

ALANZ Symposium Dunedin 2020

Language support for new New Zealanders: Strategies for meeting language development needs of refugee background learners.

Aotearoa New Zealand has expanded its refugee quota, effective July 2020, doubling the number to 1,500 (Immigration New Zealand, 2018). This will mean increased need for English language development opportunities. Programmes which have run in community and institutional contexts for decades have experience to offer as language programmes are extended to new towns which will become reception areas for these new New Zealanders.

This paper draws on already published research on language development needs for refugee background learners in Aotearoa New Zealand (Benseman, 2014; Shamem, McDermot, Martin Blaker & Carryer, 2002; Watts, White, & Triln, 2001) and North American Douglas Fir Group's transdisciplinary framework for language acquisition in a multilingual world (2016).

It foregrounds the experiences of learners with refugee backgrounds, drawn from a mixed method two-year study (Field 2019). Using Grounded Theory as a methodology (Charmaz 2014) interviews of teachers of learners from this group were later added to the learner data set. This paper analyses teachers' experiences, including reflections on teaching this learner group online as a result of Covid 19. It offers suggestions for teaching strategies for teachers in the new programmes which will need to be developed around the country to accommodate the increase in the yearly refugee quota as a result of the change in government policy.