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TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE TO SUPPORT EAL PUPILS

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Presentation at Leeds University

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IN THIS SESSION

- The key features of effective practice for EAL learners – what are we thinking and what does research tell us?
- The key features of effective practice for EAL learners – what teachers actually do
- Polish migration – the view from teachers, parents and children
- Break and networking
- Implications for our own practice – workshop activities
- Evaluation

EAL THINKING POINTS

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- Look at the statements about EAL on your own.
- Tick your responses quickly – don't worry about whether they might be right or wrong.
- When you are ready, share in a pair
- What do you agree/ disagree on?
- What are you unsure of?

THINKING POINTS	Agree	Disagree	Not sure
When pupils are learning a new language it is normal for them to be silent for a while			
It is important to have opportunities to talk and work with others when learning a new language			
Pupils learn languages more easily if they work through grammar exercises			
Once pupils can communicate in English they don't need additional support in lessons			

KEY PRINCIPLES FOR EAL TEACHING AND LEARNING

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(SUMMARISED FROM LUCAS ET AL, 2008)

- **A safe and welcoming language environment** with minimal anxiety about performing in the new language is essential.
- **Conversational fluency** is fundamentally different from **academic fluency** and it takes many more years to become confident in the latter.
- **Spoken interaction** in which EAL learners participate can support both social and academic language.
- **Maintenance of the first language** is essential because strong native language skills are associated with greater success in acquiring a new language.
- **Explicit instruction in the form and function of l**anguage (e.g. grammar) supports additional language learning.
- Practitioners need to **know as much as possible** about the first language and the previous experiences of learning that their pupils have had.
- Learning should **activate prior knowledge**.
- Learning should be collaborative and situated in a **clear and meaningful context**.

MATCHING RESEARCH TO PRACTICE FOR EAL LEARNERS: WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

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- Promoting **social well-being** for EAL learners through detailed induction documentation which support practitioners' understanding of individual need.
- Providing opportunities for **talk-based activities** and interaction wherever possible
- Providing opportunities for **non-verbal and non-written** responses
- Providing **visual cues** that support understanding of new vocabulary and concepts
- **Pre-teaching**: the process of identifying the language demands of an area of new learning before it is taught and then pre-teaching vocabulary and concepts before the main classroom input.
- Providing opportunities for EAL learners to mix with **good language role models**.
- Allowing use of first language as **a language for thinking**, note taking and talk-based activities: pairing pupils who share the same first language may support this if their academic outcomes are similar and they are socially compatible.
- **Making aspects of written and spoken English explicit**: e.g. exploring the features of different written genres and focussing on aspects of grammar.

MATCHING RESEARCH TO PRACTICE: WHAT ARE TEACHERS ACTUALLY DOING?

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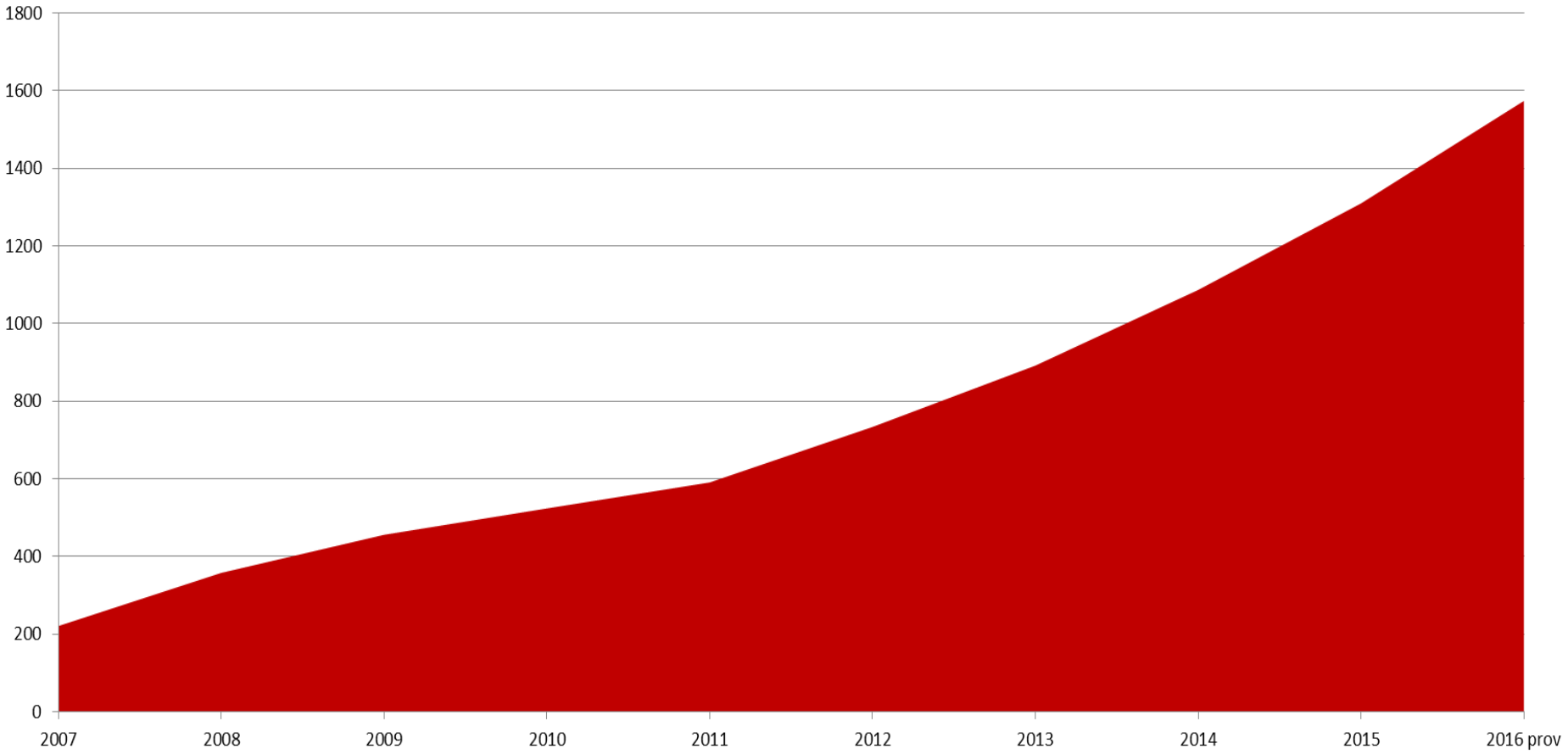
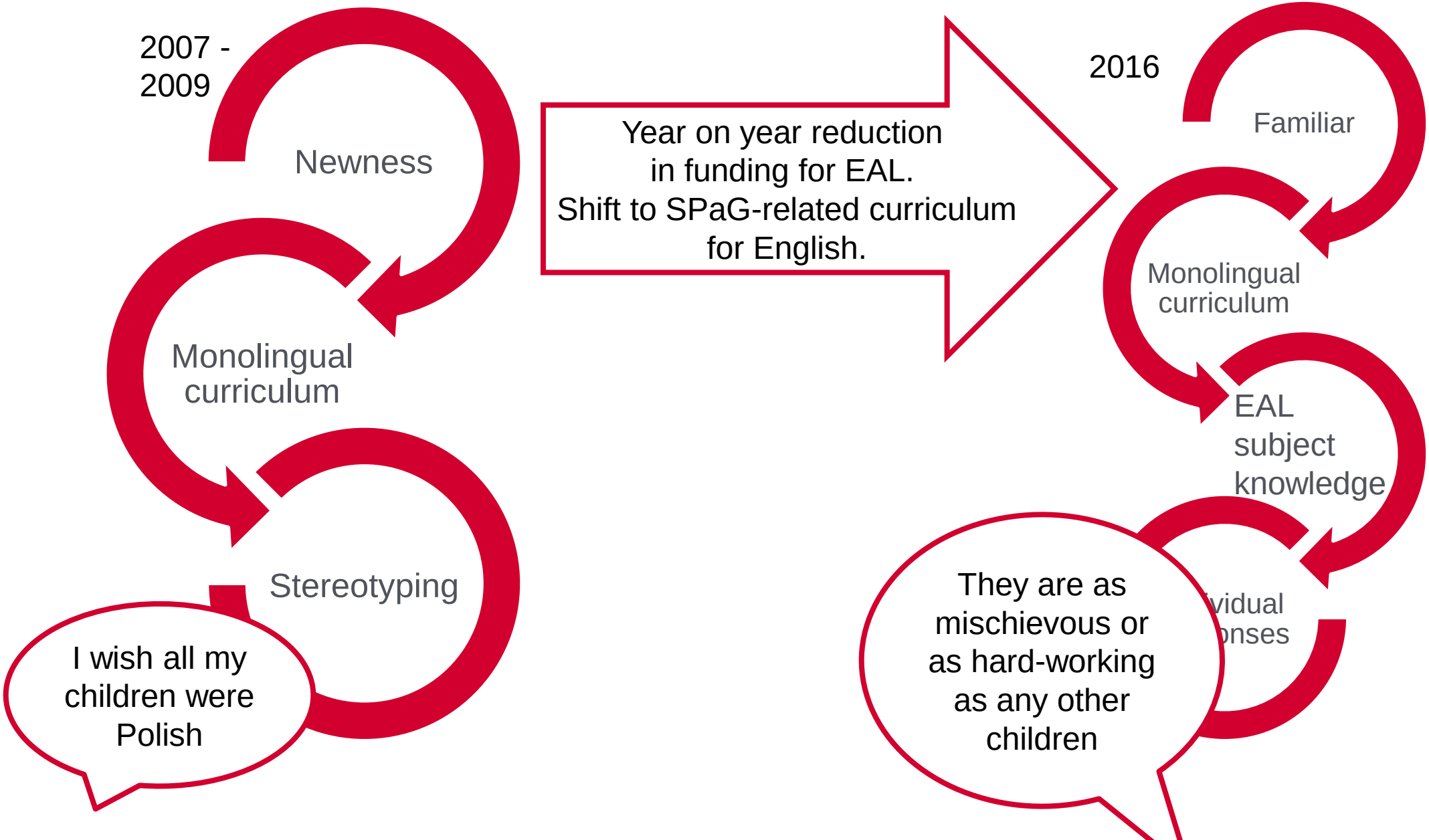


Polish children in Hampshire schools: tracking change over time

WHAT CHANGED OVER TIME FOR TEACHERS?



FEATURES OF EAL TEACHING REFERRED TO BY TEACHERS

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Teacher knows features of child's first language

Use of visual cues and repetition

Opportunities to use and think in first language

Opportunities to work with good language role models

Home language valued

In early years, use of songs and rhymes

Explicit introduction to features of written English

Explicit introduction to new vocabulary

Not aware of DfE English proficiency levels coming in Autumn 2016

EAL-friendly teaching strategies such as pre-teaching vocabulary; LSA-teacher liaison

Active learning strategies such as talk pairs and role play

HOW ABOUT THE PARENTS?

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Wide variation in reasons for being here.

Do not necessarily choose RC schools because of being RC.

Not necessarily agreed on how difficult it is for their children to learn English.

Variation in English language proficiency and languages used at home.

Differing views on whether children should go to Polish Saturday schools.

Agreed that their children should be both bilingual and biliterate Polish-English.

HOW ARE THINGS FOR POLISH CHILDREN LEARNING ENGLISH?

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I sat Karolina next to Ewa because I knew Ewa was having problems. …Karolina was the best one for Ewa to turn to because Karolina could explain to her about it (in Polish).

Teacher (Y6)

We are Young Interpreters. If there is somebody doesn't speak English, they speak another language like Polish, it means that me or Aron could go speak to them.

Agnieszka (Y5 pupil)

Well, before I went to Nursery, I didn't speak English at all, I only spoke Polish. I settled in on the first day, because I had another Polish friend there, he kind of taught me a bit of English as well.

Aron (Y5 pupil)

Karolina is my teacher.

Mum of Y6 pupil

We need to speak Polish at home because my dad goes to English school right now and my mum is going to start it next year, so they don't really know good English so I need to speak Polish.

Aron (Y5 pupil)

HOW ARE THINGS FOR POLISH CHILDREN LEARNING ENGLISH?

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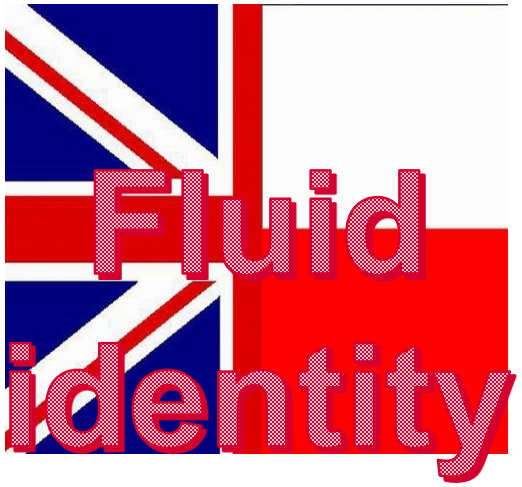
In school I am fully English and the moment I step out of the school I switch to Polish.

I think I am a lower Polish reader than I am an English reader because I can't get my head around the different letters. There's a z with a dot, z with a little line… Just difficult.

Karolina (Y6 pupil)



….because these letters, are really confusing and difficult when you read them because you suddenly don't know how to read them.

Agnieszka (Y5 pupil)

I mostly write at home in Polish because I speak in Polish at home so I write in Polish (but) at school I do everything in English. Aron (Y5 pupil)

EAL: DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS, DIFFERENT EXPECTATIONS

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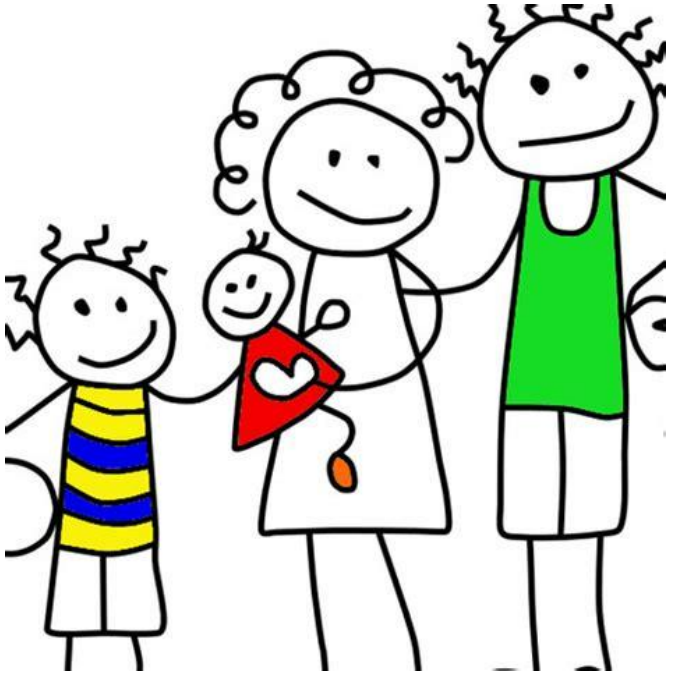

USEFUL RESOURCES: LANGUAGE BROKERS/INTERPRETERS

[Support for Children using their Interpreting Skills] from MotherTongue at Reading
www.mothertongue.org.uk

http://www3.hants.gov.uk/hyis

USEFUL RESOURCES:
FREE-TO-ACCESS, ONLINE AND EVIDENCE-BASED

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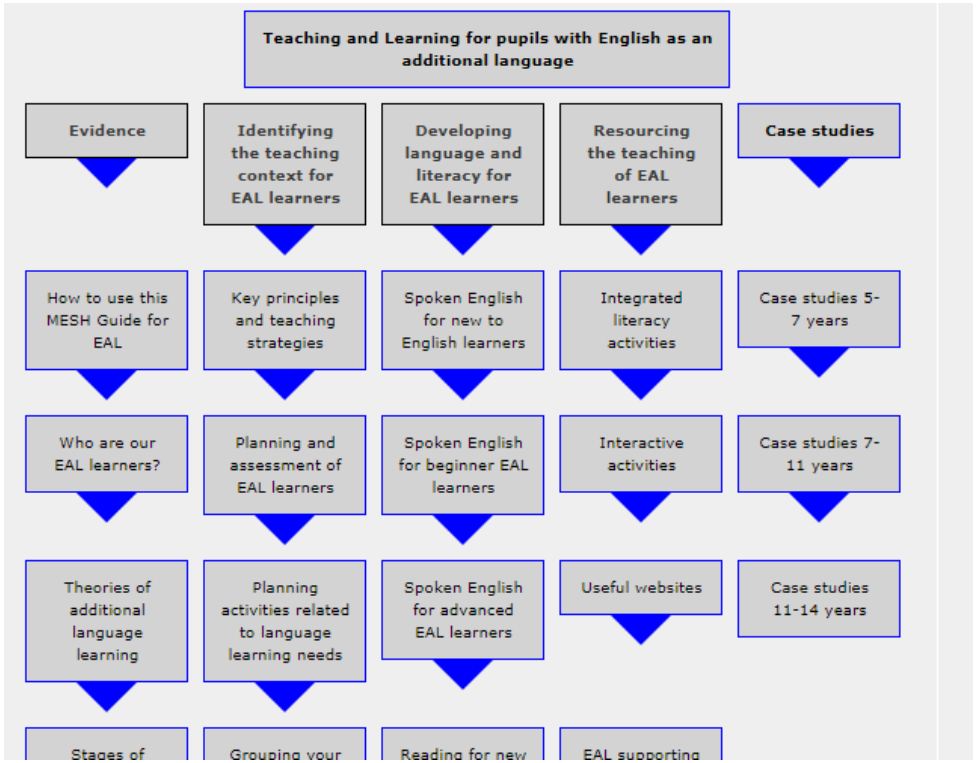
https://eal.britishcouncil.org/teachers/great-ideas-pages



Due for revision but some helpful links and advice from EAL specialists

http://**www.meshguides.org**/category/meshguides-published/general-pedagogy/english-as-an-additional-language-general-pedagogy/

Break time and networking

WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES – SOME CHOICES

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1. Take one aspect from the key features of what research tells us, and what that looks like in practice. Reflect on whether your current teaching/provision delivers this, and on how you might make adaptations.
2. Thinking of Karolina – has listening to her, and hearing the comments of other proficient EAL learners, made you reflect on changes to practice you might make?
3. Explore the links to the resources on slides 13 and 14 – what looks useful for your setting at the moment?

CONTACT AND OTHER THINGS

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If you have time, I would really appreciate your brief response to the session using the evaluation questions.

Thank you!

Have you considered becoming a member of NALDIC?

The contact for your Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Interest Group is Dianne Excell
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naldic
the national subject association for EAL