**What is Supported Immersion:**

Supported immersion is a strategy of facilitating the rapid acquisition of English for an ESL student who enters a mainstream school environment with low English language proficiency.

Immersion is a successfully proven second language teaching strategy and the underlying theoretical basis for this phenomenon is the notion of ‘acquisition’ of language rather than simply ‘learning’ a new language. Supported immersion facilitates effective and efficient academic language proficiency development.

The support aspect and scaffolding renders the immersion model a more user-friendly experience to the student as they progress in their language proficiency.

From the moment a student enters the ESL support programme, assessments are made by qualified staff to gauge the student’s current proficiency levels and needs. The programme provides regular intensive sessions and is generally conducted within school hours via class withdrawal. Withdrawal is not proven to be detrimental to students, in fact; generally, all students who enter the programme demonstrate accelerated academic gains whilst content from the mainstream is often incorporated into the ESL sessions so that the student better understands the material.

**For low entry English proficiency students**

The student upon arrival who is assessed as being of a very beginner level of English proficiency is recommended an in-class support person whose support may commence for ten hours per week, additional to the intensive support sessions. Then, normally, the support levels drop accordingly:

- 7 hrs term 2 (review)
- 5 hrs term 3 (review)
- 3 hrs term 1 (review)

In general, most beginner English proficiency students develop enough functional English in their first year to be able to cope in the mainstream relying thereafter upon the withdrawal (intensive) ESL sessions. In the following year, they normally automatically develop functional English capabilities through their daily attendance at school.

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In early entry into the mainstream, the ESL team coordinates modified activities as may be deemed appropriate according to the student’s individual academic and language levels with the aim for the student to develop coping ability in the mainstream curriculum. This may include negotiating and re-designing assessments in the initial stages until the student is equipped linguistically enough to tackle regular mainstream assessments.

The end point

ESL students are issued with extra learning materials and resources throughout their engagement with the ESL support programme in order to target accelerated language development. The solid development of academic English via supported immersion-acquisition through mainstream, explicit learning and professional intervention and monitoring is the essence of the ESL support programme offered at Whitsunday Anglican School. The ESL (Supported Immersion) programme has been in operation at WAS since 2007 and its track record of rapidly advancing academic English language proficiency for English as a second language students has been a proven and remarkable success. Whitsunday Anglican School truly does promote such students towards their goal of competitive university entrance.