A Resource Guide for
Low Incidence ELL Districts

INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Connecticut Administrators of Programs for English Language Learners

September 2010

This resource guide was developed by members of Connecticut
Administrators of Programs for English Language Learners (CAPELL)
with support from the New England Comprehensive Center (NECC).
It was developed to address the needs of districts that are just
beginning to see the emergence of an English Language Learner (ELL)
population in their district or who have very low numbers of ELLs.

The guide is an introduction that highlights key research- or evidence-based
practices and is not meant to provide detailed explanations. It provides
beginning answers to frequently asked questions, many of which were
derived from a survey of CAPELL members from low incidence ELL
districts. For more detailed information, the guide includes the references
on which most of the answers are based. Other suggestions come from
promising practices cited by CAPELL members.

This is Document 1 in the series A Resource Guide for Low Incidence ELL Districts.
Document 1: Instructional Practices
Document 2: Professional Development and Educator Support
Document 3: Family, School, and Community Involvement

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INTRODUCTION

This resource guide addresses the instructional needs of low incidence ELL districts. The focus of this document is on programs, strategies and considerations that support the acquisition of English as a second language while making content instruction comprehensible. It does not incorporate strategies and resources for programs that formally integrate native language instruction into the program of study, recognizing that such districts do not have a large enough population of ELLs who speak the same language that they would be eligible to create a transitional or dual language bilingual program.

The following are general guiding principles for the development and implementation of educationally sound programs that result in the positive achievement of ELLs. These guiding principles form the foundation on which many of the answers to the questions posed are based.

- There is clear articulation of the linguistic and academic goals for English language learners.
- Programs are research- or evidence-based, while taking into consideration local resources and constraints.
- There is careful planning based on an assessment of the ELL student population's strengths and needs that results in program coherence while maintaining flexibility to meet individual needs.
- There is school wide support, affirmation, and incorporation of the ELL student population's linguistic and cultural heritages irrespective of the linguistic model/approach used.

The suggestions contained in this resource guide derive from the literature and research on the education of English Language Learners as well as from CAPELL members.

GETTING STARTED

Q 1: Who are English Language Learners?

The U.S. Department of Education defines English Language Learners (ELLs) as "national-origin-minority students who are limited-English proficient. The ELL term is generally preferred over limited-English proficient (LEP) since it highlights accomplishments rather than deficits (Francis, Rivera, et al., 2006, p. 3)

More generally, English Language Learners are students whose first language is a language other than English and who are in the process of learning English. Potential ELLs are identified at the time of registration when the Home/Dominant Language Survey is administered. See Q 3 for more information on the identification process.

References:
1. Francis, Rivera, et al., 2006a..

Q 2: How can our district begin to build its capacity to better support and serve a newly emerging ELL population?

As you begin receiving or anticipate receiving ELL students, the first thing you should do is *formally identify an administrator to assume leadership responsibilities* for services to the ELL population. The role of this administrator will be to build the necessary infrastructure needed to respond to the educational needs of this population, such as:

- Setting up a system to gather important information about students' language and educational history

- Identifying instructional staff who may have appropriate or relevant training/certification or who are willing to learn how to work with ELL students

- Researching different English language development program designs and approaches

- Providing professional development to support school administrators and teachers understand how to respond to the educational needs of ELL students

- Undertaking outreach into the community to see what cultural/linguistic resources might be available

- Setting up an advisory council or steering committee that includes district and school representatives, students, parents, members of the community, and expert resources such as from technical assistance agencies and institutes of higher education to help guide your deliberations.

Some districts also *designate a teacher with relevant experience* and/or interest in English language learner instruction to coordinate and provide curricular and instructional support to schools receiving ELL students.   While it is preferable to have a teacher with experience in teaching English-as-a second-language (ESL), this is not absolutely necessary as long as s/he is willing to learn.

References:
1. Zehler et al., 2008.
2. Connecticut RESC Alliance, How to Create High Quality Programs for ELLS, 2009.

Q 3: I am the administrator assigned to the task of responding to the needs of our emerging ELL population. Where can I go for assistance?

Key sources of assistance are the following:

- The Connecticut State Department of Education: For technical assistance and to help you identify other resources
- Connecticut Administrators of Programs for English Language Learners (CAPELL)
- Districts that are similar to your own to learn from their experiences as they met this challenge
- Technical assistance resources such as the RESCs, the RESC Alliance, and the SERC

ENROLLMENT & IDENTIFICATION

Q 4: How should a district that is just beginning to receive students for whom English is not their home language handle the initial registration and their potential identification as ELL students?

Three things to attend to at the point of registration for potential ELL students:

1. In Connecticut, the State Board of Education requires that schools administer a three question survey, called the Home/Dominant Language Survey to all parents at the time of enrollment within a district. Make sure that the staff who handles registration, whether it is done centrally at the district or locally at the school level, has been *trained to administer the Home/Dominant Language Survey properly*. This means that intake staff needs to understand the intent and importance of the Home/Dominant Language Survey as the first step in determining if a student may need English-as-a-second language services, knows what the next steps are, and contacts the appropriate people responsible to take the next steps.

   ➢ If the person conducting the intake can communicate with the parent/guardian, whether in English or in their home language, the registration procedure set up by the state for all students should be followed, including the administration of the Home/Dominant Language Survey to determine whether a further assessment needs to be made of the child's abilities in English.
   ➢ If the person conducting the intake cannot communicate with the parent/guardian, it is important to *find someone who can interpret for the family*, and then follow the registration and identification procedures.

2. Make sure that the person responsible for intake is aware of *differences in naming conventions* among cultures and that they take the time to confirm the accuracy of how they are entering the student's name in all record-keeping systems. For example, the order in which parts of a name are written differs across cultures. In the United States, the given or first name comes first (e.g., John), then comes the middle name (e.g., Patrick) and the last name appears at the end (Moore). In Latin countries, this order does not work because it is customary to include both the father's and mother's last name, with the mother's last name appearing at the end. Thus, in Latin cultures, the last name of a child named Juan Roberto Gonzalez Rodriguez would be Gonzalez, not Rodriguez. Other countries write the family name first and then the given name.

3. Make sure that *the date of birth is recorded accurately*. In some countries, the day of the month comes before the month. For example, a birth date written as 01.05.1994 could mean May 1, 1994 and not January 5, 1994.

References:
1. Marcus, Adger, & Arteagoitia, 2007.

Q 5: What English language initial screening instruments to measure English language proficiency other than the Language Assessment System (LAS Links) are being used by districts in Connecticut?

Some districts in Connecticut use the following instruments and tools for initial English language screening:

- Initial version of LAS Links,
- IPT Oral Language Proficiency Test (Ballard –Tighe) (especially useful for students with minimal English language proficiency)
- Depending on the age of the student, some districts also ask students to provide a writing sample by responding to a prompt such as "Write about the school or place you just came from."

Q 6: What are some key questions that we might want to include in a standard parent interview form (in addition to the Home/Dominant Language Survey) to help us understand who our students are and what their needs might be?

Key information you may want to gather through a standard parent interview form is the following:

- *Family history of movement to and in the United States* –Is this the family's initial move to the U.S. or are they coming from another point of entry? Was the child born in the U.S.?

- *Language development history of the child* – Does the family speak more than one language? Does the child speak more than one language? What language does the child use with whom and for what purpose? Who else lives in the household and what language(s) do they use to speak with the child? Does the child interact with speakers of English and, if so, in what contexts (home, community, peers)? Has the child experienced any difficulties with his expressive or receptive language in his/her home language (L1)? How old was the child when first starting to learn/speak English as a second language (L2)? Is the child literate in L1? In L2?

- *Educational history* – What experience with formal schooling has the child had, including years of schooling? What level of formal schooling did the child complete? Are any of these experiences in the United States? If the child has been schooled in the U.S. was the child in an ELL program? If the child was in an ELL program but is now exited, when did the child exit? How was the child doing in their previous school?

References:
1. Nguyen, pp. 92-94, "How do you decide what kind of program for English language learners is appropriate for your school?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.
2. Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007.
3. See Appendix A: Case History Form Sample.

SERVICES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Q 7: What are some key factors the district should consider when developing services for our ELL population?

First of all, get a good sense of *who your students are and how they cluster*. Find out how homogeneous or heterogeneous your ELL population is on the following factors:

- Age of students
- Number of languages spoken
- Levels of proficiency in English in all four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing
- Levels of proficiency in their first language for both oral and literacy skills
- Experience in formal education and continuity of schooling in their home country or in the U.S.
- Educational history, including history of retention and/or participation in special services such as ESL and special education
- Academic skills in their first language
- Recency of arrival in the U.S.

Understand the *sociopolitical context of your community*. As you investigate different program designs and approaches, think about the following:

- How well will the program design/approach meet the needs of your students?
- How well will the program design/approach be accepted by the sociolinguistic community of the students and the community-at-large?

Identify what *resources (human and material)* you will be able realistically to call on:
- Availability of teachers with the expertise needed for a particular program/approach
- Administrative support
- Availability of a variety of materials
- Evidence of effectiveness in districts/schools similar to your own

References:
1. de Jong, pp. 90-92; Nguyen, pp.92-94, "How do you decide what kind of program for English language learners is appropriate for your school?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.

Q 8: What kinds of things should we think about when deciding how to assign students to schools within the district?

Depending on the numbers and distribution across grade levels, consider the pros and cons of placing all ELL students within the same school or distributing them across a number of schools. Factors to consider:

- *Language proficiency levels:* Organizing services around language proficiency levels makes it easier for teachers to develop targeted lessons. At the same time there is a danger in grouping students from multiple grade levels since this raises challenges in meeting content learning objectives. In general, when grouping by proficiency levels across grade levels, keep the age gap narrow within a class.

- *Grade level placement:* In general, ELL students should not be placed in a lower grade level only because of her/his level of English proficiency. However, while it is important to place ELLs with students who are their academic and social peers, the district and schools also will have to consider the unique needs of overage students (older students whose academic and literacy skills are well below grade level) and see what resources are available to provide them with appropriate services.

- *Social isolation:* When making decisions about ELL student assignments consider the importance of providing systematic and frequent opportunities for ELL students to practice their English while interacting and communicating with native speakers. It is also important not to segregate ELL students from the rest of the student population in order to ensure access to the full range of academic and non-academic opportunities.

- *Economies of scale:* Clustering ELL students within a school and by a given grade level, allows for a more effective use of limited resources. With clustering, resources can be shared and collaboration and communication among teachers and specialists are easier to maintain. At the same time, it is important to keep track of the cumulative numbers in each school so that no one school is being asked to assume sole responsibility for ELL students in the district and overtaxing its capacity to integrate them into the life of the school.

- *Commitment of the school leadership* and the whole school to meet the needs of ELL students: Whatever grouping practices are used, it is important for the school leadership to monitor the program regularly and be ready to anticipate or counter any negative effectives that may arise.

References:
1. de Jong, pp. 118-119; Commins, pp. 119-121; How should English language learners be grouped for instruction. In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.
2. Nguyen, pp.92-94, "How do you decide what kind of program for English language learners is appropriate for your school?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.

Q 9: What program models work best when students come from many linguistic groups?

Districts with small number of ELL students who come from many linguistic groups, by necessity, have to offer programs that use English as the medium of instruction. However, it is important in these instances to affirm the value of the child's home/dominant language and to draw on their prior knowledge and skills as much as possible.

Program models that offer primarily English instruction:

- English as a second language (ESL): ESL programs offer direct instruction and focus on helping ELLs become proficient in English - that is, acquire the vocabulary and structure of the language and develop the four domains of communicative linguistic skills – listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This type of program is also sometimes referred to as an English language development program (ELD).

- Sheltered instruction: Core content, grade level courses are taught in English using instructional strategies and techniques designed to make the content comprehensible. Often, these strategies and techniques are also effective for all students and therefore are appropriate in a general education classroom in which ELL students are included.

Teaching language through content is an effective way to encourage English language development in general and academic language in particular because 1) language acquisition occurs in a natural context, and 2) students are learning to use language for real purposes.

The use of both instructional strategies – ESL and sheltered instruction – can work effectively to reinforce learning of both language and content. For example, ESL classes or small group work can be organized to support and reinforce the academic language that will be needed in the general education content classes.

References:
1. Christian, pp. 81-83, "What kinds of programs are available for English language learners?" Freeman & Freeman, pp.139- 140, "What are the best instructional approaches for English language learners?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.
2. Wright, pp. 87-88, "What is the difference between English as a second language (ESL) and sheltered instruction/SDAIE?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.

Q 10: How can we provide effective English language instruction when our district has a small number of ELL students who speak different languages, have different levels of English proficiency, and are in multiple grade levels?

There is no single answer to this question. In order to decide how to differentiate your program options or services, you will need to know what the different needs of your subgroups are. You will need to be flexible in order to meet these differing needs.

- For example, students who come with formal schooling from their home country may need intensive English language development assistance but may have the content knowledge at their grade level. However, students who come with interrupted schooling will need intensive instruction in both English language development as well as content knowledge.

Think about scheduling a specified time for planned daily instruction in English-as-a-second language to provide ELL students with ample time to practice their oral language as well as literacy skills.

- For example, while your main approach may be an inclusive model in which all ELL students are taught in the general education classroom with a teacher who knows how to use sheltered English strategies, students who need intensive assistance in acquiring English should be assigned to work with a certified ESL teacher for a designated period of time, or with a tutor or paraprofessional trained in the use of effective language development strategies for ELLs.

References:
1. de Jong, pp. 90-92, "How do you decide what kind of program for English language learners is appropriate for your school?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.
2. Wright, pp. 87-88, "What is the difference between English as a second language (ESL) and sheltered instruction/SDAIE?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.

Q 11: What is the best way of providing ESL instruction – the push-in method or the pull-out method?

The answer to this question should be based on the purpose for which you are using either method, and the amount of time the student will spend in each.

ESL instruction can be provided either within the general education classroom itself (push in) as well as in separate, ESL classes (pull-out). For example, students who need intensive ELD can be grouped during specific times of the day by English language proficiency level, either within the classroom through co-teaching and/or differentiated instruction (push-in), or in a substantially separate ESL class (pull-out) with students with similar language needs. In either case, it is important for general education teachers to receive professional development on the kinds of strategies they can use in their teaching to meet the needs of their ELL students. In the pull-out model, it is important for the "pull-out" ESL teacher to coordinate with the general education teacher so that the "pull-out" ESL sessions support and reinforce the language needed in the general education classroom.

In instances where ELL students are 'pulled out" for targeted language instruction by proficiency level, a couple of key caveats are important to mention: 1) avoid too large an age gap within one class – the material for one age group often is not appropriate for another age group; and 2) ELL students should not be segregated in separate classes for the whole day or large portions of the day; this limits their opportunities to interact with native speakers of English and restricts their full access to content/academic instruction. ELL students should receive the same core curricula as that of the general education student population.

References:
1. de Jong, pp. 118-119; Commins, pp. 119-121; How should English language learners be grouped for instruction. In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.

Q 12: How much time in a day should an ELL student receive language instruction?

There is no definitive answer to this question. The best answer is "it depends" – it depends on the student's age, their current level of English language proficiency in both conversational fluency and academic proficiency, their literacy skills in their dominant language, their knowledge of the academic content, and other factors.

Instead of thinking about the amount of time an ELL student should receive language instruction during a given day, it is best for the district to research existing program models that have been shown to be effective in contexts and with students similar to your own and to provide an integrated program of instruction that offers both general language development and language development connected to content learning. This may mean implementing different program options for different subgroups rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

References
1. Wright, pp. 87-88, "What is the difference between English as a second language (ESL) and sheltered instruction/SDAIE?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.
2. Nguyen, pp. 92-94, "How do you decide what kind of program for English language learners is appropriate for your school?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.

RESEARCH & EVIDENCE-BASED INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

District

Q 13: While co-teaching is a possible instructional practice, is it really effective if we lack adequate planning time and if it dilutes service for all students for the sake of a few ELLs in the class?

First of all, co-teaching or collaboration between general education teachers and ESL teachers can be an effective instructional practice that enhances instruction for all. For it to work, teachers need to be willing to put effort into the following: developing shared goals, creating equal status between them, sharing responsibility for key decisions and accountability for outcomes; sharing resources; and working towards developing a sense of trust. When this happens, all students are well served.

Secondly, school administrators need to model and support collaboration and a climate of open communication and problem-solving.

Finally, while time in general is an issue, schools have found different ways of finding times for teachers to collaborate. Some examples of existing structures that can be used are:

- Common planning time
- Grade level meetings
- Monthly staff meetings
- School-based professional development days

References:
1. Echevarria, pp. 114-116; Diaz-Rico, 116-117, "How do you ensure that the mainstream teachers and English as a second language teachers collaborate with each other to effectively address the content and language needs of the English language learner?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.
2. Mosca, pp. 109-110, "How do you ensure that everyone in the school shares the responsibility for educating English language learners, not just those who are specialists in the field?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.

<u>Classroom Teacher</u>

Q 14: I am a general education teacher and I just received an English language learner in my classroom for the first time. How do I get started?

First of all, *get to know who your students are as individuals*. Find out as much as you can about the student or students you have received. Check the child's cumulative folder for the Home/Dominant Language survey, student scores on the English proficiency screening instrument, as well as on the LAS Links and content assessments if the child has taken them. Check to see if a parent interview was done that asks about the child's history of language development in her/his home language(s) and in English and about educational experiences in this and the home country. If there is little available information from the district, try to communicate directly with the parents and the child through someone who speaks their language

Identify resources in your school system. Find out if your district has an ELL coordinator who can point you to resources within and outside the district. Some coordinators have prepared information with helpful tips for teachers. If there is an ESL teacher in your school or district, ask if you can observe her/him and then discuss what strategies that teacher uses. Ask the district where you can receive professional development on working with ELL students. For example, the CT SDE offers professional development modules on teaching ELLs.

Help the student feel welcome in your class. The following are examples provided by CT ELL directors and teachers.

- Assign the child a peer buddy to teach her/him the school and classroom routines; the peer buddy does not have to speak the child's language although that is preferable.
- If there is a student in another grade or adult at the school who speaks that child's language make sure you connect that child to them.
- Learn a few words in the student's language. Even just learning how to say "good morning" will show the student you are interested and care.
- Affirm the value of the student's language by asking him/her to teach the class a few words (e.g., how to count from one to ten).
- Help students in your class learn the new student's name and how to pronounce it properly; help the new student learn the names of his/her classmates and how to pronounce them properly.
- Look for and use true cognates from the student's language; especially with older students, this connection through shared words can help the student feel comfortable.

References
1. Freeman & Hamayan, pp. 41-43, "How do you create a positive school environment for English language learners and their parents/members of their household? In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.

Q 15: What are the stages of language acquisition that I should know in order to better understand my students' progress?

Stage	Characteristics	Approximate Time Frame	Teacher Prompts
Preproduction	The student ▪ Has minimal comprehension. ▪ Does not verbalize. ▪ Nods "Yes" and "No." ▪ Draws and points.	0–6 months	▪ Show me … ▪ Circle the … ▪ Where is …? ▪ Who has …?
Early Production	The student ▪ Has limited comprehension ▪ Produces one- or two-word responses. ▪ Uses key words and familiar phrases. ▪ Uses present-tense verbs.	6 months–1 year	▪ Yes/no questions ▪ Either/or questions ▪ Who …? ▪ What …? ▪ How many …?
Speech Emergence	The student ▪ Has good comprehension. ▪ Can produce simple sentences. ▪ Makes grammar and pronunciation errors. ▪ Frequently misunderstands jokes.	1–3 years	▪ Why …? ▪ How …? ▪ Explain … ▪ Questions requiring phrase or short-sentence answers
Intermediate Fluency	The student ▪ Has excellent comprehension. ▪ Makes few grammatical errors.	3–5 years	▪ What would happen if …? ▪ Why do you think …? ▪ Questions requiring more than a sentence response
Advanced Fluency	The student has a near-native level of speech.	5–7 years	▪ Decide if … ▪ Retell …

References:
1. Hill & Bjork, 2008

Instruction can be adapted for ELLs by using the following *modifications*

> *Giving Instructions*:
> - Use both oral and written instructions. Model the instructions, check for understanding, and repeat and review instructions frequently.
> - Have children demonstrate their understanding of the instructions before they begin their work
>
> *Introducing Vocabulary*:
> - Use gestures, hands-on activities, and visuals (photographs, pictures, clip art, videos, objects) to develop vocabulary both general as well as academic.
> - Review vocabulary frequently. Whenever possible use the first language of your English language learners to present new vocabulary, building on their first language and literacy proficiency.
>
> *Instructional Design*:
> - Provide additional time for completing assignments and reduce the length of assignments, e.g. assign ELL students 2 out of 4 questions.
> - Use small groups for instruction.
> - *Schedule regular peer-assisted learning opportunities* in which pairs of students at different ability levels or different English language proficiencies work together on academic tasks in a structured manner to practice and extend material already taught. For this strategy to work, however, teachers need professional development on how to establish age appropriate routines. This strategy is not a substitute for teacher-led instruction but is intended to replace some of the independent seat work that provides little or no feedback to the student.
> - *Use wait time* to provide ELL students the opportunity to gather their thoughts and prepare an answer in English
>
> *Developing Oral Language Proficiency*:
> - Develop oral language proficiency including content vocabulary in an ongoing way.
> - Provide English language learners with many opportunities to speak and work with fluent English speakers as well as the opportunity to use their first language to understand their lessons.
> - Paraphrase student remarks during discussions and encourage them to expand on their ideas.
>
> *Developing Comprehension:*
> - Teach students to summarize texts; this helps them consolidate their learning after reading.
> - Give students the opportunity during non-instructional time to practice the reading of words, sentences, stories, and academic texts as well as to practice their reading strategies.   When possible include books in the children's first language as well as in English.
> - Provide and teach students who have reached adequate levels of language and literacy in English and their first language to use bilingual dictionaries.
> - Help students create their own personalized dictionary.

References:
1. Adapted from: Chevalier, 2009
2. Gersten et al., 2007
3. Francis, et al., 2006 (a)
4. Freeman & Freeman, pp. 143-144, "How do you ensure that English language learners develop English language proficiency? In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.
5. Connecticut RESC Alliance, ELL Strategies Desk Cards, 2009.

Q 17: How can I provide appropriate English reading instruction for grades K-3?

The following are research-based strategies that have been found to be effective.

- Focus on instruction that substantially addresses the *five core reading elements* as identified by the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000) - phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and text comprehension. Developing a solid foundation in these components of reading has clear benefits for language-minority students and a positive influence on their literacy development, just as it does for native English speakers.

- Develop oral proficiency in English. The Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Children and Youth (2006) points out that this is an area that is often overlooked in instruction. Developing oral proficiency in English is an equally necessary component as are the five core reading elements especially in supporting reading comprehension and writing skills.

- Provide intensive *small-group reading interventions* that include the five core reading elements. The primary mode of instructional delivery should be explicit and direct.

- *Teaching several of these components simultaneously* has been shown to successfully improve literacy for language-minority students.

- While approaches that are similar to those used with native English-speaking students are often effective, the research also suggests that *adjustments to these approaches are needed* to have maximum benefit with language-minority students. For example, ELL students benefit from focused work on those particular phonemes and combinations of phonemes in English that do not exist in their home language.

- Provide *extensive, explicit, and varied vocabulary instruction* that emphasizes both the meanings of everyday words as well as essential words in the content areas.

- Develop *formal, age-appropriate academic English instruction* integrated into the core curriculum beginning in the primary grades.

References:
1. August & Shanahan, 2008
2. August, & Shanahan, 2006
3. National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000
4. Gersten, et al., 2007
5. Connecticut RESC Alliance, ELL Strategies Desk Cards, 2009.

Q 18: What practices have been found to be most effect in improving literacy in ELL adolescent students?

Research on classroom and intervention practices has shown that *the following strategies are effective in improving the literacy skills* of English speaking adolescent students as well as that of adolescent ELLs.

- *Integrate all four language skills* into instruction from the start (reading, writing, listening, speaking)

- *Teach the components and processes of reading and writing*; beginning with phonemic awareness and phonics and adding vocabulary, text comprehension and fluency

- Provide *explicit vocabulary instruction* as a regular part of classroom lessons, providing opportunities for exposure and use in multiple contexts and in different linguistic modes such as discussion, reading, and writing. For ELLs, teachers may also need to distinguish between content specific words, process words, and words related to English structure

- Provide *direct and explicit instruction in comprehension strategies* with opportunities for guided practice.

- Provide *opportunities for extended discussion of text meaning and interpretation* by asking follow-up questions that provided continuity and extend the discussion; introduce and use a specific "discussion protocol."

- Increase *student motivation and engagement* in literacy learning by making literacy experiences relevant, connected to everyday life, and, for ELL students in particular, that connect to their prior experiences. For example, include folktales from the student's background when appropriate.

- Make available *intensive individualized interventions* for struggling readers (based on reliable screening assessments) provided by qualified teachers.

- Build and activate background knowledge.

- Teach language through content and themes, linking language to real-life experiences, including the content or themes being taught in other classes.

- Use native language strategically

- Pair technology with existing interventions.

- Motivate ELL's through choice: Most students tend to be more motivated and more successful in reading when they have meaningful opportunities to exercise choice, whether that means choice of text, choice of task, or choice of partner.

References:
1. Francis et al., 2006a.
2. Francis et al., 2006b.
3. Short & Fitzsimmons, 2007.
4. Kamil et al., 2008.
5. August & Shanahan, 2006.

Q 19: What are some strategies that foster effective teaching and rapid learning for adolescent newcomers?

Some strategies that foster effective teaching and rapid learning for adolescent newcomers are the following:

- Group students heterogeneously. Effective programs recognize that students often learn language among their peers with different levels of oral language proficiency; these programs provide structured opportunities for newcomers to work collaboratively with more advanced ELLs and native speakers.

- Provide extended instructional time. A strong research base supports the notion that, provided instruction is deemed effective, greater time on task is essential to the success of students performing below grade level, ELL's in particular.
- Coordinate efforts around newcomer programs, programs for advanced ELLs and mainstream classes.
- Target resources to those areas most likely to have an impact on student achievement.

*References***:**
1. Francis et al., 2006 b.

Q 20: What instructional practices have been found to be effective in developing the writing skills of ELL students?

Scarcella discusses six key aspects of instruction in developing the writing skills of ELL students.

1. *Expectations:* Set high expectations connected to specific linguistic goals. Develop writing assignments that challenge students to use their linguistic abilities with increasing complexity. For example, continuing to accept ELL student's use of simple or incomplete sentences will not help them develop writing proficiency.

2. *Instruction of features of the English language:* Teachers need to provide students with systematic and explicit instruction on the features of the English language related to writing, such as grammar, spelling and other conventions.

3. *Input:* Expose ELL students to a wide variety of reading material and forms of writing that introduce students to complex clauses, sentence variety, and low-frequency vocabulary, such as the kind of vocabulary that tends to be academic or infrequently used in spoken language. Examples of low frequency vocabulary are words such as "signify" and "acquire." While it is important to use comprehensible English input it is equally important to balance this with "comprehensive, authentic academic input" that pushes the student slightly above their current proficiency levels.

4. *Output:* Provide opportunities for ELLs to use their writing skills using different structural forms. Examples of writing structure are clauses such as "in comparison to" and "as a result." Challenge students to use their knowledge of academic language and different grammatical structures of increasing complexity in their writings.

5. *Instructional techniques and activities:* Use general strategies like encouraging students to use dictionaries to discover the meanings of words instead of just relying on context cues to guess at meanings and to use new words in their writings. Focus on accuracy building activities by providing feedback on grammar and other conventions of writing.

6. *Corrective feedback and assessment:* ELL students need to be provided with corrective feedback on their writing. At the same time "Direct correction of student errors must be balanced with other types of feedback such as modeling" of correct responses so as not to overwhelm or discourage them. While ELL students, as other students, go through a developmental stage of using ungrammatical forms of expression, without corrective feedback ELL students are never given the guidance they need to become proficient writers.

References:
1. Scarcella, 2003.

Q 21: How can I use students' literacy in their dominant language to their advantage?

For ELL students who are literate in their own language, knowing their level of proficiency and/or strengths in their native language can be used to advantage in transferring skills and knowledge into English.

- For example, students' oral proficiency and literacy skills in their first language can be used to facilitate literacy development in English.
- Take advantage of their higher order vocabulary skills (e.g., ability to provide formal definitions) when speaking a second language.
- Take advantage of cognate relationships between their first language and English; teach students how to identify the root in a family of words; often such a family of words cuts across different content areas. If planned well, such vocabulary development can be reinforced in the context of different content areas.

References:
1. August & Shanahan, 2008.
2. August, pp.71-71, "How does first language literacy development related to second language literacy development?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.

Q 22: How can we get students with strong academic skills and language proficiency at levels 4 or 5 to meet the requirements of CMT/CAPT?

Suggestions from CT ELL directors and teachers:

- First of all, find out what the problem is since the student seems to have both strong academic skills and a high level of English proficiency.
- Work with the student's tutor and review every CMT strand to look for weak scores that haven't been mastered by the child. Have the tutor focus on those specific strand questions in reading, writing, and math in which the student is weak. Since DRP counts as 50% of the reading component, incorporate a DRP lesson as part of a student's instructional interventions, grades 3-8.
-

Q 23: How can we assess whether an ELL student has a language issue or a learning disability?

A few tips to consider are:

- Complete a comprehensive assessment to examine skills in both languages.
- Make sure the student has had adequate time learning English to be able to access the curriculum.
- Make sure that the student has received appropriate and necessary instructional interventions.
- Consider sociolinguistic variables (e.g., age, differentiated instruction, opportunities for intervention) by examining the interaction among them and the bilingual child's language skills.
- Consider providing intervention in both languages in order to support the child's development of the two languages simultaneously.

References:
1. Rivera et al., 2008

District and Classroom Teacher

Q 24: How can we best select instructional materials for skills and content learning?

When reviewing materials, consider the following factors:

- *Are materials age-appropriate?* Look for materials that focus on themes of interest for a particular age group.

- *Do the materials support grade-level curriculum/concepts? Do the materials take into account the students' levels of language proficiency in English?* Look for materials that support age- and grade-appropriate curriculum and that come in different readability levels; books at different readability levels and related to the same topic lend themselves to differentiated instruction.

- *Are the language demands of the material appropriate?* Look for materials that are highly visual, especially ones with realistic photography – these are appropriate for all grade levels.

- *Are there materials in the students' native language?* Look for native language materials, especially for students who have had prior schooling in their own language, to support what they have already learned and to support what they are currently learning. Also look for native language materials that parents can use at home to support their children

References:
1. Zehler, 2008
2. Morales, pp.151-153, "What materials are available for English language learners?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006

Q 25: How can we find instructional materials for skills and content learning?

Some sources where you can find information are the following:

- Use your colleagues for resources and recommendations.

- Check your school library for ELL resources about how language is acquired and recommended instructional and assessment strategies.

- Check the Doing What Works website, Teaching Literacy in English to K-5 Learners, sponsored by the U.S Department of Education, for multimedia information on five recommended practices: screen and monitor progress; provide reading interventions; teach vocabulary, develop academic English, and schedule peer learning. (http://dww.ed.gov/)

- Check the Internet. The Internet provides many multilingual resources some at no cost while others may require a reasonable membership fee; other sites feature materials that can be purchased but allow you to review them; identify ones that provide quality materials and share with teachers, parents, and students.

- Check the sample list of multilingual and curricular resources below:

  ➤ www.colorincolorado.org
    A Spanish-English bilingual site for families and educators of English language learners

  ➤ http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/languages
    World news headlines in over 30 languages

> ➢ http://icdlbooks.org
> International Children's Digital Library: search for books in different languages

> ➢ http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/cat_tapestry.asp?CID=1585&DID=8732
> The Tapestry is an extensive resource center that has been developed for teachers and administrators in grades preK - 12 who work with children who are English language learners.

> ➢ www.readwritethink.org
> Practices and resources in English language arts for educators, students, and parents

> ➢ www.thinkfinity.org
> Thousands of free lesson plans for grades k-12 in all subject areas.

References:
1. Doing What Works: research-based education practices online.
2. Morales, pp.151-153, "What materials are available for English language learners?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.

ASSESSMENT

The research on the development of English literacy strongly suggests that adequate assessments are essential for gauging the individual strengths and weaknesses of ELL students, making placement decisions, and tailoring instruction to meet student needs. Unfortunately, existing assessments are inadequate to the need in most respects. Much more research is needed in the area of assessment.

District and Classroom Teacher

Q 26: How can classroom assessments be used to inform instruction and monitor student progress?

Some points to consider:

- Assessments of content should be done in the language of instruction.

- Teachers need to be aware that the child's level of proficiency in English can confound her/his demonstration of content knowledge. Do not confuse what the student knows with how they express this knowledge through language; in other words, focus on the student's understanding of the question instead of language errors such as grammar mistakes or awkward phrasing.

- Classroom formative assessments provide valuable essential information about what the child has learned and still needs to learn to the teacher, the student, and their parents.

- Classroom formative assessments should be integrated with instruction to provide timely information and opportunities for "re-teaching" and focused learning.

References:
1. Gottlieb, pp. 123-125, "How should you access the academic achievement of English language learners?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.

Q 27: What are some assessments that help predict performance in English reading?

Some things to consider are:

- There is some evidence that letter naming and tests of phonological awareness in English are good predictors of performance in English.

- For placement purposes, there is limited evidence about the effectiveness of teacher judgment in identifying ELL students who need intensive reading instruction or who might be at risk of dropping out of school.

- The reliability of teacher judgment can increase when they are given specific criteria to respond to rather than simply expressing their opinions spontaneously.

- While the research on determining the eligibility of ELLs for special education, language disorders, or learning disabilities services is still limited, it is recommended that students be assessed in both their first language and English, whenever possible

References:
1. Gottlieb, pp. 123-125, "How should you access the academic achievement of English language learners?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.
2. Gottlieb, 2006.

EXIT CRITERIA

District

Q 28: When should ELL students be exited from the ESL program and monitored?

Key considerations in setting exit policies/guidelines that reflect high expectations

- Policies should take into consideration the complex and non-linear nature of second language development by allowing for gradual transitioning to the general education classroom, basing decisions on actual English proficiency levels, and providing continued support for academic language development.

- Policies should reflect age-appropriate social and academic language proficiency levels (oral, literacy, and content-based language skills) and take into account the different linguistic demands of the grade level.

- Policies should include the use of both language and content assessments that provide information on the ELL student's preparedness to function in the general education classroom.

- Policies should take into account the preparedness of the general education staff to provide appropriate support to the ELL student.

- Policies should be developed collaboratively between the ESL and the general education staffs so that expectations for proficiency levels and academic preparedness are clear and consistent.

- Policies should be articulated clearly to all staff, students, and parents.

References:
1. de Jong, pp. 125-127, "When should English language learners exit their bilingual/English as a second language program?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.

Q 29: What are commonly used cut-off scores for exiting students from the ESL program?

The Connecticut State Department of Education has mandated performance standards that must be met for an English Language Learner to exit from a program of English language instruction. Performance standards have been set for the following assessments: LAS Links for English language proficiency levels, the DRA for K-2 reading, and CMT and CAPT scores in mathematics, reading and writing.

Exit criteria are posted on the Connecticut State Department of Education website: www.sde.ct.gov.

Q 30: What should happen after ELL students leave the ESL program?

The responsibility for educating ELL students should be assumed by the entire school.

- Even if an ELL student is no longer in an ESL program, their linguistic and cultural heritages are still a part of who they are and should continue to be affirmed and integrated into their education experience.

- After ELL students leave the ESL program, their continuing needs as English language learners should be met by everyone with whom they are in contact.

- While current federal requirements state that exited ELL students should be monitored for two years, the same standard for monitoring the progress of any child should apply throughout their education. Data from several states indicate that many former ELLs continue to underperform and their performance gaps grow as they move up the grades.

References:
1. de Jong, pp. 127-129, "What should happen to English language learners after they leave the bilingual/English as a second language program designed for them?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.

Q 31: How do we find out how students who have been exited are doing?

Some strategies are:

- Continue to disaggregate academic achievement data by exited students.
- Assign exited students a specific code that will allow you to identify former ELL students within the last two years and another code to indicate whether the student was exited more than two years ago.
- Set up a data system that allows you to disaggregate exited students by different factors: e.g., grade at which student was exited, program type in which student participated, number of years in an ELL program.
- Administer follow-up surveys to students, parents, and teachers.

References:
1. de Jong, pp. 127-129, "What should happen to English language learners after they leave the bilingual/English as a second language program designed for them?" In Hamayan & Freeman, 2006.

APPENDIX A:
Sample Case History Form

Children Acquiring English as a Second Language

Student Name:
Date:
School:
Completed by:

Family History

1. Who lives with the child?
2. What languages do they speak?
3. Who else spends time with the child?
4. What languages do they speak?
5. What language does the child use most often at home?
6. What language does the child use most often with playmates?
7. What is the child's country of origin?
8. When did the student/family come to the U.S.?
9. Did the child/family spend time in other locations or other countries? How long?

Language Development History

1. At what age did the child first begin to hear English?
2. Describe your child's speech/language when he first began hearing English.
3. Once English was introduced, did native language use decrease?
4. What language does your child understand better? (best?)
5. What language does your child speak better? (best?)
6. In which language does your child usually answer when you speak to him?
7. What language does your child prefer to speak? In what situations?
8. In what language does your child listen to the radio or watch television?
9. In what language does your child read for pleasure?
10. When did our child begin to use single words in her/his first/home language (L1)? Then sentences?
11. Did your child experience difficulty with her/his speech in L1?
12. Has your child experienced difficulty with receptive language in L1?
13. Has your child experienced difficulty with expressive language in L1?

Educational History

1. Did your child attend day care? Head Start? Nursery School? In what language were these programs?
2. What age was your child when s/he first started school?
3. What language(s) was your child speaking at that time?
4. Was your child speaking one language better than another at that time
5. Did your child ever receive ESL or bilingual service? How long and how often?
6. What grades were completed in the native country?
7. What is the total number of months of instruction each year in the native country?
8. Trace school placement, curriculum, and language of instruction grade by grade.

Parents' Background

1. What is the parents' educational level?
2. What is the parents/guardians' native language proficiency (speaking, reading, writing)?
3. What is the parents/guardians' English language proficiency (speaking, reading, writing)?

Other Questions

1. How often do you visit your native country?
2. How long do you typically stay there?
3. What language does your child generally use with you and other family/friends during those visits?
4. When was your last visit? How long was your visit?
5. Does your child miss school to make those visits? How much?
6. Does your child hear English during those visits?
7. What were your child's English skills when you returned?

Courtesy of Linda Clock, 2010.

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RESOURCES:

Center on Instruction, ELL Strand
The Center on Instruction provides materials and resources to improve instruction and intervention for **English Language Learners**, including exemplary delivery models and professional development for teachers in content and language areas.
http://www.centeroninstruction.org/resources.cfm?category=ell&subcategory=&grade_start=&grade_end=

Connecticut Administrators of Programs for English Language Learners
The Connecticut Administrators of Programs for English Language Learners (CAPELL) is committed to enhancing the educational experiences of English Language Learners (ELLs) by promoting cross-cultural awareness, sensitivity, parity, inclusion, and the improvement of instruction and curricula. It advocates equal educational opportunities for English Language Learners (ELLs).
http://www.capellct.org

Doing What Works
Doing What Works (DWW) is a website sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education. The goal of DWW is to create an online library of resources that may help teachers, schools, districts, states and technical assistance providers implement research-based instructional practice. The website includes a section on teaching literacy to K-5 English learners.
http://dww.ed.gov/topic/?T_ID=13

RESC Alliance
The RESC Alliance is a formal alliance of Connecticut's six RESCs: Education Connection, Cooperative Educational Services (CES), Capitol Region Education Council (CREC), Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES), East Conn; and LEARN. The RESCs are public education agencies whose main purpose is to "furnish programs and services" to Connecticut's public school districts.
http://www.rescalliance.org/index.html

The State Education Resource Center (SERC)
SERC is a nonprofit agency primarily funded by the Connecticut State Department of Education. SERC provides professional development and information dissemination in the latest research and best practices to educators, service providers, and families throughout the state, as well as job-embedded technical assistance and training within schools, programs, and districts.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Academic language (Academic talk): Language used in the learning of academic subject matter in a formal schooling context; aspects of language strongly associated with literacy and academic achievement, including specific academic terms or technical language, and speech registers related to each field of study. (http://www.tesol.org/s_tesol/seccss.asp?CID=95&DID=1565)

Adolescent newcomers: A subset of ELLs who are currently enrolled in grades 6 through 12 who have attended an English-speaking school for fewer than two years. They are a diverse group of learners who differ on key aspects related to academic achievement, including amount and degree of formal schooling, level of literacy in their native language, and age of arrival in U.S. schools. (http://www.centeroninstruction.org/files/ELL2-Newcomers.pdf)

Cognates: Words in different languages related to the same root, e.g. *education* (English) and *educación* (Spanish). (http://www.ncela.gwu.edu)

Co-teaching: A service delivery model in which two (or more) educators or other certified staff, contract to share instructional responsibility, for a single group of students, primarily in a single classroom workspace, for specific content (objectives), with mutual ownership, pooled resources, and joint accountability. (http://www.marilynfriend.com/basics.htm)

Dominant language: The language with which a bilingual or multilingual speaker has greatest proficiency and/or uses more often. (http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/)

English Language Development Program (ELD): A program of instruction designed specifically for English language learners to develop their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in English. This type of instruction is also known as "English as a second language" (ESL), "teaching English to speakers of other languages" (TESOL), or "English for speakers of other languages" (ESOL). ELD, ESL, TESOL or ESOL are versions of English language arts standards that have been crafted to address the specific developmental stages of students learning English. (http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/)

English Language Learners (ELL): National-origin-minority students who are limited-English proficient (US Department of Education). Students whose first language is not English and who are in the process of learning English. (http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/) The term English language learner (ELL) has generally replaced the term Limited English Proficient (LEP) used by the federal government to identify those students who have insufficient English to succeed in English-only classrooms.

English as a Second Language (ESL); English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL): An educational approach in which English language learners are instructed in the use of the English language. Their instruction is based on a special curriculum that typically involves little or no use of the native language, focuses on language (as opposed to content) and is usually taught during specific school periods. For the rest of the school day, students may be placed in mainstream classrooms, an immersion program, or a bilingual education program. Every bilingual education program has an ESL component. (http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/)

Exit Criteria: A set of guidelines for ending special services for English language learners and placing them in mainstream, English-only classes as fluent English speakers. This is usually based on a combination of performance on an English language proficiency test, grades, standardized test scores, and teacher recommendations. (http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/)

Formative assessment: Formative assessment is a process used by teachers and students during instruction that provides feedback to adjust ongoing teaching and learning to improve students' achievement of intended instructional outcomes. (www.CCSSO.org)

Home language survey: A survey usually given to parents at the time of registration. The following three questions are usually asked: What was the first language spoken by the student? What is the primary language spoken by the parents? What is the primary language spoken at home by the student? (http://www.ctkidslink.org/publications/edu10englishlanguage.pdf) Answers to the survey are used to help determine if the student is a language minority student. An answer indicating that a language other than English is spoken in the home triggers the administration of an English language proficiency test to determine what educational services the student may need to help them acquire English as a second language.

Intensive interventions: Interventions, including academic and behavioral, characterized by their increased focus for students who fail to respond to less intensive forms of instruction. Intensity can be increased through many dimensions including length, frequency, and duration of implementation. Within the Response to Intervention (RTI) framework, intensive is sometimes referred to as tertiary intervention. (http://www.rti4success.org)

IPT Oral Language Proficiency Test: A series of norm-referenced, standardized assessment instruments for testing oral language, reading, and writing in English; includes a separate series in Spanish. (http://www.ballard-tighe.com/)

Language acquisition: The process of acquiring a first or second language. Some linguists refer to acquisition as the informal development of a person's second language and learning as the process of formal study of a second language. Other linguists do not distinguish between informal acquisition and formal learning. The process of acquiring a second language is different from acquiring the first. (http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/)

Language proficiency: Refers to the ability to communicate or understand thoughts or ideas effectively through a language's grammatical system and vocabulary, using its sounds or written symbols. Language proficiency is composed of oral (listening and speaking) and written (reading and writing) components as well as academic and non-academic language. (http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/)

LAS Links (Language Assessment Scales): A commercially produced integrated suite of English proficiency assessments used in Connecticut to assess incoming students for appropriate placement into educational programs and to assess all students K-12 for their levels of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and determining whether a student is ready to exit her/his ELL program. (www.ctb.com/ctb.com/control/home/products/laslinks)

Native Language: The first language a person acquires in life, or identifies with as a member of an ethnic group. (http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/)

Oral Language Proficiency: Refers to the ability to communicate verbally in a *functional* and *accurate* way in a [specific language]. A high degree of oral proficiency implies having the ability to apply the linguistic knowledge to *new contexts (topics) and situations.* (http://www.carla.umn.edu/immersion/acie/vol2/Bridge2.3.pdf)

Pull-out ESL: An instructional approach in which ELLs are "pulled out" of regular, mainstream classrooms for special instruction in English as a second language by a certified ESL teacher. (http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/)

Push-in ESL: In contrast with pull-out ESL instruction, a certified ESL teacher provides ELLs with instruction in a mainstream or content-area classroom. (http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/)

Sheltered Instruction: An instructional approach used to make academic instruction in English understandable to English language learners to help them acquire proficiency in English while at the same time learning in the content areas. Sheltered English instruction differs from ESL in that English is not taught as a language with a focus on learning the language. Rather, content knowledge and skills are the goals. In the sheltered classroom, teachers use simplified language, physical activities, visual aids, and the environment to teach vocabulary for concept development in mathematics, science, social studies and other subjects. (http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/)

Sociolinguistics: The study of language and linguistic behavior as influenced by social and cultural factors. (http://www.thefreedictionary.com/sociolinguistics)

Wait time: Length of time a teacher waits for students' responses after asking a question. Research shows that increasing wait time from the typical 1.5 seconds after a question to at least 3 seconds increases the likelihood of student participation. (http://www.learnnc.org/reference/wait+time)