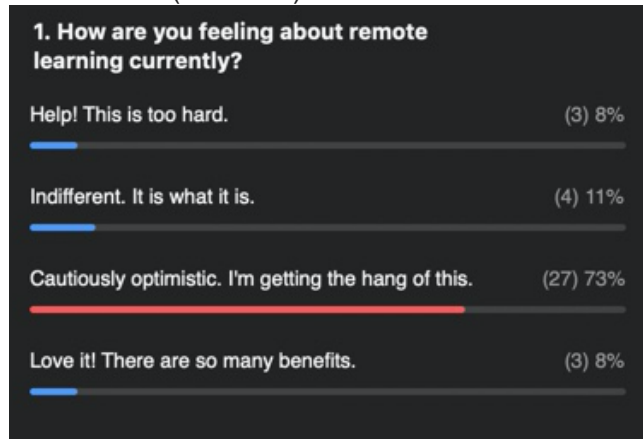


Learning from home: Supporting EAL students remotely

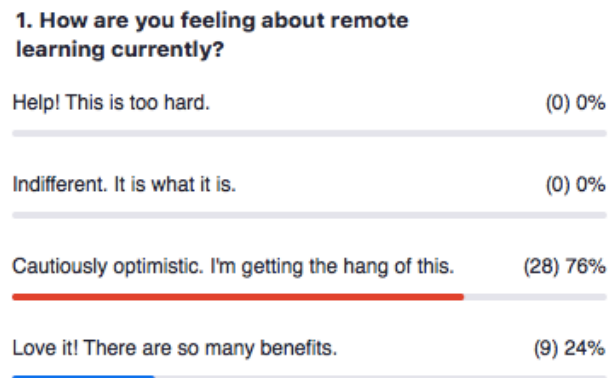
The ideas compiled here are from teacher comments and discussions during a number of professional learning sessions that VicTESOL has run since the move to online and remote learning began. The teachers who participated were from primary and secondary schools and from the adult education sector.

We took a couple of polls during the sessions:

SESSION 1 (5th MAY)

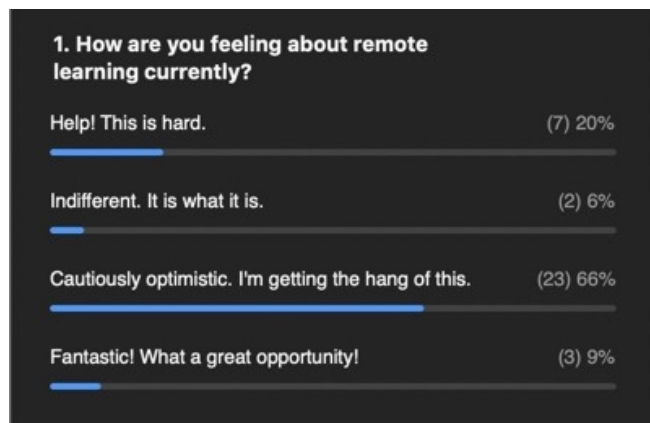


At the beginning of a session

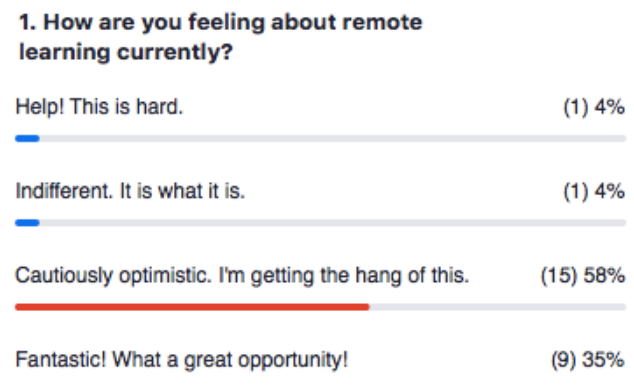


At the end of the same session

SESSION 2 (7th MAY)



At the beginning of a session



At the end of the same session

Like the teachers in this session, we hope the ideas and resources in this list help you to also feel more confident about supporting EAL learners remotely.

This list includes the positives (what's working), some challenges, tips, strategies and resources. We hope you find them both **useful for, and affirming of** your experiences and practices.

Thank you to all the participants for sharing their ideas and to the session facilitators for compiling them.

Some general principles

- Start and practice what teachers and students are comfortable with before moving forward.
- Provide differentiated work for EAL students.
- Keep it simple. Keep it connected. Par it back. Small steps at first.
- Need for step by step instructions.
- Advocate for the needs for EAL students with school/centre management.
- Simplify instructions online. Make sure there is no ambiguity in instructions to learners.
- It can be a slow process with lots of trial and error.
- Use a variety of different strategies depending on students.
- Important to acknowledge that we are on different paths with remote learning, even within our own learning communities.
- Even though it can be frustrating, it's good to remember that students do appreciate the fact that we're here for them and that we're trying to reach out.
- Developing protocols and routines with our student is important.
- Make use of Multicultural Education Aides (MEAs) and other supports.
- Don't try to replicate what happens in face-to-face classrooms.
- Try to be consistent in approach. Some teachers feeling as though the situation is improving by building a routine.
- Use visuals, recordings, provide multiple exposures, use annotated examples & models.
- Provide exemplars to help students know what to do even without reading the instructions.
- We have set a maximum of three uploads of work per week per student.
- Work with small groups or create smaller breakout groups within video conference class.
- Reassure parents they can access materials at any time during the day. This has taken pressure off "you need to be doing reading at this time".
- Kids can keep learning in their mother tongue. Reassure parents they can talk with their children about their learning in all their languages.
- Sharing ideas, confidence, reassurance, go slowly, stay connected, things will evolve.
- Sharing work with teachers has been a god-send.
- It's all about connection. Our biggest role is to ensure connectivity to learning and the school. Importance of connecting and having a good time.
- Encouraging students to meet up online.
- Engage individually with students.
- Don't underestimate students' skills.

Communication

- The importance of video conferencing.
- How useful Multicultural Education Aides (MEA) support staff have been throughout this process when communicating with families.
- Probably communicating more with parents now than ever before.
- Give mainstream teachers some tips for talking with parents with limited English.
- Ring the parent and learner, and have them use speaker phone.
- Class teachers calling once per week as well with speaker phone.
- Touch base with learners, parents, colleagues and school/centre management.
- Parents set up WhatsApp group.
- Maintain phone contact with families and children.
- Keep records of phone calls to students/families.
- It is important to check in with students often no matter what device/program you are using.

Assessment

- Formative assessment is your friend!
- Reliability of assessment – how do we know how much guidance students are receiving?

- Assessment and reporting – standard/modified/waiting for DET?
- Assessment – using formative assessment and SACs in VCE.
- Difficult to assess language skills – particularly their speaking and listening.
- How to give feedback, and that there has been a lag in giving feedback when students have paper-based learning.
- Constant feedback is crucial.
- Assessing speaking and listening - pictures in the learning packs which are used for speaking activities during phone call conversations.

Challenges

- Students who don't have devices or connectivity.
- Students' wellbeing needs.
- Students don't understand or are shy via the phone.
- Students don't have access to the required technology or don't have a high level of digital literacy. Therefore, a range of methods is being used, e.g., using hardcopy booklets rather than working online.
- Mainstream teacher instructions are too complex.
- Supporting EAL students in mainstream classes, and those with special needs.
- Digital literacy levels of EAL students.
- Intensity of screen time.
- Google classrooms are too much to navigate for some students.
- So many students, so little time to reach them all.
- Teachers feel overworked – many students to contact and not enough time.
- Some students are reluctant to use video.
- Teachers and students need to learn how to use online tools.
- School has banned phone calls to home due to potential risk to child safety.

Independent learning

- Teach ICT skills to students so they can be more independent learners.
- Students need to be independent, motivated, self-regulated learners.
- Showing students how to slow down pre-recorded videos as well as pausing and repeating made it easier for students to understand.

Parents / family

- Some parents are happy to talk, while some avoid having prolonged conversations.
- Parents and siblings helping with learning at home.
- Good chance to connect with families.
- Parents want to see HOW we teach. Provide a language experience.
- Some parents are overwhelmed.
- Communication to families, your children have the whole day to do the learning tasks.
- Give parents tips and reassurance.
- Need to address parents' concerns, beliefs and perceptions about learning more than before – e.g. One teacher had to explain why using songs in class was not “a waste of time”.
- Speaking with parents is important to see how they are going.
- Parents not having access to devices because the children are using them.
- Parents feeling anxious about having to help their students with their learning.
- Maintain personal contact. A phone call calmed a parent and teacher down, and this made a world of difference.
- Remember that there's lots going on for families.

Health and wellbeing

- Relax and take stretch breaks!
- Use visuals such as emojis for students to provide feedback on how they're coping (like a welfare check).
- Create opportunities for teachers to see each other and catch up.
- Promote peer support for teachers.

Resources

- We are all making a library of resources which could well be valuable in the future, so these will end up being a really good resource.
- Sent out pack of materials to EAL students – sent in mail with letter.
- Avoiding sending lists of websites. Just send a really good one.
- Translation of materials into different languages.
- DET putting out information in different languages- both to parents and on FUSE.
- Set up a resource list. Little videos about things like maths, going for walks, etc.
- Recorded story session.
- Provide simplified pack of extension work.
- Juniors – suggesting parents watch *ABCs Play School* with kids and encourage drawing and writing – date the material.

Skills and activities / Curriculum

- Hard copy packs with phone support.
- Can hone in on pronunciation needs through phone chats.
- Activities that can be completed off screen such as arts-based activities, cooking etc.
- Schools still wanting to maintain mainstream program.
- Specialist teachers are doing some activities for online learning.
- Videos have been very useful for teachers and very popular with families.
- One on one sessions with learners every week.
- Reading writing and maths – other things left.
- Need to continue to develop oral language.
- Helping students to connect with each other by giving them the time and through interesting visuals/videos, virtual excursions to bring up discussions.

Learning technologies

- Seesaw – primary level, Google Classroom – secondary level. <https://web.seesaw.me/>
- Easier to move to online learning by using platforms or tools that students are already familiar with (e.g. Seesaw, IMO, WhatsApp, etc).
- Seesaw platform good because can add voice comments.
- Platforms which allow voice recording, slide shows, video and icons have been particularly useful.
- ClassDoJo <https://www.classdojo.com/> used for communication, portfolio, can submit work, recording of morning message.
- Webex and Google Classroom.

Teacher professional learning

- Reflecting and sharing with other teachers has been really valuable.
- Good opportunity to up-skill our own ICT skills.
- Needing to educate and reassure teachers.

Understanding learner experiences

- Mixed situations and responsibilities for students at home. This influences their learning.
- Important to find out what students think – give students voice through a survey for example.

- Disengaged students tend to be more disengaged online, although some students are more engaged due to the novelty.
- A plus has been that some students who are a bit shy or not confident are actually thriving and engaging more than in the classroom – hoping that this carries over when normal classes resume.
- Students sharing with each other how they are learning.
- Connection with the EAL community at school has been positive.

Some suggested resources

Department of Education and Training, Victoria. FUSE.

- English as an additional language: <https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/ResourcePackage/LandingPage?ObjectId=80b66cdf-7728-4182-8fc1-bb903c8a6e0a&SearchScope=All>
- Learning from home: <https://fuse.education.vic.gov.au/pages/learningfromhome>
- EAL Space on Webex Teams where EAL teachers can get together to ask questions and collaborate: <https://eurl.io/#9aUKWweUE>

ABC

Offline supports for students who are not online – Guides for these are online via FUSE. Select programs – tell students you want them watch programs and you'll call them to discuss the program you've watched.

- ABC Me <https://www.abc.net.au/abcme/>
- ABC kids <https://www.abc.net.au/children/>

Online quizzes, polls,

- Wooclap': an online platform for surveys, word webs and other activities. <https://wooclap.com>
- Kahoot: online quizzes. Has a homework option which is useful <https://kahoot.it>

Collaborative tools

- Padlet <https://padlet.com/> Collaborate, add posts to a wall.

Screen recorders

- Loom <https://www.loom.com/>

E-books / Reading

- *Mr Greg's English cloud*. Good for low level reading and writing: <http://www.mrgregenglish.com/kindergarten-writing-worksheets/>
- *PageTurners* from PRACE. Voice recordings and some free e-books available) – low literacy adult and secondary students <https://pageturners.prace.vic.edu.au/>

- *Epic books*. Has many free books for primary school students which can be searched by levels or different options <https://www.getepic.com/>
- *Carringbush Reading Series*. Stories and language from everyday life that are relevant to adult English language and literacy learners living in Australia <https://www.carringbush.org.au/carringbush-reading-series>

Various teaching materials

- Education perfect www.educationperfect.com <https://epforlearning.com/>
- Studyladder Maths, English, Science, etc. activities for learners aged 4-12. www.studyladder.com.au
- KidsNews - news program and lesson plans www.kidsnews.com.au
- Listenwise – listening texts <https://listenwise.com/>
- ESL Library – variety of materials. Monthly cost. www.esllibrary.com
- Teach This – ESL/EFL resources www.teach-this.com
- Oxford Learner’s Bookshelf. E-books www.oxfordlearnersbookshelf.com
- Learn English Teens www.learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org
- Teachers Pay Teachers. “Online marketplace for original education resources” www.teacherspayteachers.com
- Aussie Educator. Many Australian materials. www.aussieeducator.org.au
- AMEP Research Centre. Resources www.ameprc.mq.edu.au
- One Stop English. www.onestopenglish.com
- Adele’s ESL Corner. Grammar, listening and vocabulary www.adelescorner.org
- ESOL Courses. Free English Lessons Online www.esolcourses.com
- ESLcollective.com Worksheets, lessons, etc. www.en.eslcollective.com
- Picture dictionary. NSW <https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/rap/resource/access/4365d0ab-2f86-437f-a95e-28670877dde8/1>

Disclaimer

These websites have been suggested as possible places to find EAL teaching and learning resources. VicTESOL does not endorse these and people should make their own judgement about the suitability of each item.