Supporting English Language Learners

This document is designed to give you, classroom teachers, reading specialists, ESL specialists, instructional leaders, and anyone working either directly or indirectly with English learners, key information about how English language learner (ELL) instruction is designed and built into the EL Education Language Arts Curriculum, and the principles that underlie it. While classroom teachers spend the most time with ELLs, all educational personnel must be knowledgeable about the needs of ELLs so that the kinds of supports, materials, and assessments provided create a coherent support system for ELLs. This guide will give you a good understanding of what makes this curriculum unique and valuable to ELLs.

Meet the Students

Bing-Shan is a six-year-old student in Grade 1 whose family speaks Mandarin at home. Born in the United States, Bing-Shan came to school with some English that she had learned from her older brother. She is generally quiet and does not always let the teacher know when she doesn't understand what the teacher or her classmates have said.

Marco is one of Bing-Shan's classmates; he attended preschool and kindergarten in his home country, Mexico. He spoke no English when the school year started, but he has begun using phrases that he has learned thus far, such as "tha's mine," "please help," and "please ba'room." Because he is more vocal and outgoing, Marco interacts more with his English-speaking classmates than Bing-Shan does.

 Zaineb is an eight-year-old Arabic-speaking refugee student from Syria in Grade 3. She has had almost no schooling in her home country and has been in a refugee camp for three years. In the camp, she attended English classes sporadically because she suffered and continues to suffer from PTSD. In her new school, she has been placed in a class where there are no other Syrian or Arabic-speaking children. Zaineb loves to draw and spends a great deal of time in class drawing pictures. She is shy around most of her classmates. She has begun to sit together and walk around the playground with girl whose home language is Korean.

 Andrés is in the same class as Zaineb. He was born in Guatemala but came to the United States at age three. Andrés is very popular with his classmates because he is good at sports and makes his classmates laugh. However, although Andrés can communicate in English, he is rarely on task and struggles with the complex language in the texts his teacher is using.

Salvador, in Grade 5, has similar challenges as Andrés. Although Salvador can speak English to his teachers and classmates, he has difficulty comprehending both the spoken and written English used in grade-level academic texts. Salvador was born in the United States, and he and his family live in a Spanish-English bilingual community. The adults in this community speak only enough English to get by. However, Salvador and those in his age range mostly speak English because they have never had the opportunity to study in Spanish. Moreover, Salvador has not had access to a coherent and consistent English as a second language program; nor have his teachers known how to assist

him in further developing his abilities in English. They have mistakenly diagnosed him as a "struggling reader" and placed him in remedial reading pull-out classes. The simple, short sentences and words in the remedial readers have further curtailed his access to the kinds of language used in different genres and content areas, thus stunting his English language development.

Salvador is like the majority of ELLs across the country and in many school districts: "stuck" in the middle ranges of English language development, too many of them are assigned to remedial programs with little to no access to rich, varied, complex, and compelling material that ultimately would help them become fluent readers and writers. EL Education attempts to disrupt this pattern for this large population of students by targeting instruction to these "long-term English learners" (LTELs). At the same time, the curriculum attempts to honor and serve all ELLs, from newcomers to the more proficient speakers, by incorporating a degree of heavier and lighter support.

 These five students represent the great variation in background, languages, and academic abilities found in ELLs. Not all ELLs are new to English like Marco or Zaineb; some, like Bing-Shan, Andrés, and Salvador, have heard English at home from older siblings or in their communities. Some ELLs have had some schooling in their home countries; others have only attended U.S. schools. This great variation makes it difficult to use a single set of strategies to help ELLs learn English (Bunch, Kibler, & Pimentel, 2012). For this reason, EL Education has built in consistent instruction and support for ELLs at the lesson level that will help them gain access to the curriculum and, depending on student need, suggestions to the teacher for those students needing heavier or lighter support.

What principles for supporting ELLs underlie EL Education's Language Arts Curriculum?

ELLs deserve a rich, compelling, challenging curriculum

We believe that ELLs deserve the same rich, compelling, and challenging curriculum that other students receive. ELLs have developed age appropriate-concepts and understandings about the world—as they have experienced it. They have the same cognitive needs for an enriching and challenging curriculum and learning experiences that any child does. Varying levels of support in using English are built into EL Education's curriculum to assist ELL's with this compelling and challenging curriculum.

ELLs are learning English

English language learning is not a disability. It's not a barrier. ELLs have a language; it is just not English. Lack of English is not perceived as a problem, but rather as an opportunity to add an innate language. When appropriately supported, bi- or multilingualism is an asset, an indicator of intelligence and ability.

The curriculum encourages teachers to honor and incorporate children's home languages as students learn English. Teachers can learn words and phrases in their students' home languages and publicly acknowledge them, for example, by adding the words and phrases to anchor charts and using them during various classroom routines.

To describe this process and the student learning English, EL Education opts for the common term "English language learner" and "English language learning" (ELL). Although "emergent bilingual" is an apt, asset-based term to describe students who are in the process of adding English to their linguistic repertoire, this term has some fundamental sticking points: Unfortunately, for those with less experience in this field, "emergent bilingual" is often confused with bilingual education, and the EL Education curriculum is designed for multilingual contexts for learning English. In addition, many state English language development (ELD) standards use "emergent" to describe only their lowest-proficiency students.

All educators are responsible for ELL success

As educators, we all are responsible for educating ELLs. This includes administrators, counselors, assessment specialists, and teachers. At the school level, schedules, materials, and any additional supports need to be in place to support the work with ELLs in classrooms. As educators, how we interact with ELLs and plan for and enact learning opportunities can make a fundamental difference in their educational careers and their lives. Assessment specialists must ensure that the district assessments are fair and unbiased toward ELLs. All educators can make it or break it for an ELL.

The EL Education curriculum integrates high-leverage instructional approaches that can assist all learners, but most especially ELLs. Two of the most important approaches are *Language Dives and Conversation Cues* (see the "How is the curriculum structured?" section and the table titled "Eight High-Leverage Approaches to Supporting ELLs."). We hope that all educators, by consistently incorporating these two high-leverage instructional approaches in particular, will come to understand how to better assist their ELLs on a regular basis.

Second language development reveals itself in various ways

Understanding second language development is important. As demonstrated by the student profiles above, students who are developing a new language in addition to their home language arrive from different places. As they embark on learning a new language, they may vary in the speed and accuracy with which they use English. And not all language learning follows a linear path of progression. Often students will seem to regress, reverting to developmental errors they had used previously, then after a few months, jump ahead. In some cases, students may demonstrate understanding through gestures. Some students may learn a short phrase and overextend its use.

Other students who have more outgoing personalities may attempt to speak regardless of errors. Critical errors should be tracked and addressed, but always with the consideration that language errors are a sign of beneficial risk-taking and growth. It is important to be aware of a student's English level so the student can receive instruction and support that will foster language and academic growth. A newcomer student may need the support of visuals in order to participate in class activities. However, these initial kinds of supports would not be appropriate or sufficiently challenging for a student who is at a more intermediate stage, and might in fact hinder him or her from making greater progress. ELLs need to be assisted in ways that will allow them to continuously move to more proficient levels of English. For this reason, we must always combine the appropriate supports with rigor (Wong Fillmore & Fillmore, 2012; Staehr Fenner, 2013; Gibbons, 2010; García & Walqui, 2015).

Productive and equitable conversation spurs language learning

Oral language is critical. It is the basis for reading with comprehension and writing fluency. Therefore, for ELLs, it is important to opt for interactions that are more productive and conversations that are more academically based. Before students can write successfully, they must discuss the content they are to write and the precise language they will need to use to communicate through writing. Their conversations should be content-related but also metacognitive: Students should be able to explain why they are completing any given task and what they have learned from their work. They have to engage in academically productive conversations, guided by the teacher, that call out language structures that make for great complexity in literary and informational texts. In extended, task-based interactions with peers, with teachers present to provide guidance and feedback to support effective communication, ELLs encounter authentic opportunities to grapple with language to achieve specific goals, to self-correct, and to succeed. Indeed, environments where ELLs have multiple opportunities to negotiate the meaning of content are most conducive to second language learning.

(See the "How is the curriculum structured?" section and the table titled "Eight High-Leverage Approaches to Supporting ELLs" for specifics regarding Language Dives, a high-leverage instructional approach for engaging

students in conversation about how language is used to construct knowledge about content, and Conversation Cues, another high-leverage approach to help teachers and students have and maintain extended interactions around content. Other discussion protocols used throughout the curriculum, such as Think-Pair-Share, can complement these deep, extended conversations.)

The Common Core State Standards offer a strong framework for authentic language engagement; state ELD standards describe what students should know and be able to do with language

The CCSS provides opportunities to help ELLs interact with challenging, complex engaging material. The EL Education curriculum permits students to see how language is used in academic texts from different subject areas. By listening to, talking about, and reading and writing about literary and informational texts about compelling material, ELLs will be able to put this rich input to use for their own authentic purposes.

As stated above, EL Education's curriculum is built around the CCSS standards, and for each lesson specific standards are addressed. Additionally, the curriculum addresses three major shifts required by the CCSS: building knowledge through content-rich material; reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from both literary and informational texts; and regular practice with complex texts and their academic language. Supports and scaffolds have been built into the lessons so that ELLs are given access and practice (see Staehr Fenner, D., 2013).

State English language development (ELD) standards are a necessary complement to the CCSS. ELD standards help educators gauge language proficiency level and growth as students engage with content. While states across the country have adopted many different English language development frameworks, EL Education designers consulted the California English Language Development Standards (CA ELD Standards) to help guide the design of ELL instruction and supports in the curriculum. This framework was selected as a baseline for its balance of specificity with practicality. Of all standards frameworks, the CA ELD Standards seem to provide the most useful framework, offering robust language standards and proficiency level descriptors that clearly describe what ELLs should know and be able to do across a variety of contexts and at specific benchmarks. An important benefit is that the CA ELD Standards were developed to connect to the CCSS to encourage students to engage with rigorous academic content. The CA ELD Standards descriptors also draw upon other state and national ELD descriptors.

For example, consider CA ELD Standard I.C.8: "Analyzing how writers and speakers use vocabulary and other language resources for specific purposes (to explain, persuade, entertain, etc.) depending on modality, text type, purpose, audience, topic, and content area." One benefit of this standard is to guide Language Dive writers to include conversation about the structures writers choose to communicate in various contexts. In a Language Dive about a broadside call to action in a Language Dive from Grade 4, Module 3, Perspectives on the American Revolution, for instance, a question that connects with this standard is "Why does the author use the imperative structure *Demonstrate your beliefs and stay out of the war?*" to which students might respond: "The imperative structure is forceful and personal and might have persuaded other people to be pacifists in the face of the revolution." Standard I.C.8 connects to several CCSS standards, including L.4.3a: Choose words and phrases to convey ideas precisely.

Each module lesson includes the CA ELD Standards that helped guide the design of the ELL instruction and support in that lesson. If your district uses a different framework, such as the WIDA ELD Standards or other state standards, you may wish to align those standards to the CA ELD Standards for comparison and accountability purposes.

Reading level is not necessarily language level

Some English language learners, like some native English speakers, may face reading challenges. However, it is important to remember that an ELL is faced with a different set of challenges. She must encounter new sounds, new vocabulary, new grammatical structures, and new meanings. For an ELL, decoding may not translate into meaning.

Therefore, while phonics practice may assist beginning ELLs with the sounds of English, continuous practice in these skills actually may be counterproductive. In order to grow linguistically, ELLs must have access to rich and complex language as it is used in the different academic subjects. As they come to understand and use this kind of language, their English abilities will grow. Language Dives and productive conversations around these kinds of language uses are critical to academic success for ELLs (Abedi & Liquanti, 2012). (See "How is the curriculum structured?" and the table titled "Eight High-Leverage Approaches to Supporting ELLs.")

Home language should be developed and honored in tandem with English

All ELLs should have the opportunity to further develop their home language. Some ELLs have had the opportunity to develop literacy in their home language; many have not. While it may be beyond the abilities of the teacher and schools to offer deep support in the home language, it is important that teachers and other school personnel encourage families to help their children develop literacy and other more complex and academic uses of their home language.

Although a teacher may not speak a child's home language, she can highlight and incorporate the language into the classroom by asking the child, or his or her parents, to teach phrases and words to classmates (UNESCO Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights, 1996; Garcia, 2009; Collier & Thomas, 2004). The curriculum includes specific suggestions for when and how teachers can acknowledge and honor students' home languages.

A caution regarding translations: The curriculum encourages the use of each student's home language because it will benefit the child. However, for those with less experience with translation, some cautions are in order regarding extensive translation of the curricular materials themselves. Use of translations of informational texts dealing with science, math, or social science materials may be helpful—if children have had schooling in their home languages, or if their parents are able to help their children understand these texts, and if the translation is performed by a professionally trained translator to ensure accuracy. In particular, use of literary translations, especially when dealing with children's literature, are not always as helpful because elements such as meaning, tone, beauty, and cultural nuance may shift or disappear. And translations of instruction, such as English discourse analysis and writing conventions, may have unintended consequences. The ways in which English expresses meanings can be ambiguous, which can result in translations that shift the meaning or use the home language in stilted, unnatural ways, robbing students of the opportunity to develop rich and expressive home language abilities.

Consider, for example, this imperative in English: "Put the books on the table where they belong." In this sentence, it is not clear whether the books are on the table, which is the wrong place, or they are somewhere else and need to be placed on the table. In translating to Mandarin, the translator cannot keep the ambiguity. Thus, these two meanings would be distinctly expressed:

Put the books on the table where they belong.			
Mandarin	**Transliteration**	**Literal English translation**	**English translation**
把桌子上的书放回原处	bǎzhuōzi shàng de shūfàng huí yuán chù	take table-top book(s) place back original place	Take the books from the table and put them where they belong.
把书放回原来的桌子上	bǎshū fàng huí yuánlái de zhuōzi shàng	take book place back original table-top	Take the books (from elsewhere) and place them back on the table where they belong.

The expert translator, unless given guidance by the original writer, would struggle to decide which is the correct translation to convey the ambiguous meaning of the original English sentence.

EL Education supports bilingual curricula that honor the beauty and literary traditions of all languages. In the meantime, the EL Education curriculum, as it is designed, is not meant to be translated for use in bilingual programs.

Diversity and children's backgrounds should be honored

The curriculum is built on texts and tasks that honor the knowledge, languages, beliefs, and skills that exist in the cultures and backgrounds of our students and their families. For example, in the Grade 4, Module 3, Perspectives on the American Revolution, students read varying accounts of the Revolutionary War, including European, Native American, and African American perspectives. They formulate and write about their own opinion of the war. Honoring children's backgrounds also means asking students and their parents to share their knowledge, languages, beliefs, and skills with their peers and the teacher. In this way, ELLs can shine and their classmates can learn from them and their families (Gay, 2000).

How is the curriculum structured to support English language learners?

The basic design of EL Education's curriculum is inherently and intentionally supportive of ELLs, incorporating many oral and literacy approaches that support their learning needs. These approaches are critical to language development and also help establish equity: Teachers and students unlock the "secret code" behind how language works, giving students more power in our society. Most important for teachers:

Content-based language and literacy instruction

Teachers use rich, compelling, challenging instructional material

Allow ELLs to engage with interesting and cognitively challenging materials as they learn English. Content-based language learning is considered one of the best ways for students to learn a language (Tedick & Wesley, 2015; Walqui & Van Lier, 2010; Bunch et al., 2005). In order to ensure that ELLs of different abilities receive appropriate scaffolding, the curriculum includes additional and specific approaches and strategies at two levels: units and lessons. Some are detailed in the following entries and in the Eight High-Leverage Approaches to Supporting ELLs table below. Note that the ELL instruction and supports embedded in the curriculum are not designed to replace federal- and state-mandated ELL or bilingual instruction. Seek further assistance when attempting to identify how the curriculum may meet federal and state guidelines.

Language Dives

Teachers guide students to notice and think about how language is used

Empower students to analyze, understand, and use the language of academic sentences, which is critical to college and career—but which often seems opaque to students. During a Language Dive[1], the teacher and students slow down for 10–20 minutes to have a conversation about the meaning, purpose, and structure of a compelling sentence from a complex text. These structures can include the purposes for communicating, syntactical constructions, collocations, and idiomatic expressions. The classroom becomes a space in which students are assisted to figure out why the author chose a particular phrase. Language Dives are not meant to be grammar lectures; nor do they follow the initiate-response-evaluate pattern typical of most teacher-student interactions. Rather, they are "wonderings" about the ways in which language is used to convey particular meanings, and students are encouraged to grapple with the meanings, supporting EL Education's general philosophy of building perseverance and self-efficacy.

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[1] The EL Education Language Dive is based on "Juicy Sentences": Wong Fillmore, L., & Fillmore, C. (2012, January) "What does text complexity mean for English learners and language minority students?" Paper presented at the Understanding Language Conference, Stanford, CA.

The conversations adopt a "deconstruct, reconstruct, and practice" routine as a necessary part of both language and building literacy and habits of mind:

1. **Deconstruct:** Teachers guide students to deconstruct the sentence by discussing what it means and its purpose in the text by chunking a sentence into essential phrases. For example, in kindergarten Module 3, students read the text What's Alive? One key sentence is deconstructed into four main chunks:

They	bend	their stems and leaves	to follow the sun.

Students could wonder about the words *they* and *their*: What do they refer to? And then reflect on what it means *to follow the sun*. The teacher can call students' attention to the word *to* and ask what its job is: "Can you figure out why the author wrote this word? What if the word *to* were replaced with the word *and*?"

2. **Reconstruct:** After unpacking the sentence through conversation, students put it back together, chunk by chunk. For example, students could try to develop this one sentence into two, check to see if the meaning remains the same, and then figure out how the author made it into one sentence. They talk about how the Language Dive has added to their understanding of the meaning of the sentence and the big ideas of the unit.

3. **Practice:** Students practice using one or more of the language structures as they speak about their own lives and write their own sentences. In the example above, students can focus on *to* + base verb as an infinitive to express the various purposes of plant functions using a sentence frame "Plants ＿＿＿ to ＿＿＿." Later, students should apply and transfer their discussions of these sentences when speaking or writing in subsequent tasks in the curriculum and in life.

Thus, students acquire language through analysis, conversation, and usage, which can be more effective than teacher lecture. Helping students understand how the English language works is ultimately important in sharing power and establishing equity.

A consistent Language Dive routine is critical in helping all students learn how to decipher compelling sentences and say and write their own. Proficient writers can use the routine to continue to grow as lifelong learners in the complex task of communication. The routine may hasten overall English language development for ELLs. For this reason, Language Dives are included an average of twice a week for all students and suggested daily for ELLs:

- At times, Language Dives are done with the whole class. All students benefit, and ELLs listen to and interact with native English speakers. (Native speakers gain new insight into their native language.) These Language Dives may be discrete agenda items in a module lesson or embedded in close reads (or close read-alouds in primary grades) for all students. Beginning in Module 3 of the Grades 3–5 ALL Block, Language Dives are routinely incorporated into Week 1 Additional Work with Complex Text and revisited in Week 2 Writing Practice for all students. For ELLs only, Language Dives are also integrated into the strategic grouping of the Grades 3–5 ALL Block. At other times in the module lessons, Language Dives are suggested for ELLs as an option in the Meeting Students' Needs section so that teachers can guide smaller groups of ELLs while other students are working on independent tasks, or ESL specialists can pull out ELLs for short periods.

- When helpful, Language Dives can be broken up into shorter sessions, for example, with a focus on deconstructing the sentence on the first day, and reconstructing and practicing it on the second. Alternatively, students can discuss the first part of a sentence one day, and the latter part on a second day.

- In addition to the Language Dives provided in the EL Education curriculum, teachers are encouraged to strategically choose sentences and times for additional Language Dives that they design themselves. Ideally, the work of Language Dives eventually will go beyond Language Arts to Science, Math, History, and Social Studies texts, offering conversation and practice across several days and subjects to meet the language needs of all learners, but particularly of ELLs.

For more information on Language Dives, see the Module 1 Appendix of your Teacher Guide.

Conversation Cues to promote academically oriented conversations

Teachers guide students to think and talk about important and challenging material

Engage ELLs and their peers in thoughtful and extended, academically oriented conversations about the materials they are learning through the use of Conversation Cues[2]. Conversation Cues are questions teachers can ask students to promote productive and equitable conversation, helping to gauge students' thinking. The questions can encourage students to have productive discussions and generate new ideas before they begin writing tasks. Conversation Cues are based on four goals that encourage each student to:

- Goal 1: Talk and be understood (e.g., "I'll give you time to think and sketch or discuss this with a partner." and "Can you say more about that?").
- Goal 2: Listen carefully to one another and seek to understand (e.g., "Who can repeat what your classmate said?").
- Goal 3: Deepen their thinking (e.g., "Can you figure out why the author wrote that phrase?").
- Goal 4: Think with others to expand the conversation (e.g., "Who can explain why your classmate came up with that response?").

Across the year, Conversation Cues are introduced one goal at a time. In this context, Conversation Cues are designed to slowly build the capacity for all students to engage in rich, collaborative discussions targeted at CCSS and ELD standards, thus helping to level the playing field and establish equity. For example, some students who are shy, introspective, or have less knowledge or language ability in some contexts may respond more readily to a Goal 1 Conversation Cue: "I'll give you time to think and write or sketch," while other students may be willing and able to respond to a Goal 4 cue: "How is what Lupe said the same as or different from what Young Bin said?"

Thus, all students can begin to think deeply about the material, to explain their thinking, and to learn to listen to various points of view as they consider the material. Furthermore, Conversation Cues can create a classroom environment that is ideal for language development, as students test their hypotheses about how to communicate clearly. You can encourage students to gradually begin using appropriate Conversation Cues themselves, along with other discussion conventions, to expand their independent interactions with their peers. For more information and a complete table of Conversation Cues and expected responses, see the Module 1 Appendix of your Teacher Guide.

Levels of language support

Teachers are sensitive to students' varying language proficiency levels and focus on moving them beyond the middle ranges of language proficiency

Nationally, the majority of ELLs (between 45 and 60 percent) achieve intermediate to high-intermediate levels of English language proficiency, also known as the "Expanding" level in the California ELD Proficiency Level Continuum. Keep in mind, as the name "Proficiency Level Continuum" suggests, that language proficiency shifts depending on content, task, and situation, and proficiency cannot be considered as fixed. However, most students assessed as achieving intermediate proficiency levels get "stuck" there for a few years, and often for their lifetime. These students may be formally classified as "long-term English learners" (LTELs). To help break this pattern, the EL Education curriculum targets instruction for LTELs in particular, in large part through Language Dive instruction, to help them reach advanced levels of language proficiency and be reclassified as proficient speakers.

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[2] EL Education Conversation Cues are adapted from Michaels, Sarah and O'Connor, Cathy. Talk Science Primer. Cambridge, MA: TERC, 2012. http://inquiryproject.terc.edu/shared/pd/TalkScience_Primer.pdf. Based on Chapin, S., O'Connor, C., and Anderson, N. [2009]. *Classroom Discussions: Using Math Talk to Help Students Learn, Grades K–6.* Second Edition. Sausalito, CA: Math Solutions Publications.

At the same time, in addition to the focus on LTELs, the curriculum honors and supports ELLs at lower and higher proficiency levels. Heavier and lighter levels of support are provided for different activities within each lesson to support learners at any language proficiency level in accessing content. Examples:

- **For heavier support:** For students who are new to English, the curriculum provides sentence frames the students can use both orally and in writing, as well as suggested word and phrase banks and manipulatives to help students begin to construct their own sentences.

- **For lighter support:** For students who have moved beyond intermediate levels, the curriculum suggests strategic grouping, inviting students with more language proficiency to create sentence frames for students who need heavier support.

Additionally, while heavier support generally helps students at the "Emerging" level of the California ELD Proficiency Level Continuum, and lighter support generally helps students at the "Bridging" level, these supports may, at times, benefit students classified at any language proficiency level. A relative newcomer at the "Emerging" level may benefit from lighter supports in certain contexts, while a more proficient student at the "Bridging" level may benefit from heavier supports during some tasks. It is essential to observe student ability in various situations and select supports based on need, rather than seeing student ability as fixed at one level.

Knowing each of your students and their levels of English is critical in helping you to you differentiate supports. Each lesson references relevant descriptors from the California ELD Standards; these in coordination with your state ELD standards and proficiency continuum can help you understand where your students are in their development of English and where you need to guide them in their growth. Although the curriculum has built in different levels of support, at one time or another these may not meet your students' needs specifically. For this reason, it may be important to modify these supports and seek further assistance.

Diversity and inclusion

Teachers acknowledge, celebrate, and incorporate student experience to promote equity

Practice inclusion to promote equity. Throughout the lessons, EL Education includes texts and activities that honor the cultures and backgrounds of our students and their families. For example, in the Grade 4, Module 3, Perspectives on the American Revolution, students are asked to consider not only the American and British points of view, but also those of Native Americans and African Americans. They are asked to reflect on how their own experience connects to the content and are invited to bring books and objects from home to share and discuss. They are encouraged to use their home language, when comfortable, to begin negotiating particularly challenging tasks, or to bridge their understanding as newcomers. In addition, the curriculum includes possible cultural cautions, such as using particular hand gestures that are common in the United States but may be offensive in other countries or national, family, or personal cultures. Teachers are invited to get to know students well, and, in turn, share their own national, family, and personal traditions, value systems, myths, and symbols.

The concept of culture is intricate; any given group is not monolithic and should not be stereotyped. Furthermore, each person may identify with several layers of culture—national, community, family, personal—that may shift with situation and time. Therefore, the cultural supports in the curriculum are intended to suggest the infinite possibilities of different student experience, not to essentialize or label any single student or group. For example, in Grades 3–5, teachers should be aware that the concept of plagiarizing may not be clear-cut for some students during some writing tasks. Teachers are encouraged to discuss and understand varied perspectives on using other people's work and to explain the cultural and legal aspects of citation, as well as how citation is part of providing evidence, for U.S. classrooms.

Writing practice

Teachers give students ample writing practice

In K–5, all students receive ample writing practice throughout module lessons. For Grades 3–5 in particular, as students begin to complete more formal extended writing assessments, the curriculum provides writing practice for ELLs that is similar in structure (but not in content) to the assessments. For example, in Grade 4, Module 2, students are given the opportunity to complete a similar task twice: They practice reading and writing about one animal's defense mechanisms during lessons, then they read and write about a different animal's defense mechanisms in the end of unit assessment. This helps ELLs become familiar with writing expectations.

Vocabulary and phrases in context

Teachers help students learn and practice vocabulary and phrases within the context of the topic and text they are using

Teachers introduce vocabulary and phrases in context and ask students to use new words to discuss or write about the material they are learning. Students learn and practice an unfamiliar word as it is commonly used with other words—in collocation. In Grade 2, Module 1, Unit 2, of Schools and Community, for example, students read the learning target "I can write about my observations after closely viewing pictures." They discuss the meaning of *observations* in this sentence and then observe school communities through some mystery pictures. Afterward, students talk about what they observed before they write about it. ELLs can also compare shades of meaning (*observe, see, notice, spot*) and use sentence frames to describe what they observe ("I see ＿＿. One thing I observe is ＿＿.") and contrasting the observing and noticing process to the inquiring, evaluating, and wondering process.

All students use a Word Wall to track and learn selected vocabulary. Grades 3–5 students also use a customized vocabulary log. In addition, Grades 3–5 students and teachers can consult collocation and vocabulary references such as the following:

- Oxford Collocations Dictionary for Students of English
- https://prowritingaid.com/Free-Online-Collocations-Dictionary.aspx
- http://global.longmandictionaries.com
- http://www.learnersdictionary.com/

Language usage: celebration and error correction

Teachers help students notice effective communication as well as errors in their speech and writing, and students begin to notice their own language usage

Teachers and students explicitly and compassionately point out effective communication, especially that aligned to standards, and attend to language errors, as part of the path to establishing equity and building content knowledge. Students can benefit from discussions as to why their communication is effective, or why their communication is inaccurate or incomprehensible, especially during the writing process.

At times, it can be helpful for students to discuss an error that is common to the group. At other times, giving one-on-one, individual feedback may be more respectful. Consider identifying, logging, and categorizing errors as follows, and practice correcting them over time (Ferris and Hedgcock, 2013).

- **Global:** errors that interfere with overall meaning. Example from the Language Dive sentence, above: "They bend their leaves following sun." (Here, a student has used a participle [*following*] instead of the infinitive [*to follow*] and omitted the article [*the*].)

- **Pervasive:** errors that are common. Example: "Bend they leaves, follow the sun." (Some students may omit the subject pronoun [here, *They*], use the subject pronoun [here, *they*] instead of the correct possessive pronoun [here, *their*], or omit the infinitive marker *to*.)
- **Stigmatizing:** errors that disturb more proficient speakers. Example: "They bending their leaves to follow the sun." (Some students may overuse the present progressive. Although more proficient speakers may understand the communication, they are primarily critical of the learner's language proficiency because of the error.)
- **Student-identified:** errors that students notice and often correct themselves. Example: "Bend their leaves to follow the sun. The plants, they bend." (A student omitted the subject and attempted to clarify in a subsequent sentence.)

Giving kind, specific, and helpful feedback on successes and errors can help normalize the language learning process and put students "in the know," as well as mitigate the substantial risk students take on as they try out new language. We acknowledge that error correction may be ineffective when too much time is spent on less meaningful errors, when the correction is misunderstood, or when students feel targeted. The primary goals are to share power with students, to show students how you care about their language usage, and to help students communicate their message as intended.

Concretely, where and how are ELLs are supported in the K–2 and 3–5 curricula?

Module lessons (K–5), Labs (K–2), and ALL Block (3–5)

GRADES K-5 MODULE LESSONS	ELL instruction is seamlessly integrated into the main body of the lessons.
	Language proficiency standards, lesson highlights, and levels of support are provided at the beginning of each lesson in the Supporting English Language Learners section. Lesson-specific ELL supports also are added to Meeting Students' Needs sections.
GRADES K–2 LABS	In primary grades, rich oral language and exploration of content through multiple modalities is a hallmark of the Labs. Although Labs don't include formal scaffolds for ELLs, the lesson foci and activities allow ELLs to focus on, practice, and play with language. Every Lab session also begins with "storytime" (a read-aloud), which continues to expose ELLs to important content and complex text in English.
GRADES 3–5 ALL BLOCK	Additional Language and Literacy (ALL) Block: ELL instruction is seamlessly integrated in the main body of the lessons in the ALL Block lessons. The block also includes separate instruction (which parallels the lessons and CCSS for other students) that provide additional strategic supports regarding linguistic and cultural knowledge that may be innate for native speakers.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does the EL curriculum help long-term English learners (LTELs)?

Yes, the curriculum targets instruction for LTELs, who represent the majority of ELLs in the country. Extended practice with the type of interactions introduced in this curriculum for all learners, especially LTELs, is important because students are supported and guided in using grade-level challenging materials that act as rich linguistic input. They are given multiple opportunities to then use this language orally and in writing.

How important are the Labs (Grades K–2) and the ALL Block (Grades 3–5)?

The K-2 Labs help ELLs focus their attention on language in use in the texts that they need to continue to develop linguistically. Don't skip them. The 3-5 ALL Block has specific activities aimed at assisting ELLs, such as Language Dives, vocabulary, and writing practice, that are focused specifically on their needs. Again, don't skip them. Often, these activities are integrated into task cards for all students; other times, ELLs are provided separate task cards.

When and where in the various components of the curriculum do ELLs receive targeted small group instruction?

ELLs need to work in mixed groups to talk with and learn from their peers. It is also true that they have some specific language acquisition needs that are best served with targeted small group instruction. During the ALL Block, students are grouped *homogeneously* for teacher-guided instruction (20 minutes per day) to receive targeted instruction. However, students are grouped *homogeneously* for some tasks and *heterogeneously* for others during their independent work on task cards (20 minutes per day) so that they have the support of peer coaches and the opportunity to speak with and learn from others.

How can I address the needs of newcomers?

Although the EL Education curriculum will assist all ELLs in gaining academic English abilities, there are some additional suggestions for students who are brand new to English. A functional approach for newcomers may be helpful in the early days of their introduction to English. This involves helping students learn how to use language for particular purposes, such as requesting ("Can I go to the bathroom?" "Can you help me, please?" "How do I say...?"); responding to simple questions ("Yes, I understand." "No, I'm not finished"); and using formulaic language for expressing gratitude, apologizing, clarifying, and advocating, for example. Short lessons with newcomers introducing this kind of language can be helpful so that students can quickly refer to helpful phrases early on.

At the beginning, newcomers will not understand everything that is used in the EL Education content-based literacy curriculum. As the teacher, you can develop several different strategies for helping newcomers. For example:

- Before a topic is introduced to the class, you can work with newcomers by introducing them to the topic through videos, visuals, pointing to phrases, repetition, translation, and acting out. This gives you the advantage of learning about a student's "funds of knowledge" on the new topic.

- During class work, you can vary newcomers' partners so that at times they are assisted by those who speak their same home language, and at other times by those students who are able to take the time to explain the work to be done in their own ways. In this way, newcomers benefit from their interactions with various classmates who themselves are at different levels of understanding.

- After each lesson, students need ongoing, rich exposure to the topic through K–2 Labs and 3–5 ALL Block independent reading and homework—in English and in their home language. Students should discuss the topics in their home language with families and peers who speak the same home language.

Furthermore, you can use consistent phrasing of language and routines for newcomers every day. For example, if you regularly say, "Let's go to recess," don't vary it to "Time for recess" (at least until students have learned "Let's go to recess"). Visuals and kinesthetics are great ways of building understanding for newcomers. Songs, chants, and other repetitive language practice can also help—as long as this language represents age-appropriate concepts and thinking. Above all, remember that language learning takes time.

Just as young children do not understand every word people say to them, know that newcomers initially will not understand every new word. At first, getting the "gist" of what is being talked about will help them link this understanding to what they already know about the world. As time goes on, they will become better able to recognize phrases and common vocabulary, and with your help, begin to put them to use for their own purposes. With the help of these instructional strategies, newcomers advance to intermediate levels of proficiency, often relatively quickly.

Should I use the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) supports to support ELLs?

ELLs have unique needs that require targeted support. In the K–5 module lessons, the Meeting Students' Needs sections in every lesson contain support for both English language learning and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Some supports can serve a wide range of student needs. For example, inviting students to explicitly discuss why they are completing a "noticing and wondering" task can help make explicit for ELLs the purpose and goals of noticing and wondering; this type of support also connects with multiple means of representation as part of UDL.

However, ELLs have needs that cannot always be met with UDL support. According to federal guidelines, ELLs must be given access to the curriculum with appropriate supports, such as those that are specifically identified as "For ELLs" in the Meeting Students' Needs sections. For example, ELLs also must discuss and practice the language (e.g., syntax, intonation) they will need to complete the noticing and wondering task, such as the language to help them ask noticing and wondering questions. This type of language information is often innate for native and proficient English speakers.

If our school has ESL teachers, how best should we use these specialists?

The ESL specialist (where there is one) can and should preview module lessons and support-block lessons (Grades K–2 Labs or Grades 3–5 ALL Block) and meet proactively with the general education teacher to consider how to most strategically apply or enhance the written materials.

In the K–2 Labs, for example, an ESL specialist might meet with the Labs teacher before Labs start for any given module and identify one or two specific Labs where linguistic and cultural supports might be most helpful. For instance, when the Grade 1 Research Lab invites students to learn about the body parts and functions of local birds, students will need specific language structures to do so. In this example, the ESL specialist might suggest a focus on language structures such as: quantifier + noun = noun phrase, such as *all birds* and *most birds.*

The ESL specialist could suggest songs, questions, sentence frames, visuals, manipulatives, and other supports that would introduce these structures and help students practice using them. Examples:

- "What do all birds have? What can most birds do?"
- "All birds can/have ＿＿ (walk/wings). Most birds can/have ＿＿ (fly/eyes on the side of their heads)."

In the Grades 3–5 ALL Block, an ESL specialist might meet with the ALL teacher at the start of each unit and identify the linguistic and cultural supports that will be most helpful. When the Grade 5 ALL Block invites students to compare and contrast characters' reactions to the fire in *Esperanza Rising,* for example, the ESL specialist might suggest a focus on recognizing, understanding, and using English clause structure, including subject-predicate structure and subordinating conjunctions to link clauses together, such as *while* for expressing contrast. Examples of supports:

- "How did Esperanza react to the fire? How did Miguel react?"

- "Esperanza ____, while Miguel ____."

- "Can you figure out why I underlined *Esperanza* and *Miguel* in blue?"

- "How can we use *while* in our speaking and writing?"

- Students can make index cards, each with a different conjunction or predicate, and insert them into the sentence frame, discussing how each substitution changes the meaning.

It is important to establish a close working relationship between general education teacher, English as a second language teacher, and the EL Education curriculum, and to meet regularly about ELLs' progress.

What about the other subjects I teach, such as math, science, and social studies? How can I help ELLs in those subjects?

Explicit attention to the complex language in the texts—whether Language Arts, math, science, or social studies—is critical. We recommend that teachers use the math, science, and social studies texts to guide students through Language Dives in these subjects.

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Eight High-Leverage Approaches to Supporting ELLs

The purpose of the table in this section is to provide educators with a selection of high-leverage approaches for teaching ELLs when using the EL Education curriculum. Included are three of the four foundational approaches used in the curriculum: Language Dives, Conversation Cues, and Diversity and Inclusion. The fourth foundational approach, Levels of Support, is embodied by the proficiency level examples within the table itself. This table also highlights six more of the curriculum's most powerful approaches.

Taken together, these eight approaches serve as a critical entry point into ELL instruction for educators who are new to serving ELLs, and to help illustrate the EL Education philosophy for educators who are more experienced working with ELLs. Teachers may choose to use this table as a desktop reference in the classroom as a way to begin or ground their approach to English language learning. Note that these eight approaches do not represent a comprehensive approach to educating ELLs and are not intended as a substitution for careful consideration of the customized ELL instruction built into each lesson of the curriculum.

For each approach described in the table, you will see a description of suggested teacher behaviors. You will also see a description of student behaviors at each of the three proficiency levels of the California ELD Proficiency Level Continuum. The teacher and student behaviors can help you understand what to do in the classroom to facilitate each approach, and what students might know and do according to their language ability as part of each approach.

However, recall that language proficiency shifts depending on content, task, and situation. A relative newcomer at the "Emerging" level may benefit from lighter supports in certain contexts, while a more proficient student at the "Bridging" level may benefit from heavier supports during some tasks. It is essential to observe student ability in various situations and select supports based on need, rather than seeing student ability as fixed at one level. Furthermore, the examples in one proficiency level also may sometimes be effective at another level. For this reason, it may be important to modify these supports and seek further assistance.

Consult this resource in coordination with the instruction and supports embedded at the lesson level in the curriculum. Used consistently, these approaches can help promote language development and equity.

High-leverage approach (Teacher behavior)	Examples at three proficiency levels of the CA ELD Proficiency Level Continuum (Student behavior)		
	Emerging (heavier support)	Expanding	Bridging (lighter support)
1. Language Dives			
• Facilitate 10–20 minute daily conversations about the meaning and purpose of a compelling sentence from a complex text, incorporating frequent practice using the language structures from the sentence. • Provide a challenging and playful approach, incorporating manipulatives, visuals, realia, and role-play. • Reinforce Language Dive work by consistently using the Language Dive log (introduced in Module 1), maintaining the Language Chunk Wall (introduced in Module 2), and referring to the Questions We Can Ask during a Language Dive anchor chart (introduced in Module 3).	• Deconstruct by responding to teacher questions about the gist of the sentence and chunks, assisted by visuals, acting out, sketching, and sentence frames. • Reconstruct by reassembling the chunks in their original sequence and repeating or paraphrasing how peers say the sentence connects to the guiding question. • Practice the structures by completing sentence frames with the help of a phrase bank.	• Deconstruct by grappling with the meaning and purpose of the sentence and chunks before the teacher asks questions. • Reconstruct by reassembling the chunks in their original sequence and considering any possible variations, and consider how the sentence connects to the guiding question. • Practice the structures using shortened sentence frames, extending them with the help of a bank of additional connecting or modifying structures.	• Deconstruct by grappling with the meaning and purpose of the sentence and chunks, mainly independently. • Reconstruct by reassembling the chunks in their original sequence and considering any possible variations, and explaining how the sentence connects to the guiding question. • Practice the structures, extending them with additional connecting or modifying structures.
2. Conversation Cues			

• Ask questions to promote productive and equitable, extended, academically oriented conversations.
• Strategically build appropriate entry points for all students to engage using four successive goals:
  1. Talk and be understood
  2. Listen carefully to one another and seek to understand
  3. Deepen their thinking
  4. Think with others to expand the conversation
	• Respond to the teacher's questions by completing sentence frames using a phrase bank and with heavy support from the teacher and peers.
	• Respond by sketching or acting out ideas.
	• Respond by following a model conversation that the teacher displays and demonstrates.
		• Respond by participating in and summarizing extended conversations with moderate support from teachers and peers.
		• Respond by beginning to use Conversation Cues to extend conversation with peers.
			• Respond by participating in and summarizing extended conversations, often independently.
			• Respond by using appropriate Conversation Cues and adding other discussion conventions to extend conversation with peers.
			• Respond by demonstrating a conversation that can serve as a model for students who need heavier support.

High-leverage approach (Teacher behavior)	Examples at three proficiency levels of the CA ELD Proficiency Level Continuum (Student behavior)		
	Emerging (heavier support)	Expanding	Bridging (lighter support)
3. Diversity and inclusion			
Promote equity by doing the following: • Ask about, research, acknowledge, celebrate, and incorporate student knowledge, languages, beliefs, and skills. • Share your own knowledge, languages, beliefs, and skills. • Encourage students to talk and find their voice. • Learn, incorporate, and use words and phrases in students' home languages. • Identify cultural beliefs or communication styles embedded in curriculum that may be inconsistent with those of students; support students in acclimating to unfamiliar contexts.	• Interact in home language groups to lay the groundwork for a sense of belonging and to provide an entry point for social and academic interaction with peers. • Interact in home language groups with students who have more language proficiency to translate their knowledge and beliefs. • On a class map, pin their home countries and countries connected to the content.	• Interact in home language groups to support newcomers, translating their knowledge and beliefs and offering ways to express the same in English. • Compare and contrast their cultures and background to those introduced in curricular materials.	• Interact in home language groups to facilitate development of home language in association with content. • Conduct classroom research on the topic in the module as it relates to their cultures and background. • Serve as experts to teach peers about their own experiences with the topic from their own base of culture, background, and classroom research base.
4. Strategic grouping			
• Strategically group ELLs with native and proficient English speakers, other ELLs, or by home language. • Vary these groups so ELLs interact with a variety of speakers in different situations, thus expanding the opportunity for language development. • Provide frequent opportunities in each lesson for groups to discuss and complete content and tasks.	• Respond by following a model conversation that the teacher displays and demonstrates or that a peer implicitly models. • At times, interact in home language groups with students who have greater language proficiency to begin negotiating particularly challenging tasks. • Share out by repeating the group consensus.	• Serve as models in mixed proficiency groups, initiating discussions based on teacher models and providing additional implicit sentence frames. • At times, interact in home language groups to begin negotiating particularly challenging tasks. • Interact in homogeneous proficiency groups to promote English language development through grappling. • Share out the group consensus by paraphrasing.	• Serve as models in mixed proficiency groups, initiating discussions and providing implicit and explicit sentence frames for students who need heavier support. • Interact in homogeneous proficiency groups to promote English language development through grappling. • Interact at times in home language groups to facilitate development of home language in association with content. • Share out the group consensus by summarizing.

High-leverage approach (Teacher behavior)	Examples at three proficiency levels of the CA ELD Proficiency Level Continuum (Student behavior)		
	Emerging (heavier support)	Expanding	Bridging (lighter support)
5. Multiple modes, multiple intelligences			
• Engage students with materials using a variety of modalities and access points supporting multiple intelligences, aligning with the multiple means of representation, action and expression, and engagement that are part of Universal Design for Learning. • Support visual learning by enlarging key portions of the texts, graphic organizers, note-catchers, and models in each unit to annotate, compare, and contrast side by side. • Promote collaboration and oral processing by facilitating "Information Gap" activities. Example: complete half of a graphic organizer for half of the students and complete the other half of the organizer for the second half. Allow students to talk to opposite groups to complete the organizer in its entirety. • Support language development, collaboration, and manageable workload by facilitating a jigsaw reading effect. Example: invite students to read different sections of the same text or different texts on a common topic, then have them share their learning.	• Identify and label familiar parts of complex content, including directions, learning targets, vocabulary, and key sections of text. • Demonstrate understanding of complex content through guided movement, sketching, and gestures. • Ask pre-modeled questions during Information Gap activities, focusing on understanding answers for one or two key gaps. • Read shorter jigsaw texts with more proficient peers who can ask questions and help summarize the information. • Sketch to plan writing and consult more proficient students for language models before writing. • Repeat why they are completing any given task, and what they have learned from their work. • Participate in call-and-response versions of read-alouds of texts, poems, and songs.	• Share concrete examples of complex content, including directions, learning targets, vocabulary, and key sections of text, by restating the content in relation to something in their own lives. • Ask and answer questions during Information Gap activities, completing all gaps. • Read jigsaw texts, ask questions, and summarize the information. • Say to a peer what they plan to write before writing. • Paraphrase why they are completing any given task, and what they have learned from their work.	• Repeat, sketch, point to, and rephrase complex content, including directions, learning targets, vocabulary, and key sections of text for students who need heavier support. • Ask and answer questions during Information Gap activities, completing all gaps and summarizing findings. • Read longer jigsaw texts, ask questions, and summarize the information. • Collaborate with students who need heavier support to help say what the student plans to write before the student begins writing. • Explain why they are completing any given task, and what they have learned from their work. • Add sketches, partially filled-in items, and additional step-by-step directions to graphic organizers for students who need heavier support.

High-leverage approach (Teacher behavior)	Examples at three proficiency levels of the CA ELD Proficiency Level Continuum (Student behavior)		
	Emerging (heavier support)	Expanding	Bridging (lighter support)
6. Vocabulary and phrases in context			
• Introduce vocabulary and phrases in the context of curricular materials. • Introduce an unfamiliar word in the way that it is commonly used with other words—in collocation. • Ask students to use new vocabulary and collocations to discuss or write about the curricular materials. • Model with the customized vocabulary log so students can track and learn unfamiliar vocabulary.	• Spell and pronounce new vocabulary. • Use realia, manipulatives, body language, and games to help understand meaning and usage, including objects, sentence strips, word and phrase cards, pocket charts, gestures, facial expressions, matching, and inserting. • Add home language translations to Word Walls. • Look and listen for samples of new vocabulary in different contexts.	• Discuss and use the shades of meaning of the synonyms of new vocabulary. • Discuss and use the different parts of speech of the new vocabulary. • Collect samples of new words as seen and heard in different contexts. • Use home language cognates to determine the meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary.	• Select appropriate synonyms of the new vocabulary and rephrase sentences to express similar meaning. • Rephrase sentences, selecting the accurate part of speech of the new vocabulary. • Analyze samples of new words as seen and heard in different contexts.
7. Language usage: celebration and error correction			
• Explicitly and compassionately attend to effective communication as well as language errors as part of the path to establishing equity. • Employ multiple approaches to error correction, including recasting and finger-counting a sentence. • Provide multiple opportunities for students to identify effective communication and errors and correct errors. • Identify, log, and categorize errors as: – Global: errors that interfere with overall meaning – Pervasive: errors that are common – Stigmatizing: errors that disturb more proficient speakers – Student-identified: errors that students notice and often correct themselves	• With teacher and peer guidance, attend to one or two common errors. Example: with gender pronouns: *he* to refer to males and *she* to refer to females. • With teacher and peer guidance, celebrate one or two samples of growth.	• With teacher and peer guidance, discuss one or two errors common to the content and standards and how to correct them. With encouragement, begin to notice, track, and correct these errors. • With teacher and peer guidance, identify and discuss one or two samples of effective communication within the content and standards.	• Often independently, discuss one or two errors common to the content and standards and how to correct them. Notice, track, and correct these errors. • Often independently, identify and discuss one or two samples of effective communication within the content and standards.
8. Levels of support: Teacher Behavior (see examples of student behavior across Approaches 1–7)			
• Be sensitive to students' varying language proficiency levels. • Get to know each of your students' language abilities. • Consult state ELD standards and ESL specialists to understand where students are and where they need to grow. • Observe student ability in various situations and select supports based on need in each situation, rather than perceiving student ability as fixed at one level. • As needed, use heavier and lighter support suggested in the curriculum to help students access content. • Modify supports and seek further assistance to meet students' needs.			