English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision

Supportive practices and guidance in working with deaf learners

Contents

Introduction

[Welcoming Our Learners: Scotland's ESOL Strategy 2015-2020](#) highlights as one of its strategic objectives:

ESOL learners access and recognise learning opportunities through all stages, changes and circumstances in their lives.

This guidance focuses on some of the supportive practices that practitioners have adopted in working with deaf learners from other countries in an ESOL learning context. It provides ideas and suggested approaches to working with deaf learners from other countries in ESOL provision, including things to consider in planning and preparation to ensure that deaf ESOL learners are effectively supported in their learning journey.

There is also general guidance from Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) on the provision of assessment arrangements for disabled candidates. Links to the relevant sections of the SQA website are also given. For clarity, this document refers to deaf learners and not Deaf learners to reflect the broad spectrum of deafness[1].

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[1] The term 'deaf' as we are using it here means any degree of hearing loss, in one or both ears, from mild to profound. The particular needs of deaf candidates will vary a great deal.

Summary of learner profiles

By focussing on some deaf learner profiles, this section illustrates how a range of practitioners have supported and worked with deaf learners in the ESOL classroom.

The following are points that practitioners should consider if they have new deaf learners -

- The learners come from countries where their first language is not English.

- The learners have either residual hearing (and wear hearing aids) or are profoundly deaf.

- Some learners can lip read their home country language.

- Some learners can read and write their home country language and some can read and write in English.

- Some learners have voice/speech.

- Some learners use the sign language of their home country language and some can use other countries' sign languages such as American Sign Language and British Sign Language.

- A home or family sign language has been evidenced by practitioners. This is a sign language that has been developed within the family and is a combination of signs and gestures.

The following points were identified as challenges in working with deaf learners from other countries:

- Learners who depend on their family using a family/home sign language may need more encouragement to develop independent learning skills.

- Some learners, in a formal assessment situation, may not wish to accept any assessment arrangements because they do not want to be perceived differently.

General advice and guidance in learning and teaching for practitioners

This list is not comprehensive but reflects a range of views from practitioners experienced in working with deaf learners in an ESOL learning context.

1. Consider accessing deaf cultural awareness training provided by deaf organisations. This can help you to understand how language works among deaf people.

2. Consider general adjustments, including making sure the necessary equipment is in place within the teaching space such as the Loop System, Personal Listeners and a flashing fire alarm.

3. The use of an electronic note taker and/or lip speaker in class can also help with communication support.

4. Enlist the help of others in the class to aid communication, including the use of first language, which can support the learning of English.

5. The use of a kinaesthetic approach to teaching and realia could be particularly beneficial when working with deaf learners.

6. Make the most of gesture and modelling in teaching strategies to show what is needed to complete a task. Use pictures and realia.

7. The use of a translation application can support communication with a deaf learner who can read in their home language.

8. If the learner has partial hearing or is using a hearing aid some tones may be heard more easily than others e.g. female voices may be easier to hear than male voices because of the difference in tone.

9. Always ask the deaf learner where they would like to sit in the class, and where they think the best place for the teacher would be.

10. Be mindful of talking too fast and do not raise your voice or over exaggerate your lip pattern, talk a little slower, but not so slow as to make what you are saying distorted.

11. Be aware that beards, moustaches, different accents and different lip shapes are among many of the barriers that can affect the ability of a deaf learner to understand what is being said.

12. Ensure you are facing the learner or that the learner is in a position to see you if he/she is deaf but can lip read.

13. Good light should be a major consideration to aid lip reading. Never stand in front of a light source (e.g. a window)

14. If there is a literacy need identified (possibly if the learner's first language is non-roman script), you can focus on letter formation and identification of letters then build on this, to the identification of words.

15. An alphabet BSL chart for you and the learner could be used to refer to in letter recognition activities.

16. A learner who can lip-read can use mouth shapes to recognise letters. They can mimic the shape of the letter by watching how you say it. They can check their understanding by choosing the correct letter on a card.

17. Identify any other learning support needs for example, separate 1:1 sessions focusing on speaking skills.

18. Encourage the deaf learners to ask when they have not understood or when something is not clear.

19. If another learner asks a question, repeat the question before you answer it as the deaf learner may have no idea who spoke or what was said.

20. Use repetition to reinforce learning – use the talk back technique – where the learners tell you what they have understood. Be mindful that you or the interpreter are not giving any visual clues that indicate whether something is right or wrong. This point is particularly important in an assessment situation but also worth considering in teaching practice.

21. Try to avoid too much focus on grammar, but if this is covered, try using colour for coding rather than relying on text.

E.g. verb - Monica travels to work by bus.

22. Make sure that there is no background noise or distractions which could affect the deaf person's ability to pick up what is being said.

Learner profile focus

The following profile provides some learning and teaching approaches that were used with a profoundly deaf learner from Syria. It also involved the use of an interpreter.

<u>Background</u>

Samir has been profoundly deaf from birth, he comes from Syria and can lip read Arabic and is starting to learn to lip read English. He can also read and write in Arabic and learned American Sign Language in school in Syria. He communicates mainly through sign with his family.

Samir's literacy skills are more focussed on forming letters in the roman script and he can use a pen or pencil, he uses his phone for translations. He can write his name and address but there is a mixture of upper and lower case letters, some letters are not formed correctly and there are some spelling errors. Samir also has voice. He is able to follow/mimic sounds by lip from others.

As Samir can also lip read, he is able to use mouth shapes for letter recognition. He can mimic the shape of the letter. The practitioner says a letter, for example, "b" or "d" and Samir identifies the letter by choosing the right one shown visually on a card – this effectively builds up his lip-reading vocabulary.

<u>Support</u>

In supporting this learner, the practitioner used a range of resources. Handwriting worksheets were sources from http://www.handwritingworksheets.com/. The worksheets have directions for forming the letters, dotted lines for tracing the letters and then a space for practising the letters freehand. The practitioner also made worksheets using the learner's name and other useful personal information such as address and postcode. Letter magnets were also used in both upper and lower case for Samir to place in alphabetical order or to match upper with lower case. An alphabet bingo game was also used. The practitioner would hold up a card with a letter on it and the learner would try to locate the letter on their bingo card.

In another exercise that focussed on colour vocabulary, this took the form of a language exchange process:

"We had a large sheet of craft paper and some paints and paint brushes. The learner signed the colour 'red' and then used the sign for 'lips'. I had to then select the appropriate colour of paint and then use a paint brush to paint lips on the paper."

Another person provided support if any interpreting was needed between the practitioner and the learner and used sign language for this.

There were also challenges with sounds and letter pronunciation. The practitioner did encounter some difficulties with the letters 'p' and 'b'. The practitioner used a piece of paper to exaggerate the difference between these two letters. She would hold this piece of paper in front of her mouth and would puff out extra air on the 'p' so that the learner would be able to see the paper moving and know that the letter was a 'p' and not a 'b'. The practitioner also got the learner to do the same with a piece of paper in front of their mouth and got them to mimic the shape of the letter and to puff out the extra air.

For 'd' and 't', the practitioner would highlight to the learner that for 'd' there would be an exaggerated movement in the larynx.

"I placed my finger and thumb on my larynx and indicated to the learner that the larynx moves when we say 'd' but it doesn't move when we say 't'. I then got them to place their finger and thumb over their own larynx, got them to make the shape and movement of 'd' so they could feel their larynx moving."

Based on the teaching approaches used for Samir, it would be possible to use lip reading to enable him to demonstrate that he recognises the sounds and names of the letters. If Samir were to undertake an SQA ESOL qualification, the NQ ESOL: Preparation for Literacy Unit may be an appropriate unit, as it requires him to:

- understand basic classroom language in English which could be done by lip-reading
- identify and form basic numbers in English which is a literacy skill
- identify and form letters of the English alphabet which is a literacy skill
- identify names and sounds of the English alphabet which could be done by lip-reading

Samir would need to develop his speech (in English) before he could be entered for other National 2 ESOL Units: ESOL: An Introduction to Beginner English Literacies 1, ESOL: An Introduction to Beginner English Literacies 2, ESOL for Everyday Life Listening and Speaking and ESOL in Context Listening and Speaking.

If his literacy skills develop sufficiently, he could, be entered for ESOL for Everyday Life: Reading and Writing and ESOL in Context Reading and Writing.

Before making decisions about which SQA units to enter deaf learners for, practitioners should consider the provision available (see Appendix 1) and, where necessary, appropriate assessment support. Information and contact details can be found on this link https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14976.html

Other learner profiles

The following profiles provide an illustration of a range of deaf learners who have accessed ESOL provision.

Learner Profile 1

Background

József is from Hungary and his first language is Hungarian. József has a hearing impairment and wears a hearing aid. If people are facing him he can lip read, in English and Hungarian, and has some hearing. He can hear some tones better than others e.g. male voices are harder to hear. His speech is also affected. József can read and write in Hungarian and he was initially assessed in reading and writing at SCQF level 3 English. He has completed SQA ESOL Units at National 3 and National 4. József is currently doing SCQF level 5 ESOL units (2 hrs per week) over 2 years, one unit per year at college.

Support

In previous listening assessments, József was allowed to have 25% extra time but he did not accept the support, as he did not want to be treated differently. He also struggled with the male voice/tone. As József could not hear well, he lip-read. If there is no adapted sound system/facility to play the audio recordings, and male voices are difficult for him to hear, a female can read the listening transcript aloud.

József could use lip reading to supplement his hearing.

Based on the scenario in this learner profile, it is worth noting that the practitioner could:

- emphasise to József that the use of assessment arrangements will not diminish his qualification. SQA only allows assessment arrangements that do not undermine the integrity of the qualification.
- explain to József that SQA produces CDs with extended pauses for precisely these situations (these are prepared for external examination)
- show József the relevant webpages on assessment arrangements
- read all the questions in the Listening assessments to József and check that he understands each one before playing the CD.

The practitioner should always ensure that they have documented confirmation of József's acceptance or refusal for a request to be submitted to SQA for extra time in the external examination.

Learner Profile 2

Background

Mária is Hungarian and has been profoundly deaf from birth. She also is an expert lip reader in Hungarian and uses this in class with other learners from Hungary, the class is very collaborative. Mária attends a community-based ESOL class delivered by a third sector organisation. Her level of lip-reading in English is unknown. She is able to read and write in Hungarian and English.

Support

Mária has some speech and has worked closely with the practitioner to manage more pronunciations. She pronounces a word and the practitioner signals whether it is right. Mária can remember how to say it in future.

The practitioner uses SQA ESOL National 2 Learning Support Materials including those for literacies learners and the National 3 Learning Support Materials for learning and teaching. Mária has not yet been assessed in any ESOL qualifications.

Learner Profile 3

Background

The Kulda Family were all born profoundly deaf in Latvia. They use Latvian sign language to communicate with each other and can write in Latvian. They are also proficient in BSL. English will be their third language. They can also lip read, and are learning to lip read in English, some of the family can make the sounds in English.

Support

The family all attend an ESOL class at college. Although the college class focusses on reading and writing in English (to help them in the wider community) an interpreter is also part of the ESOL class, the interpreter sounds out the words in English so that the learners can sound it out. For initial assessment, the learners were asked to fill in a simple form and produce a short piece of writing. It was clear from this that ability varied in the group but that they all knew the alphabet and were able to read simple words and phrases and fill in a simple form without much assistance. With the help of an interpreter

the class practitioner learned that they had little knowledge of English grammar or sentence structure.

SQA ESOL Literacies National 2 Learning Support Materials were used to introduce simple grammar concepts and vocabulary.

Learner Profile 4

Background

Saad has residual hearing and wears two hearing aids. Saad comes from Syria and his first language is spoken Arabic. He is able to use Arabic sign language but it's not used. There is also a home language that is used between family members. Saad's parents speak for him when he uses this home language and they then translate it to Arabic. Saad is not literate in his own language (Arabic).

Support

Saad is currently in an adult literacies class in the community where he is developing his reading and writing skills in English. In addition, he also has 1:1 tuition where there is a focus on speaking skills.

Useful links and resources

deafaction.org

British Sign Language (BSL) and Tactile BSL
https://elearning.healthscotland.com/course/view.php?id=531#section-11

The Bell Foundation: New Resources published to support deaf learners who use English as an Additional Language
https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/news/new-resources-published-to-support-deaf-learners-who-use-english-as-an-additional-language/

SQA advice and guidance on assessment arrangements
http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html

SQA ESOL qualifications
Add link here

Assessment Arrangements for Disabled Candidates

SQA can allow assessment arrangements for deaf candidates undertaking SQA ESOL assessments. The purpose of the assessment arrangements is to provide deaf candidates with an equal opportunity to demonstrate their attainment without compromising the integrity of the assessment. Deaf candidates are individuals with a diverse range of needs and it is important that you consider the individual assessment needs of your candidates when considering the most appropriate assessment arrangements.

SQA operates a needs–led model in relation to the provision of assessment arrangements.

This means that SQA requires centres to provide evidence of a candidate's difficulty and evidence that a candidate needs the support in teaching and learning, uses it in class and in any internal assessments.

SQA also requires the centre to identify any particular assessment arrangements a candidate may need. Therefore, centres are advised to contact SQA to discuss individual requirements for assessment arrangements.

Further advice and guidance to centres regarding the assessment arrangements that can be considered and the quality assurance systems they must have in place can be found at http://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/14977.html.

Based on the learner profiles given in this document, a summary of key points in relation to SQA ESOL assessment support include the following:

- Appropriate amplification equipment normally used by the candidate or provided by the centre during learning and teaching

- A listening assessment CD with extended pauses, for the relevant ESOL external examination, can be provided by SQA

- Lip-reading is also an appropriate arrangement, where someone reads out the transcript of a listening assessment in a live presentation

A key issue around access to SQA National Qualifications in ESOL, raised during the engagement phase for the implementation of the ESOL Strategy (2015-2020), related to the use of British Sign Language (BSL) in SQA ESOL qualifications.

In relation to National Units and Courses in ESOL at all levels, using BSL to demonstrate reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in English is not deemed to be an acceptable adjustment.

This is because BSL is a visual-gestural language and recognised as a language in its own right. Most of the National Qualifications in ESOL specifically require candidates to demonstrate their competence in reading, writing, listening and speaking in English. The provision of a BSL interpreter would mean that the candidate was not demonstrating the ability to understand and produce English which are the key assessment objectives.

BSL can be used as a supportive practice strategy in learning, teaching and preparation for assessment as long as it supports the development of the skills to be assessed.

Appendix 1 provides a list of qualifications that would not require assessment arrangements for deaf learners and those that would.

Appendix 1 – SQA general guidance

Summary table

SQA National Units that **do not** require candidates to demonstrate listening and speaking skills	SQA National Qualification units and courses that **do** require candidates to demonstrate listening and speaking skills
SCQF Level 2 (National 2) ESOL for Everyday Life: Reading and Writing (H998 72) ESOL in Context: Reading and Writing (H99A 72) **SCQF Level 4** ESOL: Reading for Employability (H1XD 10) ESOL: Writing for Employability (H1XF 10) ESOL: Living in Scotland (H1XH 10) **SCQF Level 5** ESOL: Reading for Employability (H1XD 11) ESOL: Writing for Employability (H1XF 11) ESOL: Living in Scotland (H1XH 11)	**SCQF level 2** ESOL: Preparation for Literacy (HA1R 72) ESOL: An Introduction to Beginner English Literacies (HW55 72) ESOL: An Introduction to Beginner English Literacies (HW56 72) ESOL for Everyday Life: Listening and Speaking (H997 72) ESOL in Context: Listening and Speaking (H999 72) **SCQF level 3** ESOL Course (C727 73) ESOL for Everyday Life (H24H 73) ESOL in Context (Work and Study) (H24L 73) **SCQF level 4** ESOL Course (C727 74) ESOL for Everyday Life (H24H 74) ESOL in Context (Work and Study) (H24L 74) ESOL Assignment: Added Value Unit (H24N 74)

	SCQF level 5 ESOL Course (C827 75) ESOL for Everyday Life (H24H 75) ESOL in Context (Work and Study) (H24L 75) **SCQF level 6** ESOL Course (C827 76) ESOL for Everyday Life (H24H 76) ESOL in Work-related Contexts (H4X6 76) ESOL in Study-related Contexts (H4X7 76)

Appendix 2 - Questions used to help develop the learner profiles

The learner profiles provided in this guidance are based on authentic learner profiles and situations. Information was collected from a range of practitioners who had worked or were working with deaf learners in an ESOL context.

The following questions were devised to gather information and may be useful to others if working with deaf learners at the initial assessment stage:

1. When did the learner become deaf?
2. What is the degree of hearing loss?
3. What is their country of origin?
4. What is their preferred/first language?
5. What is their preferred means of communication? E.g. sign language? Spoken language?(lip reading)
6. How did they communicate in their home country?
7. How do they communicate in Scotland?
8. Have they learned to or do they read and write in the language of their home country?
9. Did they have any reading and writing skills in English at the start of the course?
10. Have they undertaken any SQA ESOL qualifications and if so, which units or courses?
11. Are they learning or have they learned BSL and have they achieved any BSL qualifications – SQA or other?

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