

Recommendations to Facilitate the Implementation of an Effective Instructional Plan for English Language Learners (ELLs)

Planned Instruction for English language acquisition (ESL) classes

- *Direct English language instruction may not take place during other content classes which are required under 22 Pa Code § 4.*
- *Planned Instruction in the ESL Program must include daily instruction supporting the program model chosen by the LEA.*
- *Language instruction must be commensurate with the student's proficiency level (i.e. students at levels 1-3 require a greater amount of language instruction than students at levels 4 and 5). This includes both direct language instruction and adaptations to instruction/assessment in all content areas.*
- *Exact hours of direct language instruction by proficiency level must be determined based on student need and program/instructional delivery model. Instruction must meet all requirements under *Lau v Nichols*, 414 U.S. 563 (1974) and *Castañeda v. Pickard*, 648 F.2d 989 (1981).*

1. Administrators and teachers need to create guidelines for placing ELLs in classrooms by clustering students based on their level of English language proficiency or by designating at least one classroom per grade as the “ESOL Friendly” classroom. This strategy facilitates collaboration between ESL and the other general education teachers. Latest research on effective ESL programs shows that collaborative ESOL models in which both educators share information about the student, instructional strategies and/or co-teach have better supported ELLs in the attainment of English language proficiency and achievement of State academic and content standards. Guidelines must be shared with all instructional and administrative staff.
2. Clustering students in “ESOL Friendly” classrooms also facilitates training of general education teachers on effective strategies to support their ELLs favors a more collegial environment in which all teachers are accountable for the education of all students, including English language learners. This strategy also assists with the adequate and equitable allocation of resources.
3. Professional development sessions in which teams of ESL and content area teachers are trained together. The training needs to focus on the implementation of standards aligned instruction which means that what students are taught (curriculum), how students are taught (instructional practices), and how students are tested are directly matched to the Pennsylvania State Standards (*Core Characteristics of Pennsylvania's RtI Framework*).

- Guidelines to consider when planning *direct instruction* of ESL:
 - Entering (level 1) / Beginning (level 2) students: 2 hours
 - Developing (level 3): 1-2 hours
 - Expanding (level 4): 1 hour
 - Bridging (level 5): up to 1 hour or support dictated by student need*Levels are defined by the PA ELPS*
- ESL must be delivered via curriculum aligned with Pennsylvania's Reading,

Writing, Speaking, and Listening Standards, and the PA ELPS for ELLs.

- In order to acquire English, students with LEP must receive instruction the same as they would receive instruction for other curricular areas. In other words, ESL/Bilingual classes must be part of the daily schedule and thoughtfully planned from the administrative level so that students are not removed from other content classes to receive instruction for English language acquisition.
- As the proficiency of a student advances into the upper levels (i.e. Expanding/Bridging), a student may require only minimal instructional time, which may be in the form of ongoing support as needed. HOWEVER, this support must be planned, structured time within the school day.

1. *ACCESS for ELLs* data provides a wealth of information about the strengths and weaknesses of ELLs in all four language domains (i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing) of language development. This data needs to be analyzed in depth and use as a tool to make decisions about the best way to address the student's linguistic and academic needs. Many times you find students at the same level of English language proficiency (ELP), but with different scores in listening, speaking, reading and writing. This can happen because *ACCESS for ELLs* has provided different percentage value to each domain (listening= 15%, speaking= 15%, reading= 35%, writing=35%). These data should be included in the data analysis teaming process during grade level, data meetings or department meetings and should drive the instructional program for the student.
2. Language acquisition is fluid and with effective instruction, our ELLs move forward at a fast pace. Consequently, grouping of students for targeted ESL instruction needs to be flexible and based on on-going collaboration of both, the ESL and the other general education teachers. We also need to take into consideration multiple measures (e.g., PSSA scores, DIBELS, DRA, 4Sight etc.) in order to make a decision about what model of ESL program will be most effective in assisting ELLs at developing academic language.
3. As students move into the higher levels of English language proficiency, more emphasis needs to be placed at providing instructional supports in their classrooms using effective teaching practices that will benefit not only ELLs, but other students too. All teachers must be familiar with the information on the performance descriptors for each level of English language proficiency and domain (i.e., listening, speaking, reading and writing), so they are empowered to provide rigorous instruction that is engaging and effective for students at these higher levels of English language development. When this information is not available, general education teachers tend to look at ELLs from the perspective of their limited English proficiency and not from their skills, knowledge and English language development resulting in a drop of student motivation, interest and engagement.
4. All Teachers need to make sure that students get the right level of challenge. Instruction that is too challenging leads to frustration and discouragement on the part of the student. Instruction that is not challenging enough results in little or no learning (*Core Characteristics of Pennsylvania's RtI Framework*).

Planned Instruction in Academic content areas (content area classes)

- The language instructional program must also provide ELLs with meaningful, comprehensible access to instruction in all *content* areas required by Pennsylvania academic standards.
- The PA ELPS PreK–12 are an overlay to the academic standards and must be incorporated in planned instruction for ELLs by all teachers.
- The LEA must support instructional planning and evaluation efforts between the ESL/Bilingual teachers and the content-area teachers by providing common planning time as appropriate.
- *To access the PA ELPS PreK-12, visit www.pde.state.pa.us/esl. For information on research-based techniques and models for adapting content instruction delivered in English to meet the needs of ELLs, and information about bilingual education, visit <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/index.html>.*

1. **Simplifying the curriculum and lowering expectations does not provide access to meaningful instruction in content areas.** English language learners are expected to meet the same State academic and content standards as all children are expected to meet. Planned instruction in the content areas needs to be aligned to all State Standards, including Pennsylvania English Proficiency Standards.
2. Effective planned instruction for all students, including ELLs must follow Pennsylvania curricular frameworks that are built by identify standards, anchors, big ideas, concepts, competencies, essential questions, academic vocabulary, and exemplars (*Pennsylvania Department of Education Standards Aligned System*).
3. Aligned instruction comprises the following activities: teaching topics that are aligned with standards, making sure that you get the right level of challenge, focusing teaching based on the learning needs of each student, implementing instructional strategies that “scaffold” by building on each other to help students achieve standards (*Pennsylvania Department of Education Standards Aligned System*).
4. Include tasks and activities that engage students in higher order thinking skills, in activities that provide high challenge and high support. Include activities that engage students (and teachers) in the development of their own expertise, promote language learning in meaningful contexts, and promote disciplinary language use (*WestEd: Quality Teaching for English Language Learners*).

Grading of ELLs

ELLs must be graded using the same grading system as all other students.

1. Grading of English language learners need to reflect what the students know and are able to do at their level of English language proficiency.
2. Grading for English language learners need to reflect the collaboration and coordination of supports provided by both educators: ESL teacher and content area teacher.

3. English language learners are entitled to testing accommodations throughout the school year. Testing accommodations have been created “to level the field” and in order to do that, they have to be implemented with all kinds of assessment, including benchmark assessments, end of the unit tests, teacher-made tests, etc.
4. Grading of English language learners should reflect the use of multiple measures including formative assessments in listening, speaking, reading and writing.