



Guidance on the Implementation of English Language Development Within Language Instruction Educational Programs

This guidance defines English language development (ELD) and outlines requirements for including ELD instruction in language instruction educational programs (LIEPs) as well as requirements for educators who deliver ELD. District administrators and educators should use this guidance when developing or modifying their LIEPs and when communicating the design of the program to staff and parents. This guidance is meant to clarify and expand on requirements outlined in the [Basic Education Circular](#), Educating English Learners.

Definition of English Language Development

English language development refers to deliberate, planned, and focused instruction intended to foster the development of social and academic English for English learners in order to make it possible for them to access the general academic program and gain agency as successful, contributing members of their communities. ELD curriculum focuses on language at the word, sentence, and paragraph/discourse levels within the context of academic content and the socio-cultural context of the school/classroom.

Requirement for Including ELD in the LIEP

Districts are required to provide ELD instruction to ELs daily and throughout the school day. In elementary school, ELD must be incorporated into the entirety of the day across all subjects. In middle and secondary schools where students attend separate classes for different contents, ELD must be incorporated into each of those classes by all of the teachers.

ELD Settings

Broadly speaking, ELD can take place within one of two settings:

Stand-alone ELD Direct Instruction	Content-Embedded ELD Instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pull-out ELD instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ EL is pulled from other class time for direct ELD instruction in a separate setting • Self-contained ELD class (otherwise known as ESL class) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mixed content classes (ELs and non-ELs) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ELD instruction is incorporated into content instruction. • EL-only content classes (self-contained)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ elective or extra class; not ELA replacement ● Push-in ELD instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ ESL teacher provides direct ELD instruction to ELs within the general education classroom setting 	
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Options for Including ELD in the LIEP

The particular blend of stand-alone ELD and/or content embedded ELD (and which program type) depends on the needs of individual students and must be thoughtfully determined by district personnel with input from ESL professionals. Decisions about program design or placement of ELs within the program may NOT be driven primarily by resources or scheduling constraints.

Even if students are scheduled for ELD instruction in a stand-alone setting, ELD along with supports and accommodations for content learning must also be included in other content settings throughout the day. For example, a student’s math, science, history, English, music, art, and physical education teachers must also include ELD based on the student’s proficiency level. This is more than simply putting supports for comprehension of the content in place. It is deliberately including instruction aimed at developing the language of the content in order to teach both the content and the language simultaneously. This is a universal component of all content instruction regardless of the presence of ELs, since language is the medium of instruction and assessment. ELs simply require a more targeted and deliberate approach on the part of content teachers.

Content teachers should receive training to assist them in designing their instruction to include language objectives and assessments for ELs. They should also be provided dedicated time to collaborate with ESL teachers to build capacity and ensure that the language needs of the students are being met.

The PA English Language Development Standards (ELDS) must be used to plan and implement instruction for and assessment of ELs in content classes. The ELDS provide model indicators of performance for each proficiency level by language domain (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), content area (English language arts mathematics, science, social studies, and social and instructional language), and grade band. They describe language use that ELs should be working toward at the various levels of English proficiency.

ELD direct instruction can be incorporated into other content courses by either employing content teachers who also hold the ESL certificate or through collaboration between content teachers and ESL teachers who co-plan or co-teach. Regardless of whether the class is composed exclusively of ELs or a mix of ELs and non-ELs, ELD instruction appropriate for the ELs’ levels of language proficiency must be included in the curricular and/or instructional plan.

Considerations for ELD Based on Student Needs

In general, ELs at the beginning stages of English development (levels 1 and 2 and possibly level 3) at higher grades (grades 3 and up) benefit from, and should receive, at least some stand-alone direct ELD instruction because basic and/or foundational language instruction may

be difficult to integrate into other content instruction or it may not be feasible to do so. Also, basic language skills (social and instructional language), in which beginning level ELs require explicit instruction, may not align directly to content standards and so may require separate, specialized instruction.

For example, a 9th grader at with an oral language composite of 2.2 and literacy composite of 1.9 may need to learn basic language functions, such as how to structure a compound sentence for sequential narratives or how the basic form of persuasive language is assembled. This may be impractical to include in a sheltered English language arts class or other class that includes non-ELs. In this case, direct ELD instruction may be necessary either in a separate stand-alone class or within a regular education class during non-instructional time.

ELs at the beginning levels of language proficiency at higher grades generally benefit more from self-contained content classes than their higher proficiency level peers if that placement is possible. It is also less complicated for content teachers to include ELD instruction and provide language supports and accommodations for students of similar proficiency levels. As students gain proficiency, mixed classes (ELs and non-ELs) may become more effective in assisting ELs to increase their English proficiency and learn content.

No LIEPs may be designed as a “sink or swim” model wherein ELs are not provided ELD instruction in any setting. Even for ELs at higher proficiency levels who do not require stand-alone ELD instruction, content-embedded ELD along with appropriate accommodations and supports is required.

NOTE: These are generalizations. Each student has unique needs that must be considered before making placement decisions. These decisions must be informed by ESL professionals.

Teachers

Stand-alone ELD must be delivered by a teacher who holds a K-12 ESL Program Specialist Certificate. The teacher may hold an Instructional I or II certification that is in a grade band other than that of the student, but that teacher may not certify or provide a grade for a course outside of their Instructional I or II grade band. For example, an elementary certified teacher who holds the ESL Program Specialist Certificate may provide ELD instruction or language support at the middle or secondary level. However, that teacher may not award a credit for the ELD instruction because he/she does not hold a certification in the middle or high school grade bands.

Under most circumstances, an ELD course at the middle or high school levels should be categorized as an elective for credit purposes. Elective credits may only be awarded for ELD courses taught by a teacher who holds an Instructional I or II certification in the appropriate grade band and who also holds the ESL program Specialist Certificate. A district may not award a foreign language credit to an EL who takes an ELD course instructed by an ESL teacher who holds an Instructional I or II certification in a content area other than foreign language.

General education teachers must also provide language supports necessary to overcome language barriers for ELs and make content comprehensible for them. General education teachers can accomplish this through obtaining the ESL Program Specialist Certificate in order to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to embed ELD and language supports in their courses, collaborating with an ESL certified teacher in a structured and ongoing manner to plan

instruction and assessment, receiving specialized training in working with ELs through professional development, or any combination of these.

ELD in Bilingual Education Programs

ELD instruction is a required component of all LIEPs including bilingual programs (transitional and two-way dual language).

Transitional Bilingual

This program type initially supports ELs in their native language while increasingly introducing academic English. In transitional bilingual programs, instruction in all content areas must include the native language and English as the mode of communication for content teaching and incorporate ELD instruction. In other words, all content areas must be taught in the students' native language and English, with the amount of ELD instruction dependent on the phase of the program. Early in transitional bilingual programs, there may be less ELD instruction than in later phases as students gain proficiency in English through the bilingual content instruction exposure. ELD instruction must continue for students in transitional bilingual programs throughout the life of the program, as is the case for all LIEPs, until the students are reclassified as former ELs.

Two-Way Dual Language

In two-way dual language programs, ELD instruction must be included in the English component of the program as it would be for any non-bilingual program. There are many ways to design a two-way bilingual program, but all content areas should include instruction in both languages at some point during the school year in order to expose ELs to all content concepts in English as well as the other language.

ELD Replacement for English Language Arts

In general, ELD instruction taught by an ESL licensed teacher should not replace ELA instruction in a student's academic program. ELD has its own curriculum that, although may incorporate elements of ELA or other content areas, is unique and aligned to the PA ELDS. ELD may replace ELA only when the instruction is aligned to the same ELA standards as the ELA course or instructional period in which a student's non-EL peers are enrolled. ELD may not replace any other core content in a student's academic program unless it is for a limited time not to exceed one school year and the LEA has a pre-defined plan for immediately mitigating any academic gaps that result (e.g. in the case of a newcomer program).

Some questions to consider when planning ELD:

- What is the district/school profile of ELs? (grades, proficiency levels, SLIFE, etc.)
- How many ESL certified teachers are there in the school/district? Is it sufficient to provide the desired LIEP and level of services/support?
- Will ELs be grouped by proficiency level?
- Will ELD instruction take place for multiple grades at once (heterogeneous grade grouping)? By proficiency level?
- Will content and ESL teacher co-plan or co-teach?
- Is there time built into the schedule to allow collaboration/co-planning between ESL and content teachers_(regardless of the LIEP type)?

Overall considerations for the LIEP

The LIEP designed by the district must meet three basic criteria. It must:

1. be based on a sound theory or on research that suggests it will be successful,
2. be resourced appropriately to implement per the plan, and
3. be effective as evidenced by a sound evaluation system.

The district must be able to demonstrate that it has taken the needs of its students into consideration when designing and resourcing the LIEP and that the design has a reasonable likelihood of succeeding as evidenced by student outcomes. Evaluation, based on student outcomes, should take place throughout the school year and adjustments should be made as necessary. In addition to this ongoing evaluation, the overall effectiveness of the program must be reviewed annually and include, at a minimum, outcomes from the annual English language proficiency assessment, ACCESS for ELLs®, and other district testing results.

As a general rule, ELs may not be denied the opportunity to participate in any part of the general education program in which non-ELs may participate. ELs may also not be denied instruction in any core content classes in order to receive ELD instruction. Core content classes are defined for this purpose as any iteration of English language arts, science, social studies, mathematics, and health/physical education as well as any class or course required by an IEP if a student has one.

Refer to the Basic Education Circular, [Educating English Learners](#), as well as the guidance document, [The Language Instruction Educational Program](#), for additional program design and evaluation requirements.

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