Assessment
in Focus

Assessing students with English
as an additional language

Sue Thompson – Senior Publisher

Since 1993 Sue has worked in a number of roles in educational publishing, including as a contracts and rights manager and the manager of a list of tests and assessments for the post-16 sector. Sue has worked for CfBT managing Information Advice and Guidance services for Berkshire. During this time Sue set up and ran a large EU-funded project to bring effective training to SMEs.

As Senior Publisher at GL Assessment Sue is responsible for the *Cognitive Abilities Test: 4th Edition*; the *New Group Reading Test*, the *York Assessment of Reading for Comprehension* as well as the recently published *Baseline* and *Progress Test in English*. Sue has a BA in English from the University of Aberystwyth.

About GL Assessment

GL Assessment (known internationally as GL Education) is the leading provider of benchmarking, formative and diagnostic assessments to UK schools and has a growing presence in British, bilingual and international schools in over 100 countries worldwide. We also provide assessment services to ministries of education and their agencies.

Our assessments are developed in collaboration with a global community of experts from leading universities and research teams, and have been used by education, health and psychology professionals for over 30 years. We believe in a whole pupil approach to assessment and our integrated portfolio helps to reveal students' potential, track their progress and identify any barriers and learning difficulties they might have.

Recognising that technology is a driver for educational change, we have also pioneered an award winning digital assessment system, which has delivered over 7 million online tests across the globe, and we continue to innovate with adaptive testing and tablet-based assessments.

Find out more at www.gl-assessment.co.uk and www.gl-education.com.

Assessing students with English as an additional language

For all students in schools, language is key to every aspect of their academic work. A good deal of interaction with teachers and peers is face-to-face and spoken; at the same time classroom activities generally involve reading and writing while incorporating a variety of other visual and audio representations (e.g. images, graphics and sounds in web-based materials). In all school activities language is involved. Even when completing non-verbal tests, there is still a need to understand and process procedural rubrics and task instructions, not to mention that the requisite thinking processes are, at least in part, encoded in language. Perhaps it should be noted that sometimes ethnicity is unhelpfully conflated with English as an additional language (EAL). Many students from minority ethnic backgrounds are bi/multilingual and speak English as their first language. Conflating ethnicity and EAL can lead to misrecognition of students' abilities.

... developing all-round competence in EAL is a long-term process. Learning the English language knowledge and skills required for academic work is particularly challenging.

Students with EAL are, by definition, bilingual or multilingual; they can use two or more languages to communicate with others at varying levels of competence. However, developing all-round competence in EAL is a long-term process. Learning the English language knowledge and skills required for academic work is particularly challenging. For a vast majority of EAL students in our schools the learning of English begins after they have learned to use their first language at age-appropriate levels. Educational psychologists and linguists generally agree that children have an innate capacity for first language acquisition. For children growing up, interactions with family members and carers in their home environments provide them with critically important opportunities to experience and to learn to use their first language. The actual level of language competence achieved by any individual child will depend on a host of factors such as the social environment and the nature and types of social interaction with others (MacNamara, 1973, 1982). For instance, Ervin-Tripp (1973) found that hearing children of deaf parents could not learn speech simply through exposure to English on radio or television broadcasts. Vygotsky (1978) cites the case of Jim, a hearing boy with deaf parents, who demonstrated delayed first language acquisition because of an absence of language interaction at home. In brief, social interaction provides both the 'trigger' and the support for first language development. Therefore, development of spoken language and subsequent reading and writing should not be considered automatic, but something which needs to be nurtured and supported. Active language use is necessary for development of communicative competence (Foster-Cohen, 2009). A supportive educational and social environment is clearly important for students learning EAL. But, first-hand experience of, and exposure to English by themselves do not guarantee successful development of EAL.

How is additional language learning different to first language learning? A key difference is that a child in her/his first language environment learns language forms (e.g. sounds of names of people, pet animals

and everyday objects) and meaning (e.g. ideas and concepts such as carers) at the same time, whereas the additional language learner is likely to have some knowledge of the 'world' already. So some parts of additional language learning are about learning new linguistic forms only (e.g. words and expressions) in a different language because the meaning involved is known; in some domains they may have to learn both linguistic form and meaning anew, for example, new content in school subjects.

Some aspects of the knowledge and skills developed with first language learning are useful and transferrable when learning subsequent languages. Seen in this light, a high level of age-appropriate first language development can form a sound basis for additional language development (Cummins, 1992, 2000). However, there is no question that additional language learning involves a good deal of 'new' learning. For instance, where the grammar of the first language does not operate the count versus non-count noun rules (e.g. apple versus apples), the additional language learner will need to develop knowledge of such rules. Language sounds of the additional language may also be sufficiently different from the learner's first language for pronunciation and intonation to be part of the new learning. In addition to linguistic and subject knowledge demands, EAL learners at school also face the 'hidden curriculum' (Christie, 1984); embedded values, assumed knowledge, education and assessment practices, as well as expected language use (sociolinguistics and pragmatics). These more subtle, but no less important, rules and conventions of the additional language such as implied meaning, and formality and politeness may also need to be learned. In sum, the school curriculum and classroom activities should provide opportunities for students to develop the following aspects of the English language, none of which should be seen in isolation from the others.

- A new system of sound-symbol relationships, new sounds and grouping of sounds which may or may not bear some resemblance to the first language.

- New intonation patterns and their specific meanings, including ways of speaking which are rarely seen in written form.

- A new lexis: new words for known and unfamiliar meanings and concepts.

- A new way of stringing words into meaningful units (phrases and sentences), and meaningful units together (coherent chunks of speech and written passages).

- A new set of non-verbal gestures and signs.

- A new set of social signals: ways of indicating approval and disapproval, indicating and recognising speaker/listener relationships, status, degrees of formality, attitudes, opening and closing conversations, humour and expressing emotions.

- New sets of culturally specific and culturally shared/understood information about both the concrete world and abstractions: values, behavioural modes, rituals, indications of class/status, culturally inappropriate behaviour, anachronisms, etc.

... there is no question that additional language learning involves a good deal of 'new' learning.

... more subtle, but no less important, rules and conventions of the additional language such as implied meaning, and formality and politeness may also need to be learned.

- Culturally-specific ways of perceiving, talking about reflecting upon the world, which requires making judgements about and between cultures.

Another fundamental difference between first and additional language learners is the experiential trajectory. Unlike first-language learners who begin their language development from infancy, additional language learners embark on the process at different ages. Motivation for language learning of additional language learners may also be different. It is generally understood that, among other things, first-language learners use and develop their language facility because of a basic human need to communicate (Mitchell, Myles and Marsden, 2013). The motivation of EAL learners to learn the language often stems from being in an environment where English is the medium of instruction and study, and is not always out of the individual's volition. There may well be, to an extent, 'instrumental motivation' (Ellis, 1997), where the purpose is to pass an examination or further educational or career goals. This means they may adopt language-learning strategies and engage with the use of language with effects that are different to that of first-language students.

Professional experience and research in Anglophone countries in the past 30 years consistently suggests that in school environments supportive of EAL development, students tend to take approximately 18 months to develop a reasonable level of spoken fluency for everyday purposes and five or more years to develop peer-level academic English language competence.

Professor Constant Leung, King's College, London
Nandhaka Peiris, National Association of
Language Development in the Curriculum

March 2016

References

Christie, F. (1984). *Children writing: study guide*. Geelong: Deakin University Press.

Cummins, J. (1992). Language proficiency, bilingualism, and academic achievement. In: Richard-Amato, P.A. and Snow, M.A. (eds.). *The multicultural classroom: readings for content-area teachers*. New York: Longman. 16–26.

Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power and pedagogy: bilingual children in the crossfire*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Ellis, R. (1997). *Second language acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ervin-Tripp, S. (1973). Some strategies for the first two years. In: Moore T. (ed.) *Cognitive development and the acquisition of language*. 1st ed. New York: Academic Press. 261–286.

Foster-Cohen, S. (2009). *Language acquisition*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

MacNamara, J. (1973). Cognitive basis of language learning in infants. *Psychological Review*, 79 (1). 1–13.

Macnamara, J. (1982). *Names for things*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Mitchell, R., Myles, F. and Marsden, E. (2013). *Second language learning theories*. 3rd ed. Oxford: Routledge.

Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind and society*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Tests and assessments referenced in the following case studies:

Cognitive Abilities Test: 4th Edition (CAT4)

CAT4 comprises a suite of tests which together offer a profile of a cohort, group or individual that can support learning by identifying how students learn best and what their potential to achieve may be. The tests are for verbal, non-verbal and quantitative reasoning, and spatial ability. Together, these offer deep insights and comprehensive analysis of reasoning skills for students aged 6–17 years.

New Group Reading Test (NGRT)

NGRT has two parts: sentence completion and passage comprehension. The test is used to generate a benchmark for reading, and then track progress. It is a useful screening measure to identify potential support needs. The reports offer group and individual analysis as well as year-on-year progress tracking. NGRT is available for students aged 6–16 years.

British Picture Vocabulary Scale: 3rd Edition (BPVS3)

BPVS3 is a test of students' receptive or hearing vocabulary. It is quick and easy to administer and offers a benchmark (through a range of data) for receptive vocabulary development. Four pictures are presented to the student and a target word spoken by the teacher, the student must match one of the pictures to the word. Students aged 3 years and older may be assessed.

Pupil Attitudes to Self and School (PASS)

The PASS Survey provides insights to students' mindsets that would otherwise be difficult to obtain. In doing so, it helps schools discover often hidden reasons behind issues such as low attainment, challenging behaviour and low attendance. PASS is available in age-appropriate forms for students aged 5–18 years, and in a range of languages, including Welsh.

The value of *CAT4* and *NGRT* with a multi-national student cohort in Malaysia

The International School @ Park City in Kuala Lumpur has students from the age of 4 years in the Nursery to 18 years in the 6th Form. The school broadly follows the English curriculum with students being entered for IGCSE and A-levels. There is an emphasis on high attainment (94% of students achieve A* to C in their IGCSEs) but also on personal development; the Secondary School development plan is focussed on areas identified from *CAT4* data, *NGRT* data and examination results. Presently, these are literacy, Assessment for Learning and thinking skills, and these have become embedded across all learning.

At the time of writing, there are 56 nationalities in the school. The majority of children are Mandarin-speaking Malaysian nationals but around 50% come from around the world; from Australia, America, the UK and Europe as well as significant numbers from China and Korea. The level of proficiency in English varies enormously.

Students tend to be stronger in maths (hence higher than average Quantitative Reasoning scores in *CAT4*) but some are just beginning to learn English, so reading and Verbal Reasoning may be weak.

The school uses *CAT4* at several key points in order to understand each student's capabilities and learning profile as they enter and progress through school. Admissions are on a rolling basis and the school is growing with new places opening up in every year group each year.

The school uses CAT4 *at several key points in order to understand each student's capabilities and learning profile as they enter and progress through school.*

Regular and systematic assessment is key

Whole cohorts are tested with *CAT4* in Year 7, Year 10 and Year 12, at the beginning of each Key Stage. This is an opportunity to assess and then reassess both the profile produced by *CAT4* and the indicators of future attainment. Head of Secondary, Nicola Lambros, who also oversees the assessment programme, says:

> "We consider it vital to assess our secondary students with *CAT4* at the start of every Key Stage. This renews the data we hold on their Verbal Reasoning skills and the resulting learning profile but also shows us how, cognitively, students have developed – and they do develop between the ages of 12 and 16. We use the *New Group Reading Test* every year to monitor progress in literacy, this being one of our main focuses. Also, *NGRT* offers enough analysis to enable the teacher to identify areas for support and to intervene very precisely. Together *CAT4* and *NGRT* offer an ideal combination and plenty of information about our students."

On entry to the school each student's profile from *CAT4* is considered carefully. Very often those parts of the test that are not dependent on language can produce very high scores. The mean for Quantitative, Non-Verbal and Spatial Reasoning tends to be significantly higher than 100 and conversely, the Verbal Reasoning score slightly lower.

Understanding that a student has high spatial ability but may have weaker language skills means that teachers can adapt their teaching to accommodate these children – this is so important, especially when a child has just come into school.

If a particular student has no English, *CAT4* will be administered with one-to-one support so the tasks are clear and children have the best chance of demonstrating their ability in the NVR, Quantitative and Spatial tests. One student entered the school with SAS scores of 141, 136 and 136 for these tests, respectively, and it was on the basis of these scores that he was placed in top sets. Verbal Reasoning was very low (SAS 65) because he had very limited English but within a year his language skills had improved to an extent that enabled him to access the curriculum and begin to achieve at the level indicated by his other tests scores. Knowledge of his very high ability was a real benefit in supporting this student in his language learning.

Although English is widely spoken in Kuala Lumpur, the global profile of the school's intake means language support is required for many students. This is provided through dedicated lessons for English Language learners and, vitally, for study skills where key skills such as summarisation, skimming and structuring written work are taught. The focus on literacy throughout every curriculum area (every teacher sees themselves as a teacher of the English Language as well as a teacher of their subject area) and use of the *CAT4* Verbal-Spatial profile for lesson planning also supports language improvement in all students.

Impact on teaching and learning

Nicola Lambros continues:

> "We expect to see the impact of the *CAT4* and *NGRT* testing in the classroom, and we do. Understanding that a student has high spatial ability but may have weaker language skills means that teachers can adapt their teaching to accommodate these children – this is so important, especially when a child has just come into school. Using pictures, diagrams, film to introduce a topic or new piece of learning rather than relying on lots of verbal information can really make a difference."

Using indicators

The school uses the *CAT4* indicators to calculate value-added and set targets for individual students. Regular use of *CAT* means targets can be reviewed at the start of every Key Stage. As Verbal Reasoning scores increase with greater proficiency in English, it is often the case that other test scores increase too. This will have an impact on indicators and students will often be expected to raise expectations based on *CAT4* between key stages. Children, parents and teachers work towards the 'if challenged' targets and in Year 10 the student and parent reports are very useful for communicating what is possible in terms of attainment.

This school gets maximum value from using *CAT4* on a regular basis and working with and adapting to profiles which, over time, may change as English is acquired and reasoning through English improves. However, there are additional benefits that go beyond monitoring students with EAL: for all students, the programme of assessment means their learning profile can be re-assessed and attainment targets more closely monitored and amended as necessary. Inclusion of a reading test year-on-year means alongside verbal reasoning, practical, diagnostic information about each student's reading can be used to inform, not just language development, but reading progress too.

Using the *British Picture Vocabulary Scale* to support exceptional language development

Taylor Road Primary School serves inner-city Leicester in the East Midlands in the UK. Rated 'Outstanding' in all aspects by Ofsted in 2012, the inspection report stated that the school 'sets out to provide the best possible education for its pupils. The way it focuses on pupils' learning and personal development results in their excellent achievement and rapid progress.' This is borne out by SATs[1] results: in 2015, 97% of pupils achieved Level 4 and above in reading, writing and maths (this compares favourably to the national average of 80% and the local average of 78%). This represents a 13% increase since 2012 when Ofsted reported and pupils now make at least two levels of progress in both reading and writing.

The school has a very high number of children with English as an additional language. In all, 25 languages are spoken and children come from 18 different ethnic heritage groups.

Christine Comber, Deputy Head with responsibility for special educational needs says:

> "A small minority of pupils enter the school, even at Key Stage 2, having never received any formal schooling in their lives. In the past, we have admitted children from refugee camps in Ethiopia and Eritrea who had never been to school."

With this backdrop, it was clear that the school needed to pay great attention to language development.

> "The school has a rich variety of cultural, ethnic and language backgrounds. When we looked into the language development of the children a few years ago, we saw that their reading, writing and other subjects were being held back because of poor language acquisition.
>
> On the surface, children were able to speak quite well – they could hold a conversation about something that had happened the day before, for example. But on closer analysis, we saw that they had a very poor knowledge of vocabulary and they relied on an extremely small amount of words. They also had poor knowledge of syntax."

On the surface, children were able to speak quite well [...] on closer analysis, we saw that they had a very poor knowledge of vocabulary and they relied on an extremely small amount of words.

[1] Tests in English and mathematics administered to all 11-year-olds in England at the end of the primary phase.

Establishing a baseline with the *British Picture Vocabulary Scale* (*BPVS*)

In 2007, the school introduced *BPVS* as the starting point for an assessment regime which has developed over time. *BPVS* is designed to assess pupils' receptive (hearing) vocabulary. For each question, the teacher says a word and the pupil responds by selecting the picture (from four options) that best illustrates the word's meaning. The questions broadly sample words that represent a range of areas – animals, toys and emotions – as well as parts of speech, such as nouns, verbs and attributes.

As no reading is required, *BPVS* is ideal for assessing language development for children with English as an additional language and those who have expressive language impairments – a common problem in this school. The assessment is untimed but is designed to take approximately 10 minutes to administer.

The school-wide project involved the use of *BPVS* with all children in even-numbered years (Foundation 2, Year 2 and Year 4) and indeed, the results showed that the children's understanding of language was at a low level.

Armed with results from *BPVS*, the school introduced a programme of work to address this. Two half-hour sessions per week were dedicated to reading with the children. Every child followed a story in their own book while the teacher read and used quality questioning prepared by the Head Teacher and the Deputy Head after each chapter, focusing on literal, inferential and evaluative questions.

The children also had two half-hour sessions each week dedicated to language activities from a scheme written by the Deputy Head, focusing on raising specific vocabulary and language skills. The school then re-tested the same children at the end of each year to measure progress.

BPVS as an on-entry assessment

The school uses the *BPVS* as an initial assessment on entry to the school. Christine Comber (Deputy Head) explains:

> "The school's intake is high, especially as we are a three-form entry. Many of our children are new to the country and new to English or speak English at school and their mother tongue at home. We therefore use the *BPVS* as an initial screening assessment on entry to school. This shows us the level at which the child is operating with regard to language when they start and used alongside literacy and maths assessments, it also gives us an idea of the level of their ability.
>
> Each new child is re-tested after 6 months in the school to show the progress they have made. If a child has made little progress, these two scores begin the evidence file that may be used for SEN identification."

Understanding language is the most important factor in being able to access learning [...] as well as being essential to communicate with others in day-to-day life.

The results are used to show the level of receptive language the children have, always recognising that expressive language usually follows receptive. The class teacher can then understand the level at which a child will understand what is being said to them and that they will respond at a much lower level.

The Deputy Head analyses results to determine the areas of vocabulary the child was failing in to determine a Wave 3[2] programme to 'plug any gaps' in receptive vocabulary, and goes on to say:

> "Understanding language is the most important factor in being able to access learning – understanding instructions and explanations – as well as being essential to communicate with others in day-to-day life. The *BPVS* offers a great way to detect language impairment and to enable us to put measures in place to address any issues straight away."

Since the introduction of the *BPVS* and the dramatic rise in attainment, the school has added more assessments to support the children's learning. These include *CAT4*, *Progress Test in English* and *Maths*, the *New Group Reading Test* and for use with children who may be at risk of dyslexia, the *Dyslexia Screener*.

[2] An individual reading and writing programme for pupils who are not making expected progress through normal class provision or scripted interventions. Each child's programme is based on an initial in-depth assessment and addresses skills and knowledge at word, sentence and text level. The aim is to help the pupil develop a range of independent reading and writing strategies. The programme is targeted at pupils in Key Stage 1 and older pupils with SEN requiring 1-on-1 support (FFT website (www.literacy.fischertrust.org/index.php/wave3), Accessed on: March 2016).

Using *PASS* to support ethnic minority students across Wales

In order to improve the future employment prospects of ethnic minority children and young people in Wales, nine local authorities participated in the innovative Minority Ethnic Language and Achievement Project (MELAP), which was part-funded by the European Social Fund, through the Welsh Government. The project used the *Pupil Attitudes to Self and School* (*PASS*) attitudinal survey to support the students and gain distinctive insights into this diverse group.

With a large and increasing number of children living in Wales who speak English as an additional language, the Welsh Government decided to run this 3-year project that would focus on the particular needs of ethnic minority children. The project concluded in August 2013 and helped more than 2000 11- to 19-year-old EAL students. "At its core, MELAP's objective was to raise attainment, wellbeing and positive employment opportunities in a group of children who were at risk of becoming vulnerable," explains David Sargent, then Senior European project manager at the Department for Education and Skills responsible for managing MELAP. "Our hard targets included the number of children the project supported and the extra qualifications they will achieve in mainstream schools, such as a GCSE in their home language. However, we also wanted to measure the 'softer' outcomes to provide tangible evidence of the effectiveness of our work."

To benchmark and track the progress accurately, the students were surveyed twice a year using *PASS*. This attitudinal survey helped build a complete picture of a student's motivations, aspirations and anxieties, and allowed early and effective interventions to be put in place should there be a low score in any factor.

PASS in Pembrokeshire

Annette Thomas, Minority Ethnic Language and Achievement Service team leader and the MELAP project manager for Pembrokeshire County Council explains how using *PASS* supported ethnic minority students to achieve their full potential in education.

"Our objective was to increase the capacity of schools to meet the needs of students who, as a group, speak 47 different languages. We know how important wellbeing is when it comes to achievement, as does Estyn, which points out, 'Mental, physical and emotional wellbeing is an essential pre-condition for successful learning'.[3]

Many of our ethnic minority students are bright students but we do need to be aware of the challenges they face when learning through an additional language. Using a tool like *PASS* reflects how the children are feeling. We were already tracking our students' progress, carrying out pupil and teacher questionnaires and analysing academic achievement, but *PASS* adds a certain depth to our knowledge about students.

[3] Estyn (2010). *A self-evaluation manual for non-maintained settings.* Cardiff: Estyn. p.9.

As well as being able to identify and support students' needs, it kick-started very valuable conversations with the children. Whether the issue was to do with language, personal issues or academic learning, the child really wanted to talk and as a result of these conversations, we were able to support the pupil more effectively."

Focussing on the individual

Using *PASS* opened up dialogue which otherwise might not have been initiated. The Local Authority found *PASS* particularly useful in identifying those who were doing well academically, but whose low self-esteem was affecting their confidence in their ability to learn. Annette Thomas adds:

> "The results flagged up a boy who was doing well on the surface but was experiencing anxiety about exams. We had no idea as his results in class were good, but he was really quite worked up about his ability to take exams and needed support to build his confidence. *PASS* helped us to intervene by introducing additional study skills classes."

Low scores for self-regard, response to the curriculum and learner confidence were identified amongst some of the EAL students. *"This was particularly highlighted amongst students with poor communication skills,"* says Annette, and continues:

> "The language barriers meant some students did not understand what the teacher was saying and so lacked confidence in their own ability to learn or to ask questions. Having English as an additional language can affect a student's confidence in their ability to learn. Just one unfamiliar word in an exam can throw them out – one very mathematically-minded girl was thrown totally off course by vocabulary in a maths question. It asked about 'soft-centred' sweets and she didn't know what these were. Now, after conversations with staff, we can help EAL students prepare earlier and more thoroughly for their exams.
>
> The project has allowed us to reach out to many additional students and to learn more about the issues that they face so that we can work more effectively with our schools.
>
> Using tools like *PASS* in some instances has helped us to match interventions such as translation and interpretation services, help with extending vocabulary or organising more clubs. We're able to nip issues in the bud and stay one step ahead, which means no one slips through the net."

The language barriers meant some students did not understand what the teacher was saying and so lacked confidence in their own ability to learn or to ask questions.

The project has allowed us to reach out to many additional students and to learn more about the issues that they face so that we can work more effectively with our schools.

Using *CAT* to raise expectations

Expectations of students' attainment particularly in English had been modest. [...] However, the verbal deficit [...] proved not to be such a pressing issue so students now are entered for First Language qualifications in both English Language and Literature.

Our final case study is a group of schools that includes international schools and schools offering the country's local national curriculum. Children from Kindergarten to Sixth Form are educated and take a range of qualifications including IGCSE, AS and A-levels. Children are taught in English and where teaching in the local language is a requirement (maths and science) subjects are taught bilingually.

The *Cognitive Abilities Test: 3rd Edition* (*CAT3*) was introduced by the Head of Curriculum in 2011 as part of a whole-school improvement initiative and a drive to better understand the students' capabilities. Before this, assessment was limited to end-of-year school tests. It was felt, and so it proved, that deepening understanding of students' abilities through the use of *CAT* would demonstrate to the school community that the children were capable of higher attainment.

Assessing what really matters

CAT is used when students enter one of the schools within the group and is very suitable because it is not connected to any curriculum but instead looks at the abilities that support academic success. Parameters are set in advance due to the expectation that, for most students, there would be a verbal discrepancy.

The Head of Curriculum says:

> "Expectations of students' attainment particularly in English had been modest. For example, at age 16 students were entered for the Cambridge English Second Language IGCSE. However, the verbal deficit, as shown through *CAT*, proved not to be such a pressing issue so students now are entered for First Language qualifications in both English Language and Literature."

This meant teaching programmes were strengthened and has led to up to 92% of students gaining a pass in these subjects at A* to C.

CAT4 is now in use and administered in Year 4, Year 6 and Year 9. It has proved an effective way of looking at performance. For students following the English curriculum target setting is straightforward. For children following the local curriculum, a simple conversion is undertaken to create targets to match the local grading system. As we have seen in the earlier case, regular use of *CAT4* means the developing verbal reasoning skills of students with EAL can be closely tracked and targets amended as these skills improve. This was found to give very accurate predictions which could also be used for the school and teaching staff.

A whole school approach for every school in the group

In this group of schools, *CAT4* has been used as an improvement tool for the whole of each school and has had far-reaching benefits in demonstrating through the outcomes and particularly the indicators, that expectations had been too low. Introducing robust data that can be refreshed on a regular basis has meant that students are being challenged academically and achieving at a higher level.

CAT was introduced to a system which did not have a history of standardised testing and so the concept, the data and how to interpret and implement results was new to almost everyone. However, within 2 years, *CAT* could be used with confidence to support students' learning.

Afterword

When *CAT4* was published in 2012, included in the Teacher Guidance Pack was a short overview of research into the effects of English language acquisition on students' learning. This was set alongside a case study with references in detail to contrasting *CAT4* scores from three different students with English as an additional language. This current publication is an attempt to update and extend this overview and give more contextualised information through additional cases of good practice showing how standardised assessments can be used to support students with English as an additional language in different settings and for different purposes.

Part of the *CAT4* advice was about the length of time students had been acquiring English and possible testing exemptions or adaptations. From the cases above, we can see that repeating assessment or selecting particular assessments, such as the *BPVS,* are more likely scenarios in many schools. This is not because students with English as an additional language are not a priority; quite the opposite. There is a realisation that appropriate choice of assessment and careful interpretation of results can support these and every student in school.

Parts of *CAT4* that are not language-dependent can have a real impact on students with English as an additional language, helping their teachers understand their reasoning skills in three of the four most important areas for academic success. Some of the advice offered with *CAT4* is still relevant. Some implications of testing with *CAT4* and other GL Assessment tests still stand, they are as follows.

- Reliability of indicators – these are likely to be an underestimate of eventual attainment, particularly in *CAT4* if the Verbal Reasoning tests have been included. (Repeat testing and regular re-evaluation of outcomes as carried out by Park City is the way to overcome this.)

- The Non-Verbal Reasoning tests in *CAT4* require the combining of verbal and visual thought processes where the student will use their own 'inner voice' to reason through the task. This is true also, although to a lesser extent, of the Quantitative Reasoning tests. The outcomes from these tests will be especially useful when supporting students for whom English is an additional language.

- For many of GL Assessment's tests, administration instructions may be translated into the student's first language. This can include example and practice questions (apart from those testing English or reading) so that the conceptual and practical requirements of the questions are clear.

Finally, grateful thanks are due to Professor Leung, Nandhaka Peiris, Nicola Lambros, Christine Comber, Annette Thomas and the Deputy Headteacher from our final case study for giving their time and expertise to this guide.