

Equitable Access: Science of Learning for Multilingual Learners

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vicTESOL

- This session will be recorded and made available on the VicTESOL website.
- If you have any questions, please place them in the chat. They will be answered by the presenter after the presentation.
- If you have any technical difficulties, please use the chat function to talk to VicTESOL staff or email plcoordinator@victesol.vic.edu.au

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Introduction

BACKGROUND

Educator and EAL specialist with over a decade in Victorian schools

EAL and New Arrivals programs

Independent education consultant, partnering with schools on inclusive, effective practice

www.nestwiseeducation.com

RESEARCH

Graduate researcher

Focus: what teachers know and do around EAL/D inclusion when schools move toward Science of Reading aligned instruction

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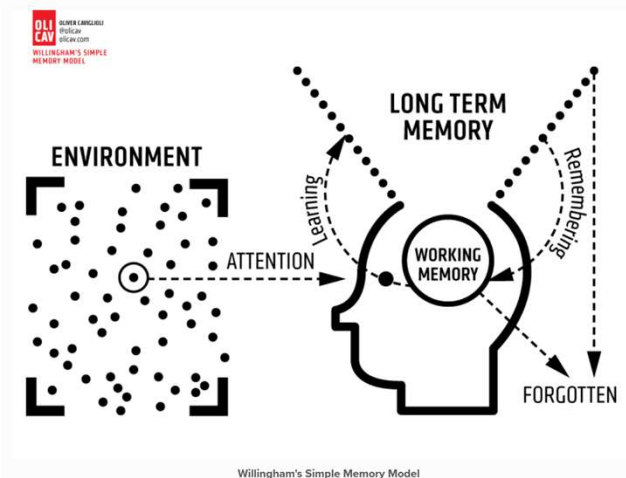
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Today's Session

- 01 Memory and Cognitive Load
- 02 Background Knowledge
- 03 Managing Load: Environment and Routines
- 04 Explicit Instruction
- 05 Bringing It Together

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How We Learn



- Learning is a change in long-term memory
- Working memory: limited capacity, easily overloaded by extraneous
- Long-term memory: vast capacity, no known upper limit
- If working memory is overloaded, learning becomes harder
- Cognitive overload: new information fails to transfer

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Reducing Load: Environment and Routines

Environment

- The classroom environment is a cognitive load decision
- Written alongside verbal: vocabulary displayed while explained, sentence stems visible during practice
- Word walls, anchor charts, sentence stems: intentional and taught, not decorative

Routines

- Well-established routines become automatic — predictability frees working memory for learning
- Engagement norms: mini whiteboards, pair shares, attention signals
- All must be explicitly taught and consistently used

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Background Knowledge and the EAL/D Learner

- Prior knowledge reduces cognitive load — the more you already know, the more working memory is free for new learning
- For EAL/D learners, knowledge gaps are not only linguistic. They can be cultural, contextual, and experiential
- Assumed knowledge creates hidden barriers
- Building the field before new content

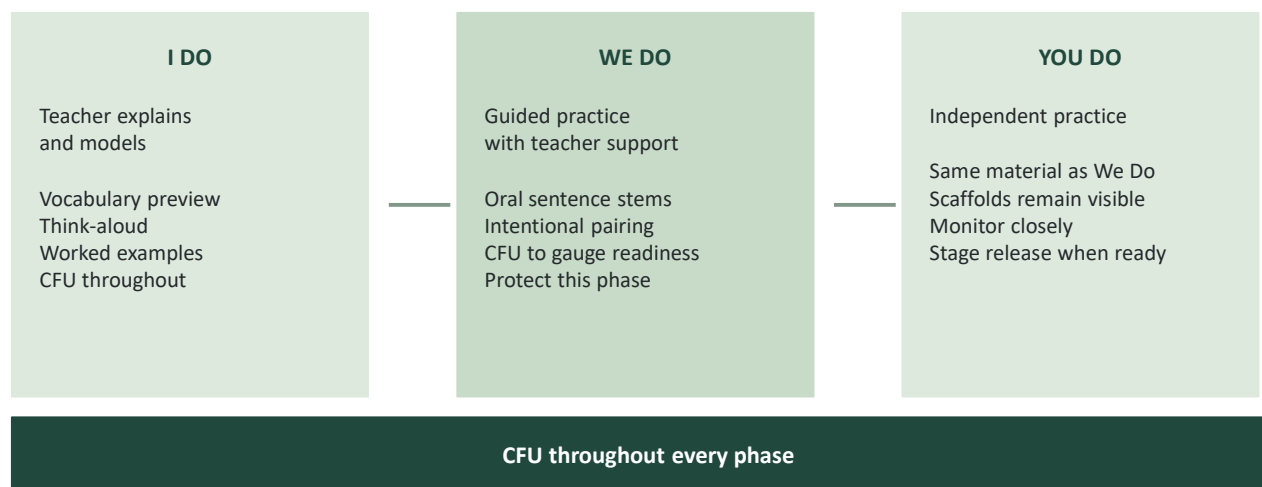
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WRITE YOUR ANSWER IN THE CHAT:

What do you use in your classroom environment that supports learning rather than adding to extraneous load?

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I Do / We Do / You Do



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Checking for Understanding

Have high expectations of your EAL/D learners (even those with low language)

- CFU: runs throughout, not only at the end
- Give wait time: EAL/D learners processing across two languages need longer
- Mini whiteboards: everyone responds simultaneously, no one singled out
- Pair shares: explicit expectation of participation, sentence stems visible, intentional pairing
- Supportive cold call: ask two students first, then the EAL/D student

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CHAT PROMPT

How do you currently include your EAL/D learners in checking for understanding?

2 minutes — write your answer in the chat

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Scaffolding

WHAT IT IS

A temporary support — there while the learning is being built, gradually removed as students develop proficiency

Not a modification. Not a lower standard.

The goal is always independence.

EXAMPLES

Sentence stems (oral and written)
 Vocabulary displayed on the board
 Worked examples showing the steps
 Checklists for tasks
 Graphic organisers
 Model texts

THE KEY THING

Scaffolds must be explicitly taught

Students need to know what they are and how to use them

A scaffold nobody knows how to use is just visual noise

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CHAT PROMPT

What's a scaffold you use that makes a difference for your EAL/D learners?

2 minutes — write your answer in the chat

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Bringing It Together

- Tier 1 explicit instruction, done well, is powerful for EAL/D students
- Small, intentional adjustments: field building, explicit vocabulary, environment, routines, scaffolding, I Do/We Do/You Do, checking for understanding
- Collaboration with EAL/D specialists: identifying language demands, advising on scaffolds, supporting planning
- High expectations, with the support to meet them

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CHAT PROMPT

What is one thing you already do well for your EAL/D learners to include them in your tier 1 instruction?

Answer in the chat

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Thank you.

To learn more:

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