**Kellie Heintz:** Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome to the seventh webinar in our suite of professional learning sessions that will focus on the implementation of the Victorian curriculum F-10 English as an Additional Language.

Before we begin our session today, I would like to acknowledge country. In recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’s spiritual and cultural connection to country, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of the Kulin Nations, and all the other lands on which we meet today. We acknowledge the continued care of the lands and waterways over generations and celebrate the continuation of a living culture that has a unique role in this region. We pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, traditions, culture and hopes of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples across the nation, and hope they will walk with us on our journey.

Thank you all for your attendance this afternoon at what continues to be a very challenging time for all of us. My name is Kellie Heintz, and I am the EAL Curriculum Manager at the VCAA, and I will be hosting our webinar this afternoon.

I would like to advise you that this presentation is being recorded, and that the slides and recordings will be made available once they have been transcribed and edited. This will take a short amount of time, so we’ll keep you posted through our usual communication channels about their availability. They will be ready as soon as possible and will be available along with the other recordings that are uploaded on the VCAA website.

I’m also excited to announce that we have two additional webinars that are now open for registration. I will provide more details about these at the conclusion of this presentation.

Today, in this webinar, we have more than 800 participants, who come from the Department of Education and Training, Catholic and independent schools, as well as various other EAL stakeholders.

We will be managing questions through the question and answer function of the software, so please be mindful that, with such a large audience, a large volume of questions is generated. So we will attempt to answer as many as we can, and will do this towards the end of the session.

I would like to acknowledge my colleagues, Alicia Farrell and Craig Smith, who are working with me today in the background on supporting this webinar.

I would now like to introduce you to Dr Shem Macdonald, who is a lecturer in Applied Linguistics and TESOL at La Trobe University, and he’s currently the president of VicTESOL – that is, the professional teaching association for EAL specialists. His presentation will focus on plurilingual strategies and cultural understandings, a new but very important part of our F-10 curriculum.

**Dr Shem Macdonald:** OK, well, thanks for the welcome, Kellie, and thanks to the VCAA and team for... (AUDIO CUTS OUT)

I’d like to start off by also acknowledging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who may be with us today, and to pay respects to elders past, present and emerging. And I also acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which you are joining us today. In making these acknowledgements I’d also to make the connection with language, languages and plurilingualism, and remind us that being plurilingual has been the norm for most Indigenous peoples in Australia and in other places throughout the world for many, many years.

So, my interest in plurilingualism stems from my work working with pre-service and in-service teachers in TESOL programs. It’s also connected with my interest in bilingual education and the learning of languages other than English by learners of all ages in both formal educational contexts – so, at school and university – but also learning language through work or socialising, and access to popular culture and art in other languages.

I’d also like to acknowledge the presenters from different VCAA sessions which I’ve attended, and they’ve been really informative and interesting in regard to curriculum, and some of the ideas I’ve picked up for my presentation here today. Also, to some of the presenters who have presented at VicTESOL sessions, the webinars we’ve been holding, and symposia, over the last two years. I also will talk about some of the ideas raised in those sessions.

So, what is plurilingualism? I’ll start with this definition that comes from the VCAA EAL glossary. And its states, “The ability of a person who has competence in more than one language to switch between them when necessary for ease of communication and learning. And it is the interconnected knowledge of multiple languages.”

Now, ‘plurilingualism’ and ‘multilingualism’ tend to be used interchangeably. And Moore and Gajo, who are cited by Ollerhead, talk about the term ‘multilingualism’ referring to different languages coexisting within a given physical location or social context, whereas the term ‘plurilingualism’ accounts for the ways in which individuals’ linguistic repertoires overlap and intersect and develop in different ways with respect to languages, dialects and registers. So, while multilingualism is the study of societal context, plurilingualism allows us to study the individual’s repertoires and agency in several languages.

So what does this mean? Well, this diagram from Ortega, to me, is sort of helpful in explaining that, with the notion of plurilingualism being within a person and an individual having a number of languages that they work with, whereas the notion of multilingualism is also a number of languages but this is occurring within a society. So, the image on the right there is a map of downtown Toronto in Canada, different languages labelled for the areas where people who speak those languages exist.

And we could do the same thing in Australia. And these couple of maps show different regions of Australia where other languages are spoken widely, and also in Victoria and New South Wales, another map of the multilingual diversity in those contexts.

So what I want to touch on, to start off with, is looking at some views and theories in relation to plurilingualism, and also the term ‘bilingualism’ and ‘multilingualism’ come up. But, before I do that, let’s consider the views of monolingualism, or this notion of one language only.

And here’s a fairly extreme example of a one-language-only perspective. This notice was posted in a block of flats in the UK, somewhere in London. It was in the newspaper... (AUDIO CUTS OUT) ...earlier this year. And you can read there that the author of this note has said, “We don’t tolerate people speaking other languages than English in the flats. We are now our own country again and the Queens English is the spoken tongue here.”

So, this is a fairly extreme version of, I guess, a monolingual mindset, a monolingual way of viewing the world. And this person is, obviously, not happy about people who spoke other languages in that vicinity. Fortunately, that was responded to fairly quickly by the council that was related to that incident, and those signs were taken down. But it’s a worry that there are people out there that consider multilingualism and plurilingualism a problem. It’s certainly not the perspective that we take.

There’s also a view of, one language only is often present in learning environments, and, “The impact of such perspectives is frequently interpreted as only one appropriate language per context, thereby rendering most crossing of standard borders of language use and other communicative strategies or other semiotic or meaning-making resources as a mark of deficiency.” So, this notion that if people don’t speak the one language, and speak it in a particular way, then they’re somehow deficient, because they’re not meeting an expectation that they...of being able to use one language in a certain way.

There’s another theory here, which I think is interesting and worth considering, called the balance theory, and the notion that proficiency in one language alters as we learn...start to learn another language, and as we keep learning, that proficiency gets sort of shared between our two languages, and maybe becomes more in the second language, until we’re proficient only in the second language, which is a very strange perspective, and clearly... (AUDIO CUTS OUT) ...develop proficiency in both languages and our capacity to manage both languages expands. But this notion that we’ve got a limited capacity to learn languages is something which is often expressed as...as...a problem, I guess, with plurilingualism.

There’s also the notion of the balloon theory. And in this...this concept, we have the notion of a monolingual, represented by one balloon, and a bilingual, being perhaps two smaller balloons, or maybe one small balloon, one big balloon. Again, this notion of limited proficiency in that space. Or it could look a bit like this is, where our attempts to learn a second language, lead to confusion or frustration and failure, as quoted by Baker and Wright.

So, these metaphors suggest that the brain has room for only one fully developed language. Now, is this correct? Well...that’s also... (AUDIO CUTS OUT) ...plurilingual compartments in the brain. So, the image on the left, we’ve got somebody who’s got several languages, but there are different locations in their brain, where each language is housed. An alternative view is that languages are all in one part of the brain, and they’re all combined.

So, this study by Grosjean, who looked at this notion of how the brain manages with more than one language, and he came up with this notion of a monolingual view of bilingualism – suggests that the bilingual person “has or should have two separate, isolable language competencies. And these competencies are, or should be, similar to those of two corresponding monolinguals. Therefore, the bilingual is, or should be, two monolinguals in one person.”

And so, that’s one perspective. Another perspective he describes is... (AUDIO CUTS OUT) ...where “a bilingual or holistic view of bilingualism proposes that the bilingual is an integrated whole, which cannot be easily decomposed into two separate parts. The bilingual is not the sum of two complete or incomplete monolinguals – rather, he or she has a unique and specific linguistic configuration.”

So, this concept, or these ideas, are expressing this article from back in the ‘80s, titled ‘Neurolinguistics, beware! The bilingual is not two monolinguals in one person’. And I think this is an important concept to keep hold of, because it determines the way we understand how bilinguals work.

A view of two monolinguals in the same body creates ideologies of disconnect and equality, and suggests that each language is completely separate from the other, or that each language is or should be developed and used equally well as the other, so we should have equality across all the languages that we speak. (AUDIO CUTS OUT) ...not really... (AUDIO CUTS OUT)

So, there’s this notion of having separate underlying proficiencies, and so the balance theory and the balloon theory suggest that there are two languages operating separately, without any transfer and with a restricted amount of room, capacity, to learn language.

However, as Bialystok argues, there’s “nothing we know about memory substantiates these fears. In fact, the fact that millions of children routinely grow up with more than one language in their environment and appear to suffer no obvious trauma should allay the concerns of most parents.” There is no evidence to suggest that first and second and additional languages are kept in separate parts of the head.

So, you’ve probably heard of Cummins’s theory, the iceberg theory, of this notion of a common underlying proficiency.

And so, this diagram represents an iceberg. The proficiencies represented by each language which appears...what we can see above the water, but below the water, we’ve got a combined mass, which is invisible, but which is the same... It’s the proficiency, the common underlying proficiency, that both languages share. And this is a...this is an understanding which supports the view of plurilingual capacity.

So, how is this relevant to your teaching? Well, I think it’s important that we do examine our beliefs and theoretical positions and philosophies. And Kellie, who introduced the session today, in her session in July, said plurilingualism is part of a philosophy related to language use and learning. And whether we are aware of or not, we have our own theories of how languages are best learned and taught. Our beliefs and philosophies are shaped and informed by our experiences of learning and using – and teaching, perhaps - languages, and what we have learned and read and studied about these things.

So, these beliefs are incredibly powerful in shaping what we do in our classrooms. So I want you to just take a minute to examine your own beliefs about how languages are used and learned. What do you think about the value and use of the L1 – the first language – in learning an additional language? And if you’ve learned a language other than your mother tongue, or mother tongues, how did you do that? What role did your mother tongue play in that learning? So, it’s important that you get in touch with your views on this, and perhaps make explicit, bring to the fore, what it is you...how you respond to these ideas.

And I’d ask you to think about how you feel your own...about your own or your learners’ plurilingualism. So looking at this chart, if you could perhaps think about where you would put the cross on the line... (AUDIO CUTS OUT) ...each of these... (AUDIO CUTS OUT) Plurilingualism is a right? Yes or no, or somewhere in between. Plurilingualism is a resource? Plurilingualism is a problem? And where do you stand in relation to these issues?

So, I think it’s worthwhile examining your own perspectives, because I think these...as teachers, these shape what we do in the classroom and how we respond to our learners and their use of languages.

I’ve done this with classes of adult learners, and I just want to show you a few pictures which I asked my learners to draw in relation to their own plurilingualism. And here are a couple of images that...that came up. Here’s a couple more. So, asking your learners to think about themselves as plurilingual people can bring to the fore Interesting ideas about the way they understand their languages, how they use them, what they use them for, where they use them.

And I’ll talk a bit later about different strategies that we can use...that have been used in classrooms for younger learners, and how they harness the knowledge and interest in languages in those ways.

So... I’m sorry. There’s one more...one more picture.

So, what I’m, I guess, encouraging here is a plurilingual mindset. Let’s value the languages that our learners have, and let’s use them to support their learning of English. And so this is reflected in... (AUDIO CUTS OUT) ...the F-10 curriculum, so that’s the focus of the session today, looking at where plurilingualism exists...occurs in the curriculum, and how it might enhance the way we teach EAL learners.

So, In the curriculum document, there is a focus on cultural and plurilingual awareness. I’ll just give you a second to read that description from the curriculum.

And the rationale that’s given for having this in the curriculum is that the inclusion of plurilingual awareness acknowledges the value of competence in multiple languages. A student who develops plurilingual awareness is able to integrate their knowledge of multiple languages in a way that enriches their communication and learning in all languages. This inclusion in the...in the curriculum validates the importance of language and the role it plays in an individual’s sense of self and identity. So, that’s there in the curriculum explicitly, and something that is important to guide our...our...use of and our approaches to languages.

The aims. Appreciate, enjoy and use the English language in all its variations and develop a sense of the ways it can be used to evoke feelings, convey information, form ideas, facilitate interaction with others, entertain, persuade and argue. The aim is for learners to develop their plurilingual awareness of the ways they use different languages and the roles of these languages in their lives and identities. It’s for them to develop their communicative skills, their linguistic knowledge and cultural understandings in English and their other languages, to enable their full participation in Australian society.

So, it’s not just about English, but it’s also about other languages and being able to develop... (AUDIO CUTS OUT) ...capacity. And it’s interesting, this point about, “to enable their full participation in Australian society,” is it assumes, or suggests to me, that it’s been...participating fully in Australian society is not just about using English, but about using all the languages that learners have.

So, what does the curriculum look like? Now, in various sessions, I know that you’ve...we’ve...the curriculum structure has been covered, but I’m just repeating it here just to remind you of the way...where cultural and plurilingual awareness appears. So we’ve got the three pathways, A, B and C, associated with lower and upper primary and secondary. And then we’ve got the levels, and the example that I’ve given there is the level Bs. And then we’ve got the language modes - speaking and listening, reading and viewing, writing. Under that, we’ve got the strands, and there are three strands – communication, cultural and plurilingual awareness, and linguistic structures and features. So, the ones we’re interested in are the ones I’ve highlighted – cultural and plurilingual awareness.

Underneath that strand, there are two sub-strands – cultural understandings and plurilingual strategies. And we have, underneath those, the content descriptions, and they’re the ones highlighted in yellow there. And they’re the skills and actions that are teachable.

And if we go to the online version of the curriculum on the VCAA website, you’ll notice there are description...content descriptions have a code – that’s that one that I’ve highlighted in yellow there - and each of those codes links to the elaborations of each of those descriptions. And so, they’re something that’s it’s...it’s well worth exploring. And I’m just showing you one here. I realise that’s a bit small to read, but the point being that the content description is an elaboration... (AUDIO CUTS OUT) ...each of those content descriptors, and underneath that, there are some links to the Department of Education and Training and also the VCAA web pages.

So, there’s a lot in there to have a look at, and a lot to explore in relation to each of the plurilingual strategies. And I would suggest you spend a fair bit of time familiarising yourself with that website, because there is some really valuable material in there.

Then I’ll just show you this. This is the paper document, which you can also download from the VCAA website. And the sub-strand ‘Plurilingual strategies’ is for...in this case, it’s for the C pathway, the secondary pathway, and I’m just showing how you can look across the different levels within the pathways, so from level CL right through to level C4, and see how those plurilingual strategies connect across the different levels.

I’ve just put a few of the plurilingual strategies up, and I’ve taken them from A, B and C. And to show how there’s a lot of similarities across each of those pathways. And that makes sense, because learners enter those pathways at different levels, so somebody in level C could be a beginner, as somebody in level B is a beginner, and somebody in level A, but obviously, the difference is their age level. But there are similarities there, obviously shaped according to the age-appropriate requirements for that strategy.

So, there’s one for speaking and listening, here is one for reading and viewing across the A-B-C level, and here’s one for writing.

For each of these descriptions of the strategies, you can see that they’re connecting different ways that the learners are expected to be able to use not just English, but also their home language, to scaffold their supporting, and to consider ways that it can be harnessed for their learning. Often, it’s to draw on knowledge they may have had from other formal learning that they’ve taken part in, or it could be other more general language skills that they have acquired through learning in a broader sense.

And here I’ve taken some plurilingual strategies from pathway C and the writing mode, starting from CL right through to C4. And here you can also see there’s a sort of a continuum of development of that strategy. So things like using home language or mime to seek assistance from teachers or peers, right through to planning... (AUDIO CUTS OUT) ...and also using home language, and that’s where the plurilingual strategy comes in there.

Now, in having a look across all the strategies, they don’t always neatly line up. There’s some sort of...what appears to be, I guess, some repetition across the levels, and I guess that makes sense, because a skill learnt at one level isn’t necessarily perfected, or is useful at a number of levels. So, seeing the progression from an L level right through to a 4 level often isn’t really clear, but if you think about how that might be operationalised in the classroom, it makes sense in a way that these are skills that learners would continue to use and continue to develop in more and more... (AUDIO CUTS OUT) ...they develop those abilities.

I also put out the fact that within those descriptors, and if you have a look at them, they’re sort of...it struck me that some are quite explicit in how they would be approached by the teacher, in terms of teaching her learners to draw on their plurilingual capacity for learning, and some of them are more implicit. And so the ones I considered... I’ve just taken a couple here. The ones in blue perhaps...possibly could be more implicit – so, the valuing and the promoting of visibility and languages might be something that could be done explicitly, but could also be done in less obvious ways. Whereas the ones in red there talk about language similarities and differences, instruct learners to use their L1 in learning activities, are obviously much more proactive kind of strategies that could be incorporated. So, I think interestingly, both approaches could be...are needed, and the teacher would need to think of how each of these this is brought up in what we do with their languages.

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