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Academic English and WIDA Level One Through Three ELs in the Mainstream: Professional Development Series for Increased Educational Equity for ELs at the Elementary and Middle School Levels

Madeline Hillier
Hamline University

ACADEMIC ENGLISH AND WIDA LEVEL ONE THROUGH THREE ELS IN THE MAINSTREAM:

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SERIES FOR INCREASED EDUCATIONAL EQUITY FOR ELS AT THE ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVELS

by

Madeline B. Hillier

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Hamline University

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Primary Adviser: Julia Reimer
Content Expert: Ellen Perrault
Peer Reviewer: Pamela Magistad
Peer Reviewer: Ciera Nelson-Cheeseman

Thank you to my dearest husband and best friend, Ian, for always loving and supporting me. Without your time, energy, patience, and humor I would never have completed this project. I am eternally grateful for your presence in my life.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Chapter Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the reader to the guiding question: *how can we ensure that WIDA level one through three English Learners (ELs) are maximizing their learning potential and being provided with equitable learning opportunities in the mainstream?* The chapter will first anecdotally describe challenges present for ELs in their mainstream school classrooms today. After, this chapter will expound on the guiding question's relevance to me personally and professionally, as well as describe the capstone project. Chapter One will conclude with a summary of points covered and a preview of what is to come in Chapter Two.

Fall 2018

In fall 2018 and I began my first full-time EL teaching job in a small school district located in a rural, upper Midwest community. The district has historically been monocultural; however, it has recently seen an influx in ELs and is becoming increasingly diverse with each passing year.

It is now spring 2019 and my first year of teaching is well underway. I currently spend my time split between an elementary school and middle school working with

students in grades three through eight. I go to the elementary one day and the middle school the next, which means I see my students at each school two to three times per week depending on the rotation. In total, I currently service 37 ELs, each with unique needs linguistically, culturally, socially, and academically. According to the WIDA ACCESS 2.0 test, 28 of these students have an overall language proficiency level ranging from one through three on a six point scale. The ACCESS 2.0 test is a state mandated test given to ELs annually between the months of January and March to measure their overall language proficiency in the four domains: listening, reading, writing, and speaking (WIDA, 2018). Level one students are referred to as entering, level two are beginning, level three are emerging, level four are expanding, level five are bridging, and level six are reaching (WIDA, 2018). Level one students have little to no English proficiency, whereas a student scoring at a level six would be considered as proficient as their native English speaking peers. Of my 24 current students with an overall proficiency of one (entering) through three (emerging), four are new to country, four are long-term ELs, and twelve have an individual education plan (IEP), which allow them to receive Special Education services, for a spectrum of reasons, further demonstrating the need for additional support to service them equitably.

Fortunately, under state law, I am legally required to give direct language instruction to ELs, which is an improvement from how ELs were treated when I attended public school. While I am able to work with these students on building academic language every other day for 30-40 minutes, it is not as much time as they need to ensure academic success. Out of curiosity, I decided to tally up the amount of minutes each

student would potentially receive of direct instruction and targeted support and compare it to the amount of time students spend in the mainstream setting. Not including minutes lost as a result of absences, special occasions, field trips, or mandated testing, the total amount of time allocated for direct EL instruction per student for the entire year equates to 2500-3440 minutes. This pales in comparison to the 62, 092 minutes students spend each year in a mainstream classroom setting. That means that students receiving EL services only receive about 4-5% of their school year receiving direct services at a maximum. Reflecting on this, I realized how unreasonable it is to close this opportunity gap in just that short amount of time and how far we still need to go to ensure ELs are getting access to equitable education. This led to the question: *how can we ensure that WIDA level one through three ELs are maximizing their learning potential and being provided with equitable learning opportunities in the mainstream?*

Why does it matter?

I have a hard time separating the personal and professional reasons I would like to pursue this topic. Teaching is inherently personal. It is my profession, but it is also part of who I am. My students are not numbers on a paper, but individuals for whom I care deeply and whose success and happiness is of the utmost importance to me. Personally, I feel that my WIDA level one through three ELs are those who need the most support and those that are the most overlooked or marginalized in the mainstream. As their EL teacher, my goal is to make their transition as smooth as possible. In addition to helping ELs acquire English, we work together to navigate the often nebulous and nuanced culture of school, the United States, and western society as a whole. I strive to advocate

with and for ELs and their families, so they feel welcome and valued in our community on a daily basis. I believe that all of these things are necessary for the student to feel motivated and engaged in their learning, especially when faced with linguistic obstacles to overcome. Regardless of English proficiency, ELs need to feel connected and empowered in their classes throughout the day. They need to be able to participate with confidence, so they can feel successful.

Unfortunately, there are challenges to providing equitable, effective language support services for WIDA level one through three ELs in a mainstream classroom setting. For example, when there is just one newcomer in a class of 30, third grade students, it can be difficult to fully integrate them into the school culture. I cannot be with them the whole day to make sure they understand all of the content, procedures, their teachers or their peers, so I want to find ways to ensure they are involved, engaged, and participating, even when I am not present to facilitate and scaffold that learning. I do not want them to be forgotten, overlooked, or become comfortable fading into the background. Additionally, a teacher may write off a level three middle school student's quality of work as being done with low effort because they think that the student is proficient in academic English simply because they can communicate colloquially. In short, this research is important to me personally because my students are those at the highest risk for missing out on learning and I want to find ways to ensure that language is not a barrier for their success. Further, I wholly believe that mainstream teachers at any level need to understand what different language proficiencies mean as it relates to their expectations of each student in the classroom. We need to work together and it is hard to

effectively work with a student if you do not fully understand their needs and specific ways to support them.

Students need to learn academic English and how to conduct themselves in a variety of social contexts in order to be successful in school and in the future. When ELs come to us, especially if they arrive later in their school career, it is absolutely critical that we waste no time in helping them acquire language and content knowledge. There are numerous gatekeeping measures in play that make it difficult for ELs to thrive within the school system and in society at large. In order for students to be fully integrated into society in the United States and gain upward mobility, they need to be given the time, tools, and support to practice necessary skills and master content. This said, if we are not intentionally using all classroom time to make sure ELs, at all levels of English proficiency, are being adequately challenged and learning, then we are missing opportunities to support their ultimate success.

Further driving my passion and interest in this work relates to my district's strategic plan. The district has put a focus on personalized learning, which is something that aligns with my teaching philosophy and one of the main reasons I decided to join their teaching staff. While the intentions are present, I feel that we have a long way to go as a district to ensure that students' learning is truly personalized to better meet their individual needs. I believe an integral component needed to organize more effective personalized programming is to examine the relationship between personalized learning and equity. The only way we can truly personalize learning is if we recognize that equity and personalized learning are not mutually exclusive. On the contrary, it is

impossible to have truly personalized learning without viewing learning processes, expectations, or opportunities through an equity lens.

Learning How to Best Collaborate

As one teacher, I know that I cannot do it all. As much as I would like to, it is not feasible for me to spend countless hours creating new content each time I have a newcomer join my school or tailoring each day and each class to each individual student on my own. I have met and talked with countless other Kindergarten through grade 12 public school EL teachers who feel the same way. I also know that mainstream teachers want to be helpful, but don't always know how. If the EL teacher cannot be with ELs constantly and every content teacher cannot be dual-licensed in content and EL, what do we do to make sure we are working as an effective, cohesive team? How can we best track what is working and what is not? Teachers need research-based practices and guides to help us know where to begin this process regardless of if we are EL or mainstream teachers. We need to find ways to work together, regardless of the constraints we have, to give ELs opportunities to learn and grow throughout the day immediately because it is critical to their long term success.

Purpose of Project

The purpose of this capstone project is to explore and compile available resources related to serving and supporting WIDA level one through three ELs in mainstream educational contexts throughout the school day. The goal is to create a professional development series intended to guide mainstream teachers in beginning to implement appropriate linguistic supports to ensure lower proficiency ELs are able to participate as

much as possible throughout the school day. This professional development series will expand on issues related to equity and ELs in mainstream settings, introduce easy to prepare linguistic scaffolds that can be employed to support ELs in their classroom, give mainstream teachers a space to plan the implementation of these scaffolds and ask questions, as well as discuss alternate forms of authentic assessment that will benefit ELs. The outcome of this project will be a small toolbox of resources mainstream teachers can use and adapt to support individual EL needs for times when the EL teacher is unable to be with the student(s) in the mainstream class.

Conclusion

Chapter One expanded on the guiding question: h*ow can we ensure that WIDA level one through three ELs are maximizing their learning potential and being provided with equitable learning opportunities in the mainstream?* Further, this chapter explained the significance of the question to me personally and professionally. It also briefly explained the significance of this research project to the field of ESL education. Chapter Two provides a literature review that provides relevant research to support the development of a professional development series that can be used to support ELs' emergent bilingualism in the mainstream throughout their day to ensure maximized learning potential, while mitigating negative repercussions stemming from the combination language barriers and ineffective practices to support EL needs. Chapter Three describes the capstone project in detail. Finally, Chapter Four offers a reflection on the process of developing the capstone project.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter Overview

The purpose of this capstone project is to explore and compile resources that can be presented to mainstream teachers to address the question: *how can we ensure that WIDA level one through three ELs are maximizing their learning potential and being provided with equitable learning opportunities in the mainstream?* The goal of this chapter is to delve more deeply into the specific needs of ELs whose overall English language proficiency is between WIDA levels one through three. Discussion of what ELs at these current proficiencies are capable of understanding and producing is included later in this chapter, as well as in Appendix B.

First, this chapter will give an overview of EL education policy in the United States (U.S.) throughout history and today. Second, this chapter will expand on issues of inequity within U.S. public schools for ELs and emphasize the urgency of closing the opportunity gap for these students. The chapter's third major section will describe second language acquisition (SLA) theory through a sociocultural lens, provide details on the differences between social and academic English, as well as between first and second language acquisition, and highlight common misconceptions about emergent bi- or

multilingualism. Fourth, Chapter Two discusses what different English proficiency levels look like for students, as well as how teachers can use WIDA performance indicators and Can-Do descriptors to more systematically incorporate supports in mainstream class lessons to increase equitable learning opportunities for ELs. Finally, this chapter provides nine research-based scaffolds and strategies that can be employed in the mainstream classroom by mainstream teachers before, during, or after instruction to help WIDA levels one through three ELs maximize their access to equitable learning throughout the day.

ELs and U.S. Education Policy

ELs have been present in the U.S. education system for decades, but the ways in which their needs have or have not been met over time has shifted dramatically and continues to evolve today. Even as legislation has been, and continues to be, passed to further highlight the need for specialized instruction and supports for our ELs, there is still much work to do in order to ensure these students are being serviced equitably.

A Brief History of ELs in the US Education System

Language planning and policy is an important and divisive issue in the United States. Many people residing in the U.S. have a first language (L1) other than English. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), 9.5% of U.S. public students qualified to receive EL services in Fall 2015 and that number is continuing to expand (NCES, 2018). As this number continues to grow and students' needs become more diverse, it is important to find ways to make sure they are supported regardless of the chosen EL program structure. The following subsections seek to show the

development of education laws in the US and how they have shaped and continue to shape how ELs are serviced in U.S. schools.

Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Wright (2015) states that until 1965, when the United States Congress passed the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), ELs in U.S. public schools were expected to sink or swim, with schools providing no language support for these students. ESEA was the first federal mandate that provided funding explicitly for ELs and bilingual education (Wright, 2015). This was impactful because it finally legitimized the need for explicit academic support for ELs.

Bilingual Education Act. In 1968, the Bilingual Education Act, or Title VII of the ESEA, was passed to provide additional funding to support students whose home language was a language other than English (Stewner-Manzanares, 1998). According to Stewner-Manzanares, this funding came in the form of grants and was used to support innovative education programs and curriculum materials, create parent involvement programs, as well as train teachers and school support staff (1998). Additionally, Wright (2015) maintains that this legislation made it so students who speak a language other than English at home were allowed to learn in their home language; making it a huge win for legitimizing a foundation for the need for specialized programming for ELs and bilingual education. In addition to the funding provided by ESEA, the Bilingual Education Act focused on providing language support in the form of structures and programming (Wright, 2015). While structures and programming were not explicitly mandated by the

Bilingual Education Act, school districts were encouraged to curate innovative programs to support ELs' English language development (Stewner-Manzanares, 1998).

Lau v. Nichols. Equality does not equate to equity. *Lau v. Nichols* (1974) made this clear when the Supreme Court ruled that not providing supplemental language instruction to ELs was in violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Wright, 2015). Established under the Equal Education Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA), this ruling made it so ELs were provided with adequate support to overcome language barriers in the mainstream classroom to provide more equal learning opportunities (Wright, 2015). While this piece of legislation was a huge milestone for recognizing the need for increased support of ELs in U.S. public schools, practical application has proven more difficult than anticipated (Wright, 2015).

No Child Left Behind. In 2002, another reauthorization of ESEA, known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) by President George W. Bush, drastically impacted ELs in the US public education system. This legislation focused on accountability of programs to demonstrate student progress (Menken, 2013). NCLB replaced the Bilingual Education Act with Title III, known as the English Language Acquisition, Language Enhancement, and Academic Achievement Act (Menken, 2010). While well intentioned, NCLB ultimately did more harm than good when it came to making education more equitable for ELs (Menken, 2010). While NCLB positively impacted ELs across the United States by holding schools accountable for their academic progress, offering more funding for specific EL resources, providing more tutoring and after school programs, and mainstreaming ELs, it was not enough to make NCLB a success (Abedi, 2004;

Maxwell-Jolly, 2011; Menken, 2010). NCLB's focus on high stress, high stakes standardized tests administered to students as the only measure of successful progress overshadowed the few positive attributes that it was able to offer ELs (Menken, 2010; Menken, 2013). The negative impacts of NCLB's implementation led to hindered creativity of students and teachers alike, a narrowed curriculum, lack of authentic learning opportunities, and unrealistic expectations for progress with regard to the ELs (Abedi, 2004, Maxwell-Jolly, 2011; Menken, 2010; Menken, 2013).

Every Student Succeeds Act. Most recently, President Barack Obama passed legislation that has yet again changed the degree to which ELs are serviced in the US public education system. In 2015, Obama signed into law the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), another reauthorization of ESEA that replaced NCLB (TransACT, 2017). According to the U.S. Department of Education, ESSA maintains that schools are held accountable to measure student growth and the efficacy of EL programs through annual language proficiency exams (n.d.). Schools are also expected to provide program adjustments as needed such as to ensure students are gaining explicit language instruction, in addition to content (TransACT, 2017). ESSA differs from NCLB in that it puts more control and decision-making power into the hands of individual states (TransACT, 2017). This was done intentionally to ensure that community input is used to guide EL programming in schools (TransACT, 2017). Additionally, ELs are only included in content-measured accountability assessments in grades three through eight and in high school (TransACT, 2017). Content-measured accountability assessments include nationally mandated tests that aim to improve accountability across U.S. public

schools and ensure that students are being held to the same consistent, high standards (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Due to the fact that ESSA was not fully implemented until the 2018-19 school year, its full impact is yet to be known.

LEAPS Act. While the above-mentioned legislation applies to students at the federal level, the LEAPS Act is specific to Minnesota. The LEAPS Act, passed in 2014, serves to further emphasize the urgency to meet the need of ELs (Minnesota Department of Education [MDE], n.d.). The LEAPS Act includes a definition and accountability measures to support ELs with limited or formal education (SLIFE), highlights the importance and utility of bi- and multilingualism, allocates more specific funding for ELs, as well as highlighting cultural competency on statewide accountability measures (MDE, n.d.).

The aforementioned legislation provided a brief overview of how support for ELs in the U.S. public education system has evolved and continued to impact students today. While legislation has mandated that educators and administrators employ funding to improve educational equity for ELs, how to do so effectively and consistently has proven difficult. The next section delves more deeply into what equity means, how current patterns in education are inequitable for ELs, and why it is so important to ensure we are giving our low-level ELs more equitable learning opportunities consistently throughout the school day.

Equity for ELs

Equity is the practice of giving individual students what they personally need to be successful, instead of taking a one-size-fits-all approach (Great Schools Partnership,

2016). Over the years, education policy has shifted to support more equitable circumstances for ELs, but there is still much to be done to ensure that ELs are given what they need throughout their day and school career to grow.

Closing the Opportunity Gap

The opportunity gap, also referred to as the achievement gap, has become the focus of many educators in recent years (LaCour, York, Welner, Renee Valladares, & Molner, 2017). The opportunity gap demonstrates that systemic inequities persist in the U.S. education system based on race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and language (Great Schools Partnership, 2013). As our student populations have become more diverse in a myriad of ways, it has become increasingly difficult for schools to effectively meet the needs of all students to ensure their success equitably because there is no single formula that will close the opportunity gap (LaCour et al., 2017) . This paired with the fact that ELs are coming into our education system with the added challenge of learning in a language that is not their first demonstrates how necessary it is we waste no time maximizing their access to equitable learning opportunities throughout the day.

While the U.S. does not have an official language, standard English is the covert and implicit language individuals must acquire to foster upward social mobility or to truly participate in all domains of formal society (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). According to Lightbown and Spada, the standard variety of a language, in this case American English, is the language used in formal writing and public speaking domains (2013). Wardhaugh and Fuller define the standard language as “a dialect of a language that is considered superior to other dialects” (2015, p. 418). As we look at the increasing

importance of meeting the needs of our diverse ELs, it is important to explore the relationship between language and society because language norms, whether they be explicit or implicit, demonstrate the influence dominant culture can have on education planning and policy (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). Language norms are essentially the understanding of when and how to use language appropriately in a given social context (Hymes, 1972). It is imperative that educators not only teach students how to communicate using academic English, but that we find ways for them to participate in meaningful, authentic learning and be fairly assessed given their current level of English proficiency. Further, we must ensure that we are building upon our ELs' competencies and strengths, not taking away from them. This is why it is of the utmost importance to answer the question, *How can we ensure that WIDA level one through three ELs are maximizing their learning potential and being provided with equitable learning opportunities in the mainstream?*

Gatekeeping Measures

While there are numerous gatekeeping measures for students and adults of developing English proficiency in society at large, there are many gatekeeping measures within U.S. public school institutions that limit equitable access to learning opportunities for ELs. ELs not only have to develop their English proficiency, but must do so while simultaneously demonstrating mastery of content competencies.

Immigrant versus elite bilingualism. The United States' individualistic social values assert that English language proficiency, or lack thereof, is a problem that needs to be fixed by the education system (Wiley & Lukes, 1996). This mindset manifests

assumptions that those who are not yet English-proficient lack a certain aptitude that their English-speaking peers have, revealing an unspoken prejudice against the EL population in schools. This implicit language bias is manifested by examining the distinction between what Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) call *immigrant bilingualism* and *elite bilingualism*. Students who are fluent in a language other than English are labeled as ELs and thought of as being academically deficient, whereas their peers who are proficient in English, but are learning a foreign language, are regarded as elite and highly motivated (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015; Wiley & Lukes, 1996). According to Wiley and Lukes, when students fail to produce academic English, the education system regards it as a deficiency of the individual, rather than seeing this mindset as a "systematic institutional inequity between groups" (1996, p. 517). This outlook fails to acknowledge the value in being bi- or multilingual or to recognize the various ways in which it perpetuates inequitable learning outcomes for ELs (Wiley & Lukes, 1996). Additionally, unlike their foreign language learning peers, being labelled as an ESL student limits educational achievement and social mobility of ELs because it sees their developing bilingualism as a deficit to be amended instead of a strength to be embraced (Wiley & Lukes, 1996).

Tracking. A result of negative or misguided social perceptions of students of developing English proficiency is tracking. Tracking is often seen in secondary contexts and is the practice of placing students in different classes based on their perceived academic ability (Callahan, 2005). Those who are tracked into higher classes are often given access to activities that promote higher-order thinking, while those tracked into lower classes are often subjected to simplified content in an attempt to meet grade level

standards (Callahan, 2005). According to Bloom's Taxonomy (1956), higher-order thinking promotes critical thinking through tasks that require application of concepts, analysis of information, as well as synthesis and evaluation. Conversely, low-level thinking requires less critical thinking and relies on tasks based in remembering and comprehending information (Bloom, 1956).

Unfortunately, ELs are more likely to be tracked into low-level classes, rather than given the opportunity to participate in high level classes (Harklau, 1994). According to Callahan (2005), while many would like to think that students are tracked into different class levels based on merit, this is shown to be untrue in many cases. This leads to inequitable learning circumstances for many ELs. Callahan maintains that this is because, albeit often inadvertent, mainstream teachers and administrators often equate English proficiency with intelligence. A student that is significantly less proficient in English than their peers will often be perceived as less capable of completing difficult course work; however, research shows that this is untrue (Callahan, 2005). Callahan found that ELs placed in high track courses that emphasize higher level thinking skills will rise to the occasion and succeed regardless of English proficiency. If we truly wish to increase equity for our ELs, we must avoid tracking them into remedial courses and give them enriching educational opportunities with appropriate linguistic scaffolds.

Dual qualified for EL and special education. In addition to a higher incidence of ELs being tracked into low-level mainstream classes, Fernandez and Inserra (2013) have found that ELs are also disproportionately dual qualified for Special Education (SpEd) services. Since it can take ELs anywhere from five to ten years, depending on

their background, to become fluent in academic English, many researchers have determined that ELs are often misdiagnosed as having a learning disability when in reality they are simply still developing their language competencies (Fernandez & Inserra, 2013). The overrepresentation of ELs receiving SpEd services is problematic because students who receive the least amount of EL support are at the highest risk for being referred to SpEd (Fernandez & Inserra, 2013). This demonstrates that more comprehensive support for ELs in a mainstream setting may alleviate the pattern of over-referring ELs for SpEd evaluation. Due to the fact that mainstream teacher input is typically a driving force behind evaluating a student for SpEd services, increasing mainstream teachers' understanding of ELs and the process of SLA will be imperative to combating misdiagnoses of ELs as having SpEd needs. What appears to be an academic deficit may often be a failure to provide adequate language supports to make content accessible to ELs as they continue to acquire English as an additional language.

Second Language Acquisition

There are a variety of factors that lead to successful second language acquisition (SLA). The major areas of language that linguists study are as follows: pragmatics, syntax, semantics, morphology, phonetics, and phonology. All of these components contribute to an EL student's current level of English proficiency as it relates to the four language domains: listening, reading, writing, and speaking. In addition to understanding the linguistic components of a language system, ELs need to know how to effectively produce the second language to effectively communicate with other speakers. It is important to realize that acquiring a second language is much more than simply

memorizing or understanding the prescriptive grammar rules (Hymes, 1972). For the purposes of this literature review, SLA will be explored through a sociolinguistic lens as to highlight the social aspect of successful SLA.

Sociolinguistics

Sociolinguistics examines at the way people use language in different contexts to create meaning and regard "language as holistic, dynamic social practice or discourse" (Wright, 2015, p. 37). According to Wright, success in the mainstream can be defined as the ability understand the academic, instructional, and social language that will be present in the variety of tasks, conversations, and interactions students will be asked to carry out as a fully integrated part of the student body. In order for students to truly be fluent, they must develop their communicative competence (Wright, 2015). This means that students learning an additional language must not only understand the nuances of the five linguistic subgroups, but must also know how to produce them correctly given the social context of their interaction (Wiley, 2004). As students learn a new language, they are simultaneously learning a new culture and defining the way in which they fit into that culture (Wright, 2015). As Wright observes, students are learning how to socialize in that culture using language as a vehicle to do so within a community of English speakers in the context of classes and school in general. Given this, students must be able to effectively transition their language given different sociolinguistic environments depending on what they are talking about, who they are talking to, or the level of formality required in order to participate in meaningful and genuine interaction (Wright,

2015). Also, they must be able to recognize and understand subtle pieces of language like humor, idioms, or sarcasm (Law & Eckes, 2007).

Social versus Academic English

According to Law and Eckes (2007), succeeding in the mainstream requires a command of English language beyond what is expected socially. Beyond learning social language, an English proficient student should be able to use language "to clarify, to investigate, to justify, or to elaborate, depending on the subject of task" (Law & Eckes, 2007, p. 183). In terms of linguistic competence, students must be able to effectively communicate, participate, follow instruction, and comprehend the discourse related to each academic subject and academic language overall appropriate for their age and grade level to be successful in the mainstream (Law & Eckes, 2007). Further, they must be able to vary vocabulary, use specific discourse, and employ specific grammar structures unique to each discipline (Cook, Boals, & Lundberg, 2011).

When referring to language, EL teachers often differentiate between social and academic English. Social English is language required to build relationships and can be thought of as more informal, colloquial language (Zwiers, 2014). Conversely, academic English is much more complex. Zwiers (2014) defines academic language as "the set of words, grammar, and discourse strategies used to describe complex ideas, higher order thinking processes, and abstract concepts" (p. 22). ELs inevitably learn social English more quickly than academic English. According to Cummins (1999), social English takes a student one to three years on average to master, while academic English takes five years at the minimum and up to ten years for students who have had limited or

interrupted formal education (Cummins, 1999; Collier, 1995). Knowing this, it is critical that we waste no time in finding ways for students increase their academic English in the mainstream classroom.

BICS and CALP

As stated, a common misconception is that a student who is able to communicate in English fluently using colloquial language will be successful in an academic setting. This is not the case because social English differs greatly from the type of English needed to be linguistically proficient in an academic context. The initialism created came to be known as BICS, basic interpersonal communication skills, and CALP, cognitive academic language proficiency (Cummins, 1999). BICS is comprised of linguistic aspects like chunks of survival language, simple grammar forms, high frequency vocabulary, and initial reading skills (Roessingh, 2006). Conversely, CALP is language that is needed to complete most academic tasks requires students to be able to derive meaning from language without any interpersonal or contextual clues (Cummins, 1999; Zwiers, 2014.)

Common Misconceptions

Before discussing the strategies that mainstream teachers can implement to better serve WIDA levels one through three ELs in the mainstream, it is important to go over some common misconceptions frequently thought about ELs. In addition to understanding that EL demonstration of content objectives will look different depending on the student's proficiency level, mainstream teachers serving ELs in their classrooms need to be made aware of common misconceptions frequently held about their ELs

because teacher perception affects their understanding of the student's ability to participate and learn (Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Hoover, Sarris, & Hill, 2015).

Academic language is simply vocabulary. While vocabulary is an essential part of building academic English proficiency with ELs, it is only one piece of the proverbial puzzle. Academic English is a nuanced topic that extends far beyond simple vocabulary words or phrases (Zwiers, 2014). It also includes sentence-level constructs and discourse-level competencies (Zwiers, 2014). In order for a student to become fully proficient in academic English, they must be explicitly taught not only vocabulary words, but be able to use them appropriately in context, as well as interact with different sentence structures and discourse patterns while using target vocabulary (Zwiers, 2014).

Learning two languages inhibits emergent bilinguals. Many mainstream teachers believe that utilizing a first language (L1) will inhibit English proficiency growth and this is not the case (Karabenick & Noda, 2004; Herrera, Perez, & Escamilla, 2010). According to Cummins' interdependence hypothesis, reading and language skills a student has in their first language will be transferred and used to develop these skills in an additional language (2000). Further, students with an understanding of their first language patterns as a system, will better be able to identify and understand their second language patterns as a system (Herrera et al., 2010). Finally, research has shown that if a student fails to develop academic or cognitive abilities in their first language, it may actually impede their ability to master a second language (Collier, 1995). This further demonstrates the importance of encouraging ELs to further develop their first language while fostering their second.

Input ultimately leads to acquisition. Oftentimes, ELs who have been in the U.S. public education system for the duration of their academic tenure are confusing to mainstream teachers. This is because mainstream teachers assume exposure and immersion will ultimately lead to language acquisition. According to Krashen (1982), this may be true over many years of exposure, it is not a best practice for EL student success. The acquisition versus learning theory maintains that acquiring knowledge requires an active role in knowledge building (Krashen, 1982). In order to acquire knowledge and language, ELs need to be exposed to knowledge multiple times and allowed to engage with it meaningfully and actively (Morales-Jones, 1998).

Content must be simplified. While this doesn't seem to be done intentionally, mainstream teachers often think the solution for making content more accessible to ELs is to simplify the information. Collier (1995) argues that this is the opposite of what ELs need. Lack of English proficiency does not equate to lack of cognitive ability (Collier, 1995). ELs are capable of higher order thinking, but need supports to demonstrate their understanding regardless of current English proficiency. Adding appropriate linguistic supports to enable ELs to access content aligns with Krashen's (1982) comprehensible input theory. Making input comprehensible means that whatever is being said or presented to ELs needs to be done so in a way that allows them to understand the overall concept regardless of their current proficiency level (Krashen, 1982). By employing scaffolds and strategies to make input comprehensible for ELs at varying proficiency levels in the mainstream, we can begin to make their learning opportunities more equitable.

Support for ELs in the Mainstream

While the saying *good teaching is good teaching* is true to a certain extent, it minimizes the importance of direct language instruction for ELs in mainstream settings (Hansen-Thomas, 2008). While some general education strategies support EL development, students need additional supports as they continue to increase their linguistic, cultural, and content competencies (Vygotsky, 1978). Due to the fact that logistically an EL teacher cannot be in every classroom all the time, it is crucial that mainstream teachers are exposed to tools and resources that can enhance their understanding of their ELs' current proficiency levels, in addition to, research-based EL learning strategies to better meet students' cultural and linguistic needs (Hoover et al., 2015).

World Class Instructional Design and Assessment

World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) is an educational consortium that begin at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2003 (WIDA, 2018). Since its onset, WIDA has grown to include over 37 states and the District of Columbia (WIDA, 2018). The purpose of WIDA is to define language proficiency standards and assessments for ELs so they could be more systematically and equitably serviced in schools (WIDA, 2018). The state where I currently work is part of this consortium and as such, EL teachers here use the various resources and tools WIDA provides to better understand and support ELs at every English proficiency level. Additionally, the WIDA ACCESS 2.0 test is a mandated test that is administered annually between the months of January and March to every student who qualifies for EL

services. The purpose of the ACCESS 2.0 test is to measure student growth and proficiency in academic language features, not content (WIDA, 2018).

Performance definitions. There are six levels of proficiency for ELs: Entering (1), Beginning (2), Developing (3), Expanding (4), Bridging (5), and Reaching (6) (Gottlieb, 2013). Each proficiency level is accompanied by performance definitions. Performance definitions denote the linguistic elements, related to vocabulary, sentence, and discourse levels, a student should be able to understand or produce at each given level (Gottlieb, 2013).

While it may be hard for mainstream teachers to understand at first, it is essential to understand that students at different language proficiencies will not always demonstrate their understanding of content in the same way or to the same depth (Short, 1993). For example, if the content objective in a social studies class is to describe the events leading up to Pearl Harbor, the ways in which ELs at different proficiencies demonstrate their understanding of this concept can vary. For example, level one student may put pictures of events in order and label them with words or phrases using a word bank. A level two student may put the same pictures in order and write short sentences describing the events using a word bank and sentence stems. A level three student may write sentences describing each event using sentence stems, while level four and five students may be expected to write full paragraphs describing the events in detail with similar supports. While it may not seem like the students are being assessed on the same content; they are, but the manner in which they are able to demonstrate their understanding just looks different given their current ability to produce English in an

academic setting (Short, 1993). To be clear, these are not activities students choose for themselves, but intentional choices the teacher makes to help students best demonstrate their understanding given their current English proficiency. This is why understanding what these assigned numerical levels means related to what students are capable of producing is the first step in understanding how to more equitably service them in the mainstream setting. A chart detailing the general characteristics of students' proficiencies levels can be found in appendix B.

CAN-DO descriptors. Can-Do descriptors were developed by WIDA to provide a reference to what students should be able to do at their given proficiency level provided they are given appropriate supports (Gottlieb, 2013). This caveat is often overlooked and is important to highlight. If students are labelled as being a level three that does not mean that they will be able to produce the outlined outcomes without appropriate scaffolds (Gottlieb, 2013). Conversely, it should be noted that just because a student is currently a level three, doesn't mean they cannot be exposed to higher-level content or produce more complex language than what is described for a level three student. The Can-Do descriptors are a useful tool for mainstream teachers to understand alongside EL teachers because they make discerning how to differentiate more concrete. That said, it is important to stress that the Can-Do descriptors should be used to inform and guide instruction, but not be relied on so heavily as to put students into a box and limit expectations of their capabilities. Language is fluid and ever-developing, so the Can-Dos provide a small idea of what the student can or should be able to do in order to help guide

instruction, rather than prescriptively assigning what a student can do. The Can-Do descriptors for K-12 ELs can be found in the appendix B.

EL Best Practices

It is unreasonable to expect a mainstream teacher, who has not had adequate ESL training, to implement all ESL strategies in their classroom the way an EL teacher might. This said, there are a variety of ways that mainstream teachers can work alongside the EL teacher to integrate EL best practice into lessons daily. By implementing some or a few of the following supports with the assistance of an EL teacher, mainstream teachers can further support ELs' linguistic and academic development. The following subsections denote nine different strategies that can be used by mainstream teachers instructing ELs of any age or in any discipline to help them better master language and content simultaneously. Theoretically, a combination of these can and should be used to help make content and language more comprehensible for ELs of lower proficiency levels in daily lessons.

Explicit vocabulary instruction. Vocabulary is an essential component of mastering a new language and is closely related to students' abilities to comprehend a text (Van Staden, 2011). While mainstream teachers teach vocabulary, ELs do not often get to interact with it in context more than once (Herrera et al., 2010). According to Nisbet and Tindall (2015), students need to interact with a new vocabulary word in context multiple times before they fully comprehend its meaning and function. Additionally, in mainstream classrooms, target vocabulary is often only stated alongside its definition, which does not improve comprehension or a student's ability to

appropriately use it in context (Beck & McKeown, 2007; Herrera, et al., 2010). Beck and McKeown found that ELs need to not only be explicitly instructed on relevant vocabulary, but also given opportunities to discuss and make connections to the language by identifying and explaining its across contexts to add it to their linguistic repertoire (2007). Giving ELs more engaging and effective vocabulary instruction that includes multiple opportunities to use the target vocabulary orally and authentically can be accomplished by using a multitude of strategies, such as interactive word walls or word splashes (Herrera et al., 2010; Van Staden, 2011).

Interactive word walls. Gottlieb (2013) contends that ELs need exposure to a word rich environment to build their academic language. According to Jackson and Durham, one way to create a word rich environment that also engages students in exploring and using target vocabulary in context is through the use of an interactive word wall (2016). Interactive word walls are different from traditional word walls in that they include more information that enables students to use and make deeper connections with the target vocabulary throughout a unit (Jackson & Durham, 2016). The most effective interactive word walls highlight relationships between words in context, include pictures or physical artifacts, and require students to create and maintain the word wall throughout a unit (Jackson, Tripp, & Cox, 2011). These characteristics make target vocabulary acquisition more effective for ELs in the mainstream because they are developed by students, make explicit, visual connections related to content, require discussion about learning, and allow for repeated practice using target vocabulary in context (Jackson & Durham, 2016).

Word splash. Another strategy mainstream teachers could use to better support ELs in their classrooms is a word splash. A word splash is an instructional strategy that activates ELs' prior background knowledge and allows them to make connections between words and concepts in context to deepen their understanding (Herrera et al., 2010). There are many variations of a word splash, but the general procedure is as follows: (1) students are presented with a list of target vocabulary terms; (2) students are asked to make as many connections as they can to each of the words, as well as between them; (3) students are asked to share their predictions and connections (Herrera et al., 2010). An added benefit of this strategy is that it can be effortlessly differentiated (Herrera et al., 2010). For example, students can work independently first or work in small groups to discuss their ideas. Also, lower proficiency ELs have the opportunity to draw pictures or write in their native language. Conversely, higher proficiency students could be asked to write complete sentences or a paragraph explaining the relationships they have identified.

Visuals. Krashen's comprehensible input theory maintains that in order for ELs to understand a concept, the input must be made comprehensible (1982). One of the ways in which teachers can easily build background knowledge and make input more comprehensible is by employing the use of visuals to accompany instruction (Morales-Jones, 1998). Herrera et al. (2010) maintain that these visuals aid in comprehension, so students have a better understanding of the learning context because they align with students' sensory memory. Further, visual strategies help students better understand the relationships between words in the context of a specific content area

(Herrera et al., 2010). There are countless ways in which visuals can be utilized to enhance EL comprehension. For example, visuals could pertain to vocabulary words students will need to understand to fully comprehend a text, or provide background on the setting or context of a unit, lesson, or reading (Herrera et al., 2010).

Think aloud. Herrera et al., maintain that explicit modelling is important for ELs because it enables them to see and better comprehend the process of a given strategy, so they are able to apply the strategy more effectively (2010). A think aloud is an oral strategy that teachers can use to model their understanding of a text as it is read aloud to students (Zwiers, 2014). This is beneficial to ELs because it models how to effectively interact with an academic text by focusing explicitly on academic language features and how they function, which makes language visible (Herrera et al., 2010; Le-Thi, Rodgers, & Pellicer-Sanchez, 2017). Le Thi et al., found that explicit language instruction is an effective strategy to aid ELs' full acquisition of English (2017). Moreover, the think aloud strategy aids ELs in comprehension by showing how an expert reader makes connections, builds background knowledge, identifies a text's purpose, and monitors their own reading, so they can improve in these areas themselves (Bauman, Seifert-Kessel, & Jones, 1992). Additionally, it benefits ELs academic English language development by identifying and examining a text's structure, exposing ELs to texts with academic language they wouldn't yet be able to comprehend independently, and builds interest and background knowledge in topics necessary for content class learning activities (Zwiers, 2014).

Exemplars. Again, modelling how to understand or produce target academic language structures is an essential component in supporting ELs academic language development (Herrera et al., 2010). Modelling and analyzing academic English in the context of writing is especially important because the vocabulary, sentence structures, and discourse patterns needed to understand and produce target academic language tasks vary from one discipline to the next (Fang, Schleppegrell, & Cox, 2006; Zwiers, 2014). Further, language features vary even across text genres presented within a specific discipline (Zwiers, 2014). Given this, it is vital that we build ELs' background knowledge related to each text genre by exposing them to examples before they are expected to generate them independently (Zwiers, 2014). One way to model what students are expected to produce for a learning task is by using exemplars. According to Zwiers, it is important to give ELs multiple opportunities to read and analyze writing exemplars, both exemplary and unsatisfactory, so they are able to see which academic language features and patterns are ideal, as well as identify what to avoid when writing their own texts (2014). Including exemplars is a simple way to help ELs develop their academic writing skills and enhance their academic English in general in any mainstream class.

Sentence stems. Sentence stems are also a great scaffold for ELs to support speaking or writing development (Hoover et al., 2015). Donnelly and Roe (2011) found that sentence stems help overall academic language development because they give ELs an opportunity to practice target vocabulary, language functions and sentence structure. To most effectively utilize sentence stems it is important to first analyze what vocabulary

and language functions students will be expected to produce, so sentence stems can be created to support whole language development (Donnelly & Roe, 2011). For example, if the content objective requires learners to compare and contrast the habitats of two animals, example sentence stems might look like the following: ____ *and* ____ *both* ____. or *One difference between* ____*and* ____ *is* _____. Further, Carrier (2005) maintains that sentence stems serves as a scaffold that enables ELs to produce language more complex than what they could do at their current proficiency level without any support. In short, sentence stems serve as a useful scaffold to help ELs practice producing target academic language within a content area and often enable them to produce more complex language than they would independently at their current level of English proficiency.

Cooperative learning. Oftentimes, teachers do more talking than students, which puts ELs at a disadvantage because they aren't given time to practice new academic language (Long & Porter, 1985). Cooperative learning is a useful scaffold to help WIDA level proficiency one through three ELs participate and develop academic language skills in the mainstream classroom for a multitude of reasons. First, when put in a heterogenous group, lower level proficiency ELs are able to listen to ideas and linguistic structures modeled by their more proficient peers, which gives them exposure to target language structures and content related concepts (Levykh, 2008). Second, working in small groups to informally discuss ideas lowers students' affective filter and encourages participation in a low stakes environment (Krashen, 1982; Morales-Jones, 1998). The term *affective filter* was originally used by Krashen (1982) and refers to the

level of anxiety a student has in the classroom. The lower the affective filter a student has in a particular context, the less anxious they are, which implies they will be better able to learn (Krashen, 1982). Third, allowing ELs the ability to listen and discuss prior to completing a writing activity greatly increases the quality and quantity of their writing (Levykh, 2008; Vygotsky, 1978). Fourth, cooperative learning allows students to negotiate meaning. Long and Porter (1985) maintain that allowing students to negotiate meaning in a natural, authentic conversational setting aids second language acquisition. When ELs are required to have an authentic conversation to communicate they must work with other speakers to negotiate meaning to understand the ultimate message (Long & Porter, 1985). This improves their understanding of language and how to effectively communicate in a given social context (Long & Porter, 1985). Finally, the importance of oral discourse in academic English language acquisition cannot be understated. Research supports the idea that ELs should discuss what they think, see, read, or learn to better process, comprehend, build background knowledge, as well as hear academic language modelled and repeated to create a deeper understanding of language and content (Wright, 2016). Cooperative learning provides an authentic context for oral discourse to be used as a scaffold for ELs as they continue to develop their English proficiency. It should be noted that students can be grouped homogeneously or heterogeneously based on their current English proficiency level (Zwiers, 2014). While grouping lower level proficiency students together to give them more support can be beneficial, it can also be advantageous to utilize heterogeneous groups as well, as discussed above.

Graphic organizers. According to Cooper, Kiger, Robinson, and Slansky, graphic organizers are useful to use with WIDA levels one through three ELs because they allow students to see how the information fits together as a structure (2012). According to Zwiers (2014), graphic organizers guide ELs in creating the target writing discourse, or structure, which allows them to process and organize their thoughts related to what they have just been exposed to. Further, they enable students to connect their understanding of a text to their prior background knowledge (Cooper et al., 2012). Not only are graphic organizers beneficial to utilize during instruction, there are countless graphic organizers for every text genre available to download making them accessible and easy to implement.

Assessment and ELs

It is critical that mainstream educators not only work to find ways to implement specific EL supports into daily instruction, but that the assessment they administer matches the instruction. ELs, regardless of proficiency, should be given assessments that allow them to show what they have learned and demonstrate their learning in a manner that relates to the learning objectives and tasks previously practiced.

Traditional Assessment

In order to properly assess an EL we need to discuss the importance of validity, reliability, authenticity, and cultural bias inherent to traditional assessment. Language and cultural bias are extremely pervasive and can be seen when examining components of traditional assessment and how they might impact the perception of an EL student's understanding.

Validity. Wright (2015) defines validity as "the accuracy with which a test or assessment measures what it purports to measure" (p. 124). The validity of any assessment for any student can be tainted by an array of things ranging from cheating to inadequate test administration (Wright, 2015). With regard to EL assessment, ensuring an evaluation is valid is extremely important as most tests are valid; however, the way teachers interpret or use these results can jeopardize the validity of the assessment (Wright, 2015). For example, if a teacher is attempting to measure an EL student's knowledge on a mathematical concept, we must be sure that the language in the word problem does not ultimately hinder them from completing the mathematical task. In this instance the student is no longer being evaluated in terms of their ability to do math, but in their capacity to read and comprehend English language. In an effort to maintain valid EL assessment data two things can be done. First, educators need to be sure they are only evaluating the information they set out to evaluate. Second, educators need to be actively aware of any possible factor that could adversely affect the validity or interpretation of student understanding.

Reliability. Closely related to validity is the notion of reliability in assessment. Reliability can be thought of as a form of consistency; consistency among graders, test formatting, the environment in which assessments are administered, and between multiple forms of a test (Wright, 2015). While it is impossible for any form of assessment to be completely reliable, attempting to maintain similar assessment results across different contexts, assessors, and test versions as best as possible helps ELs be evaluated objectively and consistently (Wright, 2015).

Cultural bias. Cultural bias in testing can be generally defined as anything in an assessment that penalizes a group because of any characteristic that defines them culturally as a group (Wright, 2015). While cultural bias is becoming less pronounced in mainstream forms of assessment, it has not been entirely eradicated. Cultural bias can take form in test questions that may reference specific cultural norms, lowered expectations of an evaluator for a specific group, or simply in the language of the test itself (Law & Eckes, 2007; Wright, 2015). Cultural bias occurs in assessments when the assessment questions assume that all students have familiarity with specific cultural norms and practices usually relevant to white, middle class citizens in the United States (Wright, 2015). If a student is expected to solve a math equation by way of a word problem or read a passage to measure comprehension, not only could there be linguistic barriers, there could be obstacles related to culture that can block their ability to demonstrate what they truly know. This may render the assessment invalid. Valdez Pierce (2006) contends that the context of an assessment must be meaningful to the student. This can be hindered if the test assumes incorrectly that a student has knowledge of a cultural practice outside of their personal experience (Valdez Pierce, 2006). An example of this is when a student is asked to complete a reading test about Halloween with a picture of a witch on the page. If a student has no cultural background related to Halloween or how a witch may be relevant to the passage, it defeats the purpose of the reading passage that initially aimed to measure comprehension (Valdez Pierce, 2006). It becomes a futile form of comprehension assessment due to the fact that even if the student understands each word on the page, they have no meaningful context in which to

base this information, so they may miss the point of the passage due to lack of cultural knowledge, rather than lack of comprehension. This ultimately renders the assessment invalid (Valdez Pierce, 2006).

Authentic assessment. Providing authentic assessment to EL learners is essential to ensuring that an EL student is able to demonstrate a more holistic representation of their knowledge, skills, and other attributes in addition to the limited information taken from standardized tests. By definition, authentic assessments, "more closely match instructional practices in the classroom and they reflect the knowledge and skills ELs need outside of the classroom" (Wright, 2015, p. 139). Authentic assessment is central to the linguistic and all over development of ELs because it allows for consistent and true assessment (Wright, 2015). It also leaves room for the student to engage and actively participate in the evaluation process as well as covers topics that are relevant to the student and the community in which he or she is part of (Wright, 2015). Authentic assessment as an addition to summative tests, offer more reliable information as they are based in real life contexts. Moreover, they involve relevant tasks where language is embedded in expanding and demonstrating knowledge. Authentic assessment can come in the form of a portfolio, observations, performance assessments, among other things giving a better view of student strengths and weaknesses (Law & Eckes, 2007; Wright, 2015).

Alternative Approach to Assessment for ELs

In an attempt to ensure that content assessments in the mainstream classroom are fair, there are specific standards outlined to ensure their quality. They must be valid in

that they measure what they set out to measure. They must be reliable in that there aren't extensive differences in a score across different contexts. They must be authentic in that they give an all-encompassing view of student knowledge, skills, and ability. Lastly, they must avoid bias by acknowledging that ELs have a cultural knowledge base that may not include that of mainstream culture seen in the United States.

There are many different ways to guide assessment for ELs. It is unreasonable for a level one, fifth grade EL student to be expected to write a five paragraph essay, but that doesn't mean that they are incapable of demonstrating their understanding of a content objective. All too often well-meaning mainstream teachers merely pass a student for trying, thus lowering expectations, or worse, some teachers feel an EL student hasn't earned a passing grade because they are not producing the same type of work as their non-EL peers. Alternative or differentiated approaches to assessment should be implemented for ELs so that assessment honors each individual student's current level of proficiency and is focused on growth over proficiency. Some examples of alternative, authentic assessments for ELs include portfolios and competency-based grading practices (Law & Eckes, 2007). Other ways to make assessments valid, reliable, authentic, and unbiased is by working to review test questions with the EL teacher to ensure they are linguistically appropriate and culturally relevant. Additionally, any linguistic supports that were present during instruction should also be available to support students during assessment (Law & Eckes, 2007). Due to the fact that evaluations of student learning and understanding often impact the trajectory of their academic career, it is important to be

mindful of possibly discriminatory assessment practices when examining equity and ELs in the mainstream.

Conclusion

This chapter expanded on the specific needs of low-level ELs and how to better support their academic language acquisition in a mainstream setting. This chapter provided an overview of who ELs are and the historical metamorphosis of education policy and its effect on ELs over the past 60 years. It also discussed SLA, the difference between social and academic English, and common misconceptions about emergent bi- or multilingualism. Third, this chapter described the opportunity gap and various gatekeeping measures ELs face in the current education system and elaborated on the urgency and importance of maximizing EL learning potential throughout the school day. Finally, Chapter Two provided research-based strategies that can be employed in any mainstream classroom to help WIDA level one through three ELs maximize their learning throughout the day in order to maximize their participation and learning potential.

Chapter Three will provide the framework and rationale for the professional development project being developed to present the aforementioned research. Further, it will describe the audience and setting of the project. Last, Chapter Three will describe the timeline for completion, ways in which I will measure the effectiveness of this project, and opportunities for further professional development.

CHAPTER THREE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Chapter Overview

The purpose of Chapter Three is to give a description and explanation of my professional development project. The goal of this project is to explore the research question, *how can we ensure that WIDA level one through three English Language Learner (ELs) are maximizing their learning potential and being provided with equitable learning opportunities in the mainstream?* This chapter includes four major sections. The first provides an overview of the chosen project, including its description, the setting, audience, and timeline. The second section elaborates on why this project was developed and the research paradigm chosen to ground this project in. The third section explains the research and methodology to support the capstone project. Finally, the conclusion will summarize key points of this chapter and introduce the Chapter Four.

Project Overview

This project consists of five sequential professional development (PD) sessions for mainstream teachers, aimed to expand on the research question, *how can we ensure that WIDA level one through three ELs are maximizing their learning potential and being provided with equitable learning opportunities in the mainstream?* Following this initial

professional development series, I hope to develop additional sessions centered around teacher interests and needs as they relate to supporting ELs in the mainstream.

Project Description

As stated, the project initially includes five one-hour long PD sessions that build upon each other sequentially.

Setting. The district in which this project takes place is a small, rural upper Midwest school district. It has five elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school. The current EL population of the entire district is about 13% of the population; however, it is expected that this number will continue to increase in coming years. This professional development series will be offered at both the elementary and middle schools where I currently teach. The elementary school currently has 58 ELs in grades K-5, while the middle school only has 15. While 15 does not seem like much, there are very high and diverse needs at this school and the number of ELs in each school in this district has been known to shift greatly from one year to the next, making this a great opportunity to have teachers begin supporting ELs as the numbers will most likely increase with time.

Audience. All teachers and paraprofessionals are invited and encouraged to attend this PD series, though it will not be required. The goal is to provide participants with an interactive, adaptive PD workshop that serves to provide a more concrete understanding of who our ELs are and what they need in order to address inequities and ensure success.

Structure. The first session will include a short presentation describing the EL population in our district and at individual schools, introducing the WIDA English proficiency levels and what they mean or look like for students, and expanding on the role of the EL teacher both in the classroom and as a resource. Session one will end with teachers taking a survey aimed to address current teacher attitudes and perceptions regarding ELs. The second session will elaborate on the difference between social and academic English, as well as provide learning activities for participants that will make the nuances of academic English more concrete. The third session addresses common misconceptions about ELs in the mainstream and offers three easy to prepare scaffolds teachers can bring back to their classrooms and use immediately either before, during, or after instruction. During this session, teachers are given work time to collaborate with other participants and ask questions as they plan how to implement one of the newly introduced scaffolds in an upcoming lesson. The fourth session begins with a feedback period where teachers can share their triumphs and concerns regarding their use of the scaffolds taught in the previous session. Following this, five new scaffolds that mainstream teachers can begin to implement will be shared. Similar to session three, session four will also give participants time to collaborate and find ways to integrate these scaffolds into upcoming lessons with the support of the facilitator and other colleagues. The fifth session begins with another feedback session where participants can share their challenges and triumphs regarding the newly learned and implemented scaffolds. After, there will be a short presentation discussing common problems with traditional assessments and ELs, the importance of providing authentic assessments for

ELs, and examples of alternative, authentic assessments. Following this, participants will take a post survey to measure their growth and understanding related to ELs following this PD series and give them an opportunity to share what they would like to see in future PD offerings pertaining to ELs. After the five sessions described here have been completed, further professional development sessions will be offered and designed around mainstream teacher input and need.

Timeline. The timeline for this project is as follows, but given that it is a PD project, it will provide flexibility in further implementation after its initial trial. I plan to implement the actual project as described in this chapter during the 2019-2020 school year. The five pre-planned sessions will be carried out in September 2019, November 2019, January 2020, March 2020, and May 2020 respectively. Following these sessions and feedback from mainstream teachers, I hope to further curate PD workshops that delve more deeply into the topics covered in the PD series described here. My overarching goal is to use this as a starting point and to develop regular professional development sessions for subsequent school years based on student need and teacher interest.

Choice of Method

A PD series was the chosen method for this project for a multitude of reasons. First, the context in which this project will take place is a district that has a small, yet increasing number of ELs with incredibly diverse needs and backgrounds. In order to best serve these students, we need to ensure that mainstream teachers are comfortable not only teaching content, but also implementing scaffolds that will make input

comprehensible for ELs currently at lower proficiency levels, while simultaneously fostering their academic English language development.

As an EL teacher, I often feel overwhelmed when trying to make sure everything is scaffolded for every student in every class in both of the buildings I service. Given this, I think it will be worthwhile to have a PD series that will help mainstream teachers support what EL teachers in what we are already doing. Many mainstream teachers have commented that they just don't know how to best serve our ELs and think that there is magic involved, so I want them to see this is not the case. While EL teachers are specialized in their craft, as any other content teacher is, that does not mean that mainstream content teachers cannot implement scaffolds or strategies to support EL academic language development in their own classrooms. In short, a PD series seemed to be the best way to help coach mainstream teachers and provide them with strategies that can further support EL academic English language development in mainstream classes.

Research and Methodology

After spending the last few years focused on K-12 learners, it was refreshing to have an opportunity to explore theories of andragogy to help develop this project. According to Knowles (1986), andragogy is the practice of helping adults learn. When first developing my professional development plan, I immediately knew what I didn't want to do. I reflected on the amount of professional development sessions I had attended and thought about which were useful and which were easily forgettable. I knew I wanted to avoid a sort of 'sit and get' where I droned on with information. My intention was to design a PD that not only gave information, but allowed participants to digest and use

their new knowledge meaningfully and immediately in their classroom. The key components I wanted my PD to include were: collaboration, openness, practicality, and participant choice. My goal was to provide a space where we are learning together, reflecting, asking questions, and engaging in discussion to deepen understanding and improve practice.

Frames of Reference and Misconceptions

According to Mezirow (2000), "Learning occurs in one of four ways: by elaborating existing frames of reference, by learning new frames of reference, by transforming points of view, or by transforming habits of mind" (p. 19). Frames of reference can be thought of as people's mindsets, habits, or understandings (Mezirow, 2000). The majority of mainstream teachers I know, and for which this project was created, are not well versed in how to most effectively support ELs. Further, many have had limited experience working with ELs. While they want to help and are most often well-intentioned, they need to first critically reflect on their assumptions of ELs in order to transform their thinking and develop teaching habits that will best serve them in the mainstream classroom. I know that classroom teachers are incredibly busy as it is and even with a strong desire to help their ELs succeed, a professional development related to a framework may seem daunting, overwhelming, or overzealous. Mezirow's discussion of Transformation Theory made me realize I needed to not only provide useful, relevant information based in theory, but present the information in a way that allows those who are not EL teachers to see the relevance of this work to theirs, as well as the benefits of implementing it alongside or with the EL teacher (2000) . My job when presenting this

information is to make sure that all participants are in a space where they are able to empathize with an EL "…in order to make them more inclusive…open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action" (Mezirow, 2000, p. 8). I not only want mainstream teachers to see the benefits of the tools and scaffolds presented in this PD series, but also believe that the effort required to change current practice will be worth it, so they feel more empowered to carry them out with fidelity. This is why I plan to have participants reflect on their assumptions and understandings of our EL population in the first and third session, so they can begin to see where misconceptions lie and critically reflect on how these misunderstandings may have inhibited them before. Further, I hope to help begin to shift perceptions to further support EL equity in the district through this initial PD series.

Knowles' Learning Process as a Framework

In addition to pushing teachers to expand their perceptions, expectations, and understanding of ELs and language development, I found it useful to develop my PD project using Knowles' (1986) Learning Process as a framework. According to Knowles, the andragogical learning process needs to be self-directed and problem centered, exploit all relevant resources, as well as connect to participants' internal desire to learn and grow (1986). Given this, I have attempted to incorporate each of these components to varying degrees throughout the project.

Self-directed learning. Based on Knowles' (1986) andragogical learning process, I knew that I wanted to provide participants with as much time as possible to direct their

learning during this PD series. I worked hard to integrate self-directed learning opportunities consistently throughout the PD series and was able to do so in the following ways. First, I plan to give participants time to work independently to apply new information to their classroom in each session. Further, participants will be able to choose what they want to try to implement and work to build it into an actual upcoming lesson. Second, I plan to give them the opportunity to ask questions throughout each presentation using an interactive platform. Last, as we develop these short sessions beyond the basic information, I plan to include stakeholders in the decision-making process for subsequent sessions based on what they think they need to support ELs more specifically. My hope is that this project is a starting point that will help mainstream and EL teachers to collaborate and organically develop EL supports and programming throughout our district.

Relevant resources. At this point, I have enlisted the expertise of a veteran EL teacher in our district to help me carry out this project. We both think that moving to a sort of hybrid model of coaching and teaching as EL teachers may be in the best interest of our ELs, given our context. In addition to utilizing this human capital to further answer questions and work with participants during the self-guided learning time, I plan to provide teachers with specific strategies and scaffolds that they can use to support students based on individual needs.

Problem centered. More training on how to best support ELs in the mainstream has been specifically requested by teachers and administrators at my respective schools. The problem has been identified by teachers as there has been an influx of ELs in our

district and it appears that the EL population is only going to continue to increase. Many mainstream teachers I work with have expressed that they want to better support ELs in their classes, but are unsure of how to do so effectively. Additionally, I have noticed that there are a number of mainstream teachers that hold misconceptions about ELs and second language acquisition (SLA). These misconceptions need to be addressed in order to provide ELs with equitable education opportunities. In essence, this entire PD series was developed in response to a perceived problem or lack of understanding that needs to be addressed in our district.

Participant connection. Due to the fact that this entire PD series has been established as a result of teacher and administrator request for more EL specific training, the participant connection is already present. Further, participation is voluntarily. This implies that participation will be driven by individual participants' internal desire to engage in the sessions and learn more about how to better support ELs in the mainstream classroom.

Process Design

While there are countless components I would like to include in my professional development project, I found that Knowles' (1986) process design process was simple, yet allowed for all of my overarching goals to be implemented under the umbrella of the three following categories: facilitator, climate, and learner environment.

Facilitator role. The goal of this project is for me to act as a resource or facilitator of EL information to mainstream content teachers. I do not claim to know everything and look forward to finding ways to incorporate mainstream teachers'

expertise, as well as outside resources to make this work more in depth and meaningful. This project aims to create a space for open dialogue that helps us co-create what it looks like to make a mainstream setting more equitable for our WIDA level one through three ELs.

Climate. Under the climate section of Knowles' (1986) framework, there are many nuanced implications extending far beyond the physical set up of the space. In addition to creating a comfortable, open physical space, Knowles maintains that the climate must be based in mutual respect, as well as be open, authentic, collaborative, trusting, supportive, and exciting to ensure that the necessary components of andragogy are being met (1986). In order to create this climate I plan to apply a variety of techniques throughout the PD series. For example, participants will be asked to work together consistently throughout each session, share their thoughts, opinions, challenges, and triumphs, as well as engage in various cooperative learning activities and tasks.

Learner environment. Knowles' framework maintains that in an andragogical learning environment, participants, or learners, must be involved throughout the learning process (1986). Learners must be committed to the content, diagnose their needs, develop learning objectives and reflect on their own work (Knowles, 1986). While participants did not develop the learning objectives of the initial PD sessions for this project, mainstream teachers and other stakeholders will be included in subsequent PD build around specific, individual needs. Finally, teachers will be given opportunities to apply their learning immediately and provide feedback on how well they did at implementing suggested strategies with fidelity and discussing what can be done or what

they need to improve. This was done intentionally to allow for more flexibility and to create an opportunity for participants to guide the dialogue.

Conclusion

This chapter outlined the project description, including its main components, the setting and its participants, as well as the timeline for completion to demonstrate how to begin to answer the question, *how can we ensure that WIDA level one through three ELs are maximizing their learning potential and being provided with equitable learning opportunities in the mainstream?* The second major section of this chapter explained why a PD series was chosen as the best way to relay research to relevant stakeholders. The third section of this chapter described process design frameworks rooted in the study of andragogy to justify the design, research, and methodology of the professional development project. Chapter Four will reflect on the process of developing this project, expand on its relevance to the profession of teaching, describe limitations, and provide possible ideas for further research.

CHAPTER FOUR

REFLECTION

Chapter Overview

The purpose of this capstone project was to explore the guiding question, *how can we ensure that WIDA level one through three English Learners (ELs) are maximizing their learning potential and being provided with equitable learning opportunities in the mainstream?* As an EL teacher, I feel passionate about increasing equitable learning opportunities for EL populations. While well intentioned, it has been my experience that many mainstream teachers miss the opportunity to leverage EL background and build their academic English language in the mainstream setting. As a result of these observations, I wanted to research ways to start bringing awareness to this issue and how to combat it. All too often, I have seen ELs simply fade into the background of their mainstream classrooms causing many to be disengaged, underchallenged, and apathetic. The goal of this project was to begin to get mainstream teachers in my district to see inequities present in our system, create a sense of urgency to alleviate these inequities, and provide ready-to-implement strategies that will be the first step in creating more equitable classrooms.

Major learnings

This has been an unprecedented journey for me and has left me with many more questions than answers. I have learned a lot through this process, but am continuing to decompress and digest everything that I have researched, written, and created.

Five years ago, I moved to Dublin, Ireland. Once there, I was tasked with finding a job, which is where I inadvertently fell into teaching ESL to adults from all over the world. Prior to that experience, I would have never described myself as *creative*. Before becoming an EL teacher, I had always reserved the term 'creative' for people who looked like my mom, an immensely talented florist, or my sister, a natural painter and designer with an eye for detail. This said, I have found a passion in EL teaching because creativity is a necessary component of creating equitable opportunities for diverse students. Again, I found myself having to be creative in an unexpected way: through the capstone project process. Reflecting on this capstone project, I feel like an artist staring at a canvas. I am proud of what has been accomplished, yet wonder what I could add to make it more complete. I have spent countless hours researching, refining my writing, and finding creative, effective ways to present my information to a group of colleagues. As I sit here writing this, I truly can't believe it is finished. If you would have asked me if I thought I could impulse buy a puppy, move to a new city, start my first official year of teaching while waiting tables on the weekend and completing my capstone in the span of one year I would have thought you were crazy. I feel immensely proud of what I was able to accomplish this year and my final capstone project. While it feels incomplete, I have come to accept that the feeling that something can always be built on or improved is an

inherent part of the capstone process and the teaching profession in general. This capstone project has only inspired me to want to continue learning, advocating, and collaborating alongside others to build equitable learning contexts for my ELs. It has showed me that I am capable of balancing more than I ever thought possible and I want to keep this momentum going.

A second major learning I have had throughout this process is learning the importance of patience and empathy. Countless times while researching and developing the professional development (PD) series, I found myself feeling like I wasn't including enough important information to address the urgent need to more effectively support ELs in our district. Now, after taking a step back and reflecting, I have realized that this PD project is what the mainstream teachers I currently work with need. Lasting change and learning is not necessarily impressed based on urgency or what others think you need to know. It is about meeting participants where they are at, engaging in critical thinking, and providing them with a little bit to build on. Participants need to be an integral part of the process and help guide their learning (Knowles, 1986). The last thing I want to do is overwhelm mainstream teachers with tedious details and overly complex research related to supporting ELs. From what I understand, this is precisely the reason why many mainstream teachers I work with are intimidated by working with ELs. This project made me realize that you cannot skip steps when trying to make enduring change. In order to foster a truly more equitable education system, we must start at the beginning and have patience and empathy as we slowly help people recognize what equity means for our ELs, what it looks like, why it's important, and how we need to adapt.

A third major learning I have from this project relates to the sheer scope of supports available for ELs. As an EL teacher, I am trained in supporting ELs' academic language development in the mainstream, as well as other contexts, and even I was consumed by the amount of information related to scaffolding learning tasks for ELs when I began researching. The research I did for this project was fascinating, yet overwhelming to sift through. I would start researching one topic and when I looked up from the computer, four hours had passed and I was reading my fifteenth journal article on an entirely different topic. It was fascinating because it not only reinforced what I had learned, but gave me an abundance of new ideas and wonderings for my personal teaching journey. It was overwhelming because I felt like I could never have enough time to convey all of this wonderful information to mainstream teachers, nor expect them to implement it. The research I found only reinforced the idea that I will need to continue building relationships and collaborating with others. We need input and support from all teachers, staff, administrators, students and their families, as well as community members to improve equitable learning outcomes for ELs in the mainstream.

This experience has often been frustrating, making me realize that implementing structures, strategies, and supports to make mainstream classrooms more equitable for ELs will require more than just me or even the support of my EL teacher colleagues. Further, simply doing PD sessions surrounding how to implement general scaffolds, like those described in this project, is not enough (Villegas, 2018). According to Villegas (2018) schools need to implement school-wide change that inform all teachers on sociocultural learning theories and EL best practice for each specific discipline. Given

this, my perception of how to best serve the ELs in our district has shifted. When I began my capstone, I thought that implementing a model where EL teachers in our district serve as coaches who supported mainstream teachers and taught sheltered EL classes would be ideal. After completing this project, I now strongly feel that co-teaching with mainstream teachers will create the most effective model to support EL academic language development. I look forward to researching co-teaching more and finding ways to better implement it effectively in our district as I continue my teaching journey.

Revisiting the Literature

Throughout this project and for the past three years leading up to this project, I have read countless books, websites, and journal articles related to supporting ELs and equity. While all of these sources have impacted this project in some way or another, there are a few that were especially influential in completing my capstone. The most influential literature I reviewed for this project related to widely applicable and appropriate scaffolds for WIDA levels one through three ELs in the mainstream, as well as research related to attitudes and perceptions towards ELs' emergent bilingualism.

At the core of this project, I found myself constantly revisiting Krashen's (1982) concept of making input comprehensible. The overarching goal of this project was to provide an introduction to scaffolds and strategies that mainstream teachers could use to make learning more equitable for ELs in mainstream classrooms. Given this, I wanted to provide mainstream teachers with not only ready-to use-strategies and scaffolds that they could implement to make content more accessible for students, but also the language used to access that content more comprehensible as well. While there were countless scaffolds

to choose from, the supports I ultimately included in my project for the PD series were those that were easy to implement, could be easily adapted to meet the specific needs of an individual class or teacher, and best supported the goal to make input comprehensible for students across multiple grade levels and disciplines. It's not to say that these scaffolds are to be used as a one-size-fits-all approach, but they were to provide a variety of options for teachers and allowed them to be flexible in their implementation across contexts. The researchers whose work most influenced the scaffolds I ultimately chose were Zwiers (2015) and Herrera et al., (2010).

Throughout my research, I learned that while teaching supports and scaffolds mainstream teachers can use to support WIDA levels one through three ELs in their classrooms is important, it is not the only thing that needs to be addressed to create more equitable learning contexts (de Jong, Naranjo, Li, & Ouiza, 2018; Villegas, 2018). Before being able to create a project that supported mainstream teachers in better meeting the needs of ELs, I wanted to learn more about the relationship between ELs and educational equity. To set the context for this project and explore the evolution of ELs in U.S. public schools, I relied heavily on Wright (2015). I thought this would help me better articulate the relationship between equity and academic language development to mainstream teachers. Further, I thought that this research would help me demonstrate how many of our district's current practices can limit ELs' opportunities and create inequitable learning environments for them in the mainstream setting. The mainstream teachers I currently work with are definitely aware of the opportunity gap, but I don't think the connection between the opportunity gap and its direct impact on ELs in our

school is very concrete for many of them. The research I found discussing gatekeeping measures present in schools and society for ELs who are not yet proficient in English presented by Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) and Wiley and Lukes (1996) was striking. The discussion of *elite bilingualism* versus *immigrant bilingualism* was of particular interest to me because it demonstrates how pervasive attitudes and perceptions of language and ELs' abilities can be. In fact, I have seen how this phenomenon manifests in teachers' impressions of student ability when talking to mainstream teachers in my district. I have had numerous conversations with mainstream colleagues where they are frustrated with an EL's current English language proficiency and how it impacts their ability to effectively deliver content to that student. Further, I often find many mainstream teachers feel pity for ELs currently at lower English proficiency levels, rather than seeing the value that an EL has and leveraging their prior knowledge and skills to build their content and linguistic knowledge. This deficit based outlook fails to acknowledge the value in being bi- or multilingual or to recognize the various ways in which it perpetuates inequality for ELs in the mainstream classroom. This perception limits educational achievement and social mobility of ELs because it sees their developing bilingualism as a deficit to be amended instead of a strength to be embraced (Wiley & Lukes, 1996). This information was instrumental in explaining *why* this research and project was necessary.

As for the project itself, the PD structure was heavily influenced by the work of Knowles (1986) and Mezirow (2000). I used Knowles' (1986) Learning Process as a framework to create the type of PD I envisioned. The key components of Knowles'

Learning Process maintain that andragogical learning must be self-directed and problem centered, exploit all relevant resources, as well as connect to participants' internal desire to learn and grow (1986). I based the development of my entire PD project around these core components. My goal was to provide a space where we are learning together, reflecting, asking questions, and engaging in discussion to deepen understanding and improve practice. Additionally, Mezirow's discussion of Transformation Theory also impacted the structure of my PD series (2000). Transformation Theory maintains that critical reflection of a person's own beliefs and assumptions and evaluation of their validity are required for transformative learning to take place (Mezirow, 2000). With this in mind, I worked hard to a design a PD using information and learning activities that would not only teach new strategies to support ELs academic language development in the mainstream classroom, but also help transform teachers current mindsets related to ELs, equity, and second language acquisition (SLA). I found this helpful in developing a PD series that will help participants better understand the relevance of the information being presented to their work, as well as its benefits.

Limitations

The scope of this project is limited by nature. It is meant to be an introduction to increasing equitable learning outcomes for WIDA level one through three ELs in mainstream classrooms, but it is only the beginning of what needs to be done. This process has taught me just how challenging it is to provide a comprehensive PD series that includes a balance of relevant information, meaningful learning tasks, and readily applicable strategies. I appreciate now more than ever the time and reflection it takes to

create a PD series that includes all of these elements. My project will be implemented during the 2019-2020 school year and will be reviewed, revised, and adapted as necessary based on the initial implementation. Following this, it is my intention to continue developing a PD workshops that will address the systemic educational inequities related to ELs more deeply.

Additionally, when I was initially planning the project and conducting research, I anticipated including more to the session related to assessment and ELs. Unfortunately, I only included a brief overview of common issues with traditional forms of assessment and ELs, as well as a few suggestions about how to provide more authentic assessment based on growth over proficiency. I made this decision because I think it is important to include information surrounding assessment if we are talking about scaffolding curriculum because the two are directly related. This said, I found it difficult to provide an extensive presentation on authentic assessment for ELs given the time constraints of the one-hour session. Reflecting on this, I think it would be valuable to continue our PD sessions in the future beginning with authentic assessment if stakeholders agree it would be relevant and useful.

Lastly, when I began planning this project, I had originally planned to include ten scaffolds, but in the end I have only included eight. In the beginning, I wanted to provide participants with many options and I felt like ten wasn't even that many. This said, I realized over time that it would be more beneficial for participants to learn about fewer scaffolds and understand them more deeply than it is for them to have a big list they didn't fully understand or have time to digest. This is why I limited the number of

scaffolds presented in theis PD series to eight. After I carry out the initial PD series during the 2019-2020 school year, I will add or take away scaffolds presented based on participant input.

Where do we go from here?

While I feel this project provides a great foundation in which we can build off of as a district to further support equity for our ELs in a mainstream setting, there is so much more work to be done. It is hard to say exactly what needs to be done to provide more equitable support for ELs because equity inherently requires personalization and flexibility. My intention is to continue this work through collaboration with other district EL teachers, mainstream teachers and staff, as well as administrators, students and their families, and community members. Following this project, I would like to work with relevant collaborators to find more effective and authentic ways to leverage ELs' linguistic and cultural backgrounds, as well as implement structures and strategies that will make their learning experiences more equitable. I anticipate that this project will demonstrate why co-teaching is an effective model to put into practice to support EL equity to mainstream teachers in my district who hold strong reservations about co-teaching with an EL teacher. I hope that by continuing this work, we will ultimately foster a district climate and culture that not only tolerates our ELs and the differences they may have, but fully embrace all they have to offer.

Broad Implications

When I was hired in my current position, one of my administrators said that their hope was that I could work to provide explicit training for mainstream teachers on how to

best scaffold and differentiate for the increasing EL population. This project is intended to be used as a springboard to providing comprehensive PD for mainstream teachers related to ELs, equity, and personalized learning. My intention is that it will be a learning opportunity that leads to more interest and discussion surrounding equity and ELs in the mainstream that we can organically develop as a school, district, and community going forward.

Benefit to the Profession

My hope is that this project will be used by other EL teachers who are in a similar position to me. I created this project because I felt that my district needed a comprehensive start to talking about equity and ELs in the mainstream. I know that the district EL team I work with has found this challenging and I anticipate that many other EL teachers working across the U.S. face similar obstacles when trying to create more equitable learning opportunities for the ELs they support. While this project was created with my specific context in mind, the PD series can easily be adapted and be used to present to any target group of mainstream teachers. This is why I plan to share this project in its entirety not only with other EL teachers in my district, but make it available to the public on Hamline's Digital Commons web page.

Conclusion

Chapter Four provided a reflection on the capstone process as a whole. First, the chapter provided a reflection on the major learnings and realizations that happened as a result of the process. Second, it provided a review of research that was the most relevant and impactful to the creation of this capstone project. Next, Chapter Four expanded on

the intended impact of this project, as well as limitations and suggestions for further development of the project's goals. Finally, Chapter Four expounded on the benefits of this project to the profession of ESL teachers and where to access project resources.

Appendix A

Glossary

Academic English

The specific vocabulary, sentence constructs, and discourses necessary to master in order to be successful in an academic setting.

ACCESS for ELs 2.0

Annual State mandated test that measures the English language growth and proficiency of ELs developed by WIDA.

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS)

The language needed to communicate socially. It is comprised chunks of survival language (ie: need help), simple grammar forms (ie: I like dogs.), high frequency vocabulary (ie: bathroom), and initial reading skills.

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)

Language needed to complete academic tasks. This language is often isolated in context, making it hard to derive meaning from contextual or interpersonal clues.

Communicative Competence

A person's ability to communicate using a language appropriately in multiple social contexts or interactions.

Comprehensible Input

Presenting information in a way that allows students to understand the overall concept regardless of their current English language proficiency.

The practice of English as a Second Language (ESL)

The study of teaching English to a speaker whose first language(s) are something other than English.

English Learner (EL)

A student in the K-12 US public school system who has qualified to receive ESL services.

Equity

Equity is the practice of giving an individual what they need to be successful, rather than giving everyone the exact same thing.

Gatekeeping Measures

Systems, policies, or institutions that limit opportunity for a group of people.

Language Norm

A speaker's ability to effectively use language appropriately in a given social context.

Long Term English Learner (LTEL)

A student who has been receiving ESL services for at least six years, is struggling academically, and are not hitting annual language proficiency targets.

Newcomer

A student who qualifies to receive ESL services and has arrived to the U.S. in the past twelve months.

Social English

Language used in informal social contexts meant to establish, maintain, or grow relationships.

Standard English

Covert and implicit language individuals must acquire to foster upward social mobility or to truly participate in all domains of formal society

World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA)

An educational consortium that begin at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2003 and now includes 37 states and the District of Columbia. It works to define language proficiency standards and assessments for ELs, as well as provides various resources and tools to help teachers better understand and support ELs at every English proficiency level. WIDA also developed the WIDA ACCESS 2.0, which is administered annually to every student who qualifies for EL services to measure student growth and proficiency in academic language features.

WIDA Can-Do Descriptors

The Can-Do descriptors were developed by WIDA to provide a reference to what ELs should be able to do with English language at their given proficiency level provided they are given appropriate supports.

WIDA Performance Definitions

WIDA Performance Definitions are provided on a scale from one to six: entering, beginning, developing, expanding, bridging, and reaching. Under each performance definition number, a student should be able to understand or produce linguistic elements

described by the performance definition of that level. Performance indicators are available to describe students in each of the domains: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. This means that just because a student is a level two in writing doesn't mean they cannot be a level five in speaking. Additionally, these are to be used as a guide and can be fluid.

Appendix B

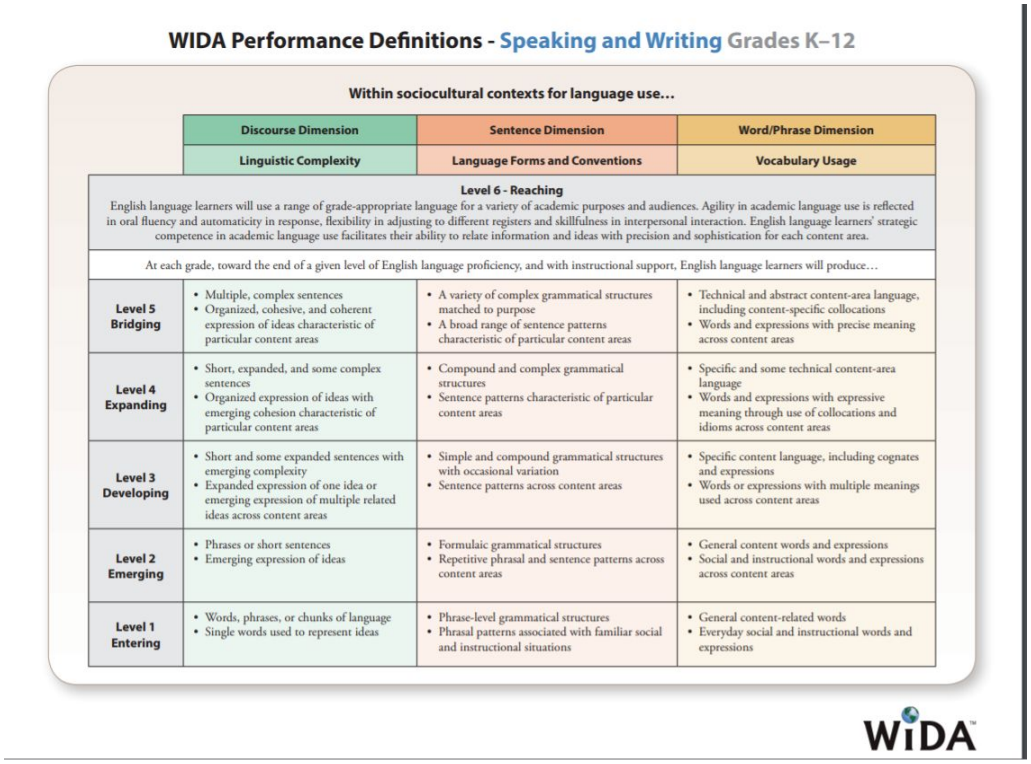
WIDA Performance Definitions

WIDA Performance Definitions - Listening and Reading Grades K–12

Within sociocultural contexts for processing language…

	Discourse Dimension	Sentence Dimension	Word/Phrase Dimension
	Linguistic Complexity	**Language Forms and Conventions**	**Vocabulary Usage**
Level 6 - Reaching English language learners will process a range of grade-appropriate oral or written language for a variety of academic purposes and audiences. Automaticity in language processing is reflected in the ability to identify and act on significant information from a variety of genres and registers. English language learners' strategic competence in processing academic language facilitates their access to content area concepts and ideas.			
At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will process…			
Level 5 Bridging	• Rich descriptive discourse with complex sentences • Cohesive and organized, related ideas across content areas	• A variety of complex grammatical structures • Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	• Technical and abstract content-area language • Words and expressions with shades of meaning across content areas
Level 4 Expanding	• Connected discourse with a variety of sentences • Expanded related ideas characteristic of particular content areas	• Complex grammatical structures • A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	• Specific and some technical content-area language • Words or expressions with multiple meanings across content areas
Level 3 Developing	• Discourse with a series of extended sentences • Related ideas specific to particular content areas	• Compound and some complex grammatical constructions • Sentence patterns across content areas	• Specific content-area language and expressions • Words and expressions with common collocations and idioms across content areas
Level 2 Emerging	• Multiple related simple sentences • An idea with details	• Compound grammatical structures • Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas	• General content words and expressions, including cognates • Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas
Level 1 Entering	• Single statements or questions • An idea within words, phrases, or chunks of language	• Simple grammatical constructions (e.g., commands, Wh- questions, declaratives) • Common social and instructional forms and patterns	• General content-related words • Everyday social, instructional and some content-related words and phrases

WIDA



WIDA Performance Definitions - Speaking and Writing Grades K–12

Within sociocultural contexts for language use…

	Discourse Dimension	Sentence Dimension	Word/Phrase Dimension
	Linguistic Complexity	**Language Forms and Conventions**	**Vocabulary Usage**
Level 6 - Reaching	English language learners will use a range of grade-appropriate language for a variety of academic purposes and audiences. Agility in academic language use is reflected in oral fluency and automaticity in response, flexibility in adjusting to different registers and skillfulness in interpersonal interaction. English language learners' strategic competence in academic language use facilitates their ability to relate information and ideas with precision and sophistication for each content area.		
At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will produce…			
Level 5 Bridging	• Multiple, complex sentences • Organized, cohesive, and coherent expression of ideas characteristic of particular content areas	• A variety of complex grammatical structures matched to purpose • A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	• Technical and abstract content-area language, including content-specific collocations • Words and expressions with precise meaning across content areas
Level 4 Expanding	• Short, expanded, and some complex sentences • Organized expression of ideas with emerging cohesion characteristic of particular content areas	• Compound and complex grammatical structures • Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	• Specific and some technical content-area language • Words and expressions with expressive meaning through use of collocations and idioms across content areas
Level 3 Developing	• Short and some expanded sentences with emerging complexity • Expanded expression of one idea or emerging expression of multiple related ideas across content areas	• Simple and compound grammatical structures with occasional variation • Sentence patterns across content areas	• Specific content language, including cognates and expressions • Words or expressions with multiple meanings used across content areas
Level 2 Emerging	• Phrases or short sentences • Emerging expression of ideas	• Formulaic grammatical structures • Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas	• General content words and expressions • Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas
Level 1 Entering	• Words, phrases, or chunks of language • Single words used to represent ideas	• Phrase-level grammatical structures • Phrasal patterns associated with familiar social and instructional situations	• General content-related words • Everyday social and instructional words and expressions

WIDA

Images retrieved May 3, 2019 from: Gottlieb, M. (2013). *Essential actions: a handbook for implementing WIDA's framework for English language development standards*. Madison, WI: Board of Regents--University of Wisconsin System, pp. 28-29.

Appendix C

WIDA Can-Do Descriptors PreK-12

WIDA CONSORTIUM

Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster PreK-K

For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	Level 6 - Reaching
LISTENING	• Match oral language to classroom and everyday objects • Point to stated pictures in context • Respond non-verbally to oral commands or statements (e.g., through physical movement) • Find familiar people and places named orally	• Sort pictures or objects according to oral instructions • Match pictures, objects or movements to oral descriptions • Follow one-step oral directions (e.g., "stand up"; "sit down") • Identify simple patterns described orally • Respond with gestures to songs, chants, or stories modeled by teachers	• Follow two-step oral directions, one step at a time • Draw pictures in response to oral instructions • Respond non-verbally to confirm or deny facts (e.g., thumbs up, thumbs down) • Act out songs and stories using gestures	• Find pictures that match oral descriptions • Follow oral directions and compare with visual or nonverbal models (e.g., "Draw a circle under the line.") • Distinguish between what happens first and next in oral activities or readings • Role play in response to stories read aloud	• Order pictures of events according to sequential language • Arrange objects or pictures according to descriptive oral discourse • Identify pictures/realia associated with grade-level academic concepts from oral descriptions • Make patterns from real objects or pictures based on detailed oral descriptions	
SPEAKING	• Identify people or objects in illustrated short stories • Repeat words, simple phases • Answer yes/no questions about personal information • Name classroom and everyday objects	• Restate some facts from illustrated short stories • Describe pictures, classroom objects or familiar people using simple phrases • Answer questions with one or two words (e.g., "Where is Sonia?") • Complete phrases in rhymes, songs, and chants	• Retell short narrative stories through pictures • Repeat sentences from rhymes and patterned stories • Make predictions (e.g. "What will happen next?") • Answer explicit questions from stories read aloud (e.g., who, what, or where)	• Retell narrative stories through pictures with emerging detail • Sing repetitive songs and chants independently • Compare attributes of real objects (e.g., size, shape, color) • Indicate spatial relations of real-life objects using phrases or short sentences	• Tell original stories with emerging detail • Explain situations (e.g., involving feelings) • Offer personal opinions • Express likes, dislikes, or preferences with reasons	

Image retrieved May 3, 2019 from: https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/can-do/descriptors.

Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster PreK-K

For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	
READING	• Match icons and symbols to corresponding pictures • Identify name in print • Find matching words or pictures • Find labeled real-life classroom objects	• Match examples of the same form of print • Distinguish between same and different forms of print (e.g., single letters and symbols) • Demonstrate concepts of print (e.g., left to right movement, beginning/end, or top/bottom of page) • Match labeled pictures to those in illustrated scenes	• Use pictures to identify words • Classify visuals according to labels or icons (e.g., animals v. plants) • Demonstrate concepts of print (e.g., title, author, illustrator) • Sort labeled pictures by attribute (e.g., number, initial sound)	• Identify some high-frequency words in context • Order a series of labeled pictures described orally to tell stories • Match pictures to phrases/short sentences • Classify labeled pictures by two attributes (e.g., size and color)	• Find school-related vocabulary items • Differentiate between letters, words, and sentences • String words together to make short sentences • Indicate features of words, phrases, or sentences that are the same and different	Level 6 - Reaching
WRITING	• Draw pictures and scribble • Circle or underline pictures, symbols, and numbers • Trace figures and letters • Make symbols, figures or letters from models and realia (e.g., straws, clay)	• Connect oral language to print (e.g., language experience) • Reproduce letters, symbols, and numbers from models in context • Copy icons of familiar environmental print • Draw objects from models and label with letters	• Communicate using letters, symbols, and numbers in context • Make illustrated "notes" and cards with distinct letter combinations • Make connections between speech and writing • Reproduce familiar words from labeled models or illustrations	• Produce symbols and strings of letters associated with pictures • Draw pictures and use words to tell a story • Label familiar people and objects from models • Produce familiar words/phrases from environmental print and illustrated text	• Create content-based representations through pictures and words • Make "story books" with drawings and words • Produce words/phrases independently • Relate everyday experiences using phrases/short sentences	

Image retrieved May 3, 2019 from: https://wida.wisc.edu/teach/can-do/descriptors.

Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 1-2

For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	Level 6 - Reaching
LISTENING	• Follow modeled, one-step oral directions (e.g., "Find a pencil.") • Identify pictures of everyday objects as stated orally (e.g., in books) • Point to real-life objects reflective of content-related vocabulary or oral statements • Mimic gestures or movement associated with statements (e.g., "This is my left hand.")	• Match oral reading of stories to illustrations • Carry out two- to three-step oral commands (e.g., "Take out your science book. Now turn to page 25.") • Sequence a series of oral statements using real objects or pictures • Locate objects described orally	• Follow modeled multi-step oral directions • Sequence pictures of stories read aloud (e.g., beginning, middle, and end) • Match people with jobs or objects with functions based on oral descriptions • Classify objects according to descriptive oral statements	• Compare/contrast objects according to physical attributes (e.g., size, shape, color) based on oral information • Find details in illustrated, narrative, or expository text read aloud • Identify illustrated activities from oral descriptions • Locate objects, figures, places based on visuals and detailed oral descriptions	• Use context clues to gain meaning from grade-level text read orally • Apply ideas from oral discussions to new situations • Interpret information from oral reading of narrative or expository text • Identify ideas/concepts expressed with grade-level content-specific language	
SPEAKING	• Repeat simple words, phrases, and memorized chunks of language • Respond to visually-supported (e.g., calendar) questions of academic content with one word or phrase • Identify and name everyday objects • Participate in whole group chants and songs	• Use first language to fill in gaps in oral English (code switch) • Repeat facts or statements • Describe what people do from action pictures (e.g., jobs of community workers) • Compare real-life objects (e.g., "smaller," "biggest")	• Ask questions of a social nature • Express feelings (e.g., "I'm happy because…") • Retell simple stories from picture cues • Sort and explain grouping of objects (e.g., sink v. float) • Make predictions or hypotheses • Distinguish features of content-based phenomena (e.g., caterpillar, butterfly)	• Ask questions for social and academic purposes • Participate in class discussions on familiar social and academic topics • Retell stories with details • Sequence stories with transitions	• Use academic vocabulary in class discussions • Express and support ideas with examples • Give oral presentations on content-based topics approaching grade level • Initiate conversation with peers and teachers	

Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 1-2

For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	Level 6 - Reaching
READING	• Identify symbols, icons, and environmental print • Connect print to visuals • Match real-life familiar objects to labels • Follow directions using diagrams or pictures	• Search for pictures associated with word patterns • Identify and interpret pre-taught labeled diagrams • Match voice to print by pointing to icons, letters, or illustrated words • Sort words into word families	• Make text-to-self connections with prompting • Select titles to match a series of pictures • Sort illustrated content words into categories • Match phrases and sentences to pictures	• Put words in order to form sentences • Identify basic elements of fictional stories (e.g., title, setting, characters) • Follow sentence-level directions • Distinguish between general and specific language (e.g., flower v. rose) in context	• Begin using features of non-fiction text to aid comprehension • Use learning strategies (e.g., context clues) • Identify main ideas • Match figurative language to illustrations (e.g., "as big as a house")	
WRITING	• Copy written language • Use first language (L1, when L1 is a medium of instruction) to help form words in English • Communicate through drawings • Label familiar objects or pictures	• Provide information using graphic organizers • Generate lists of words/ phrases from banks or walls • Complete modeled sentence starters (e.g., "I like ____.") • Describe people, places, or objects from illustrated examples and models	• Engage in prewriting strategies (e.g., use of graphic organizers) • Form simple sentences using word/phrase banks • Participate in interactive journal writing • Give content-based information using visuals or graphics	• Produce original sentences • Create messages for social purposes (e.g., get well cards) • Compose journal entries about personal experiences • Use classroom resources (e.g., picture dictionaries) to compose sentences	• Create a related series of sentences in response to prompts • Produce content-related sentences • Compose stories • Explain processes or procedures using connected sentences	

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Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 3-5

For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	
LISTENING	• Point to stated pictures, words, or phrases • Follow one-step oral directions (e.g., physically or through drawings) • Identify objects, figures, people from oral statements or questions (e.g., "Which one is a rock?") • Match classroom oral language to daily routines	• Categorize content-based pictures or objects from oral descriptions • Arrange pictures or objects per oral information • Follow two-step oral directions • Draw in response to oral descriptions • Evaluate oral information (e.g., about lunch options)	• Follow multi-step oral directions • Identify illustrated main ideas from paragraph-level oral discourse • Match literal meanings of oral descriptions or oral reading to illustrations • Sequence pictures from oral stories, processes, or procedures	• Interpret oral information and apply to new situations • Identify illustrated main ideas and supporting details from oral discourse • Infer from and act on oral information • Role play the work of authors, mathematicians, scientists, historians from oral readings, videos, or multi-media	• Carry out oral instructions containing grade-level, content-based language • Construct models or use manipulatives to problem-solve based on oral discourse • Distinguish between literal and figurative language in oral discourse • Form opinions of people, places, or ideas from oral scenarios	Level 6 - Reaching
SPEAKING	• Express basic needs or conditions • Name pre-taught objects, people, diagrams, or pictures • Recite words or phrases from pictures of everyday objects and oral modeling • Answer yes/no and choice questions	• Ask simple, everyday questions (e.g., "Who is absent?") • Restate content-based facts • Describe pictures, events, objects, or people using phrases or short sentences • Share basic social information with peers	• Answer simple content-based questions • Re/tell short stories or events • Make predictions or hypotheses from discourse • Offer solutions to social conflict • Present content-based information • Engage in problem-solving	• Answer opinion questions with supporting details • Discuss stories, issues, and concepts • Give content-based oral reports • Offer creative solutions to issues/problems • Compare/contrast content-based functions and relationships	• Justify/defend opinions or explanations with evidence • Give content-based presentations using technical vocabulary • Sequence steps in grade-level problem-solving • Explain in detail results of inquiry (e.g., scientific experiments)	

Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 3-5

For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	
READING	• Match icons or diagrams with words/concepts • Identify cognates from first language, as applicable • Make sound/symbol/word relations • Match illustrated words/phrases in differing contexts (e.g., on the board, in a book)	• Identify facts and explicit messages from illustrated text • Find changes to root words in context • Identify elements of story grammar (e.g., characters, setting) • Follow visually supported written directions (e.g., "Draw a star in the sky.")	• Interpret information or data from charts and graphs • Identify main ideas and some details • Sequence events in stories or content-based processes • Use context clues and illustrations to determine meaning of words/phrases	• Classify features of various genres of text (e.g., "and they lived happily ever after"—fairy tales) • Match graphic organizers to different texts (e.g., compare/contrast with Venn diagram) • Find details that support main ideas • Differentiate between fact and opinion in narrative and expository text	• Summarize information from multiple related sources • Answer analytical questions about grade-level text • Identify, explain, and give examples of figures of speech • Draw conclusions from explicit and implicit text at or near grade level	Level 6 - Reaching
WRITING	• Label objects, pictures, or diagrams from word/phrase banks • Communicate ideas by drawing • Copy words, phrases, and short sentences • Answer oral questions with single words	• Make lists from labels or with peers • Complete/produce sentences from word/phrase banks or walls • Fill in graphic organizers, charts, and tables • Make comparisons using real-life or visually-supported materials	• Produce simple expository or narrative text • String related sentences together • Compare/contrast content-based information • Describe events, people, processes, procedures	• Take notes using graphic organizers • Summarize content-based information • Author multiple forms of writing (e.g., expository, narrative, persuasive) from models • Explain strategies or use of information in solving problems	• Produce extended responses of original text approaching grade level • Apply content-based information to new contexts • Connect or integrate personal experiences with literature/content • Create grade-level stories or reports	

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Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 6-8

For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	Level 6 - Reaching
LISTENING	• Follow one-step oral commands/instructions • Match social language to visual/graphic displays • Identify objects, people, or places from oral statements/ questions using gestures (e.g., pointing) • Match instructional language with visual representation (e.g., "Use a sharpened pencil.")	• Follow multi-step oral commands/instructions • Classify/sort content-related visuals per oral descriptions • Sequence visuals per oral directions • Identify information on charts or tables based on oral statements	• Categorize content-based examples from oral directions • Match main ideas of familiar text read aloud to visuals • Use learning strategies described orally • Identify everyday examples of content-based concepts described orally • Associate oral language with different time frames (e.g., past, present, future)	• Identify main ideas and details of oral discourse • Complete content-related tasks or assignments based on oral discourse • Apply learning strategies to new situations • Role play, dramatize, or re-enact scenarios from oral reading	• Use oral information to accomplish grade-level tasks • Evaluate intent of speech and act accordingly • Make inferences from grade-level text read aloud • Discriminate among multiple genres read orally	
SPEAKING	• Answer yes/no and choice questions • Begin to use general and high frequency vocabulary • Repeat words, short phrases, memorized chunks • Answer select WH- questions (e.g., "who," "what," "when," "where") within context of lessons or personal experiences	• Convey content through high frequency words/ phrases • State big/main ideas of classroom conversation • Describe situations from modeled sentences • Describe routines and everyday events • Express everyday needs and wants • Communicate in social situations • Make requests	• Begin to express time through multiple tenses • Retell/rephrase ideas from speech • Give brief oral content-based presentations • State opinions • Connect ideas in discourse using transitions (e.g., "but," "then") • Use different registers inside and outside of class • State big/main ideas with some supporting details • Ask for clarification (e.g., self-monitor)	• Paraphrase and summarize ideas presented orally • Defend a point of view • Explain outcomes • Explain and compare content-based concepts • Connect ideas with supporting details/evidence • Substantiate opinions with reasons and evidence	• Defend a point of view and give reasons • Use and explain metaphors and similes • Communicate with fluency in social and academic contexts • Negotiate meaning in group discussions • Discuss and give examples of abstract, content-based ideas (e.g., democracy, justice)	

Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 6-8

For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	Level 6 - Reaching
READING	• Associate letters with sounds and objects • Match content–related objects/pictures to words • Identify common symbols, signs, and words • Recognize concepts of print • Find single word responses to WH- questions (e.g., "who," "what," "when," "where") related to illustrated text • Use picture dictionaries/ illustrated glossaries	• Sequence illustrated text of fictional and non-fictional events • Locate main ideas in a series of simple sentences • Find information from text structure (e.g., titles, graphs, glossary) • Follow text read aloud (e.g., tapes, teacher, paired-readings) • Sort/group pre-taught words/ phrases • Use pre-taught vocabulary (e.g., word banks) to complete simple sentences • Use L1 to support L2 (e.g., cognates) • Use bilingual dictionaries and glossaries	• Identify topic sentences, main ideas, and details in paragraphs • Identify multiple meanings of words in context (e.g., "cell," "table") • Use context clues • Make predictions based on illustrated text • Identify frequently used affixes and root words to make/extract meaning (e.g., "un-," "re-," "-ed") • Differentiate between fact and opinion • Answer questions about explicit information in texts • Use English dictionaries and glossaries	• Order paragraphs • Identify summaries of passages • Identify figurative language (e.g., "dark as night") • Interpret adapted classics or modified text • Match cause to effect • Identify specific language of different genres and informational texts • Use an array of strategies (e.g., skim and scan for information)	• Differentiate and apply multiple meanings of words/ phrases • Apply strategies to new situations • Infer meaning from modified grade-level text • Critique material and support argument • Sort grade-level text by genre	
WRITING	• Draw content-related pictures • Produce high frequency words • Label pictures and graphs • Create vocabulary/concept cards • Generate lists from pre-taught words/phrases and word banks (e.g., create menu from list of food groups)	• Complete pattern sentences • Extend "sentence starters" with original ideas • Connect simple sentences • Complete graphic organizers/ forms with personal information • Respond to yes/no, choice, and some WH- questions	• Produce short paragraphs with main ideas and some details (e.g., column notes) • Create compound sentences (e.g., with conjunctions) • Explain steps in problem-solving • Compare/contrast information, events, characters • Give opinions, preferences, and reactions along with reasons	• Create multiple-paragraph essays • Justify ideas • Produce content-related reports • Use details/examples to support ideas • Use transition words to create cohesive passages • Compose intro/body/ conclusion • Paraphrase or summarize text • Take notes (e.g., for research)	• Create expository text to explain graphs/charts • Produce research reports using multiple sources/ citations • Begin using analogies • Critique literary essays or articles	

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Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 9-12

For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	
LISTENING	• Point to or show basic parts, components, features, characteristics, and properties of objects, organisms, or persons named orally • Match everyday oral information to pictures, diagrams, or photographs • Group visuals by common traits named orally (e.g., "These are polygons.") • Identify resources, places, products, figures from oral statements, and visuals	• Match or classify oral descriptions to real-life experiences or visually-represented, content-related examples • Sort oral language statements according to time frames • Sequence visuals according to oral directions	• Evaluate information in social and academic conversations • Distinguish main ideas from supporting points in oral, content-related discourse • Use learning strategies described orally • Categorize content-based examples described orally	• Distinguish between multiple meanings of oral words or phrases in social and academic contexts • Analyze content-related tasks or assignments based on oral discourse • Categorize examples of genres read aloud • Compare traits based on visuals and oral descriptions using specific and some technical language	• Interpret cause and effect scenarios from oral discourse • Make inferences from oral discourse containing satire, sarcasm, or humor • Identify and react to subtle differences in speech and register (e.g., hyperbole, satire, comedy) • Evaluate intent of speech and act accordingly	Level 6 - Reaching
SPEAKING	• Answer yes/no or choice questions within context of lessons or personal experiences • Provide identifying information about self • Name everyday objects and pre-taught vocabulary • Repeat words, short phrases, memorized chunks of language	• Describe persons, places, events, or objects • Ask WH- questions to clarify meaning • Give features of content-based material (e.g., time periods) • Characterize issues, situations, regions shown in illustrations	• Suggest ways to resolve issues or pose solutions • Compare/contrast features, traits, characteristics using general and some specific language • Sequence processes, cycles, procedures, or events • Conduct interviews or gather information through oral interaction • Estimate, make predictions or pose hypotheses from models	• Take a stance and use evidence to defend it • Explain content-related issues and concepts • Compare and contrast points of view • Analyze and share pros and cons of choices • Use and respond to gossip, slang, and idiomatic expressions • Use speaking strategies (e.g., circumlocution)	• Give multimedia oral presentations on grade-level material • Engage in debates on content-related issues using technical language • Explain metacognitive strategies for solving problems (e.g., "Tell me how you know it.") • Negotiate meaning in pairs or group discussions	

Can Do Descriptors: Grade Level Cluster 9-12

For the given level of English language proficiency and with visual, graphic, or interactive support through Level 4, English language learners can process or produce the **language** needed to:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	
READING	• Match visual representations to words/phrases • Read everyday signs, symbols, schedules, and school-related words/phrases • Respond to WH- questions related to illustrated text • Use references (e.g., picture dictionaries, bilingual glossaries, technology)	• Match data or information with its source or genre (e.g., description of element to its symbol on periodic table) • Classify or organize information presented in visuals or graphs • Follow multi-step instructions supported by visuals or data • Match sentence-level descriptions to visual representations • Compare content-related features in visuals and graphics • Locate main ideas in a series of related sentences	• Apply multiple meanings of words/phrases to social and academic contexts • Identify topic sentences or main ideas and details in paragraphs • Answer questions about explicit information in texts • Differentiate between fact and opinion in text • Order paragraphs or sequence information within paragraphs	• Compare/contrast authors' points of view, characters, information, or events • Interpret visually- or graphically-supported information • Infer meaning from text • Match cause to effect • Evaluate usefulness of data or information supported visually or graphically	• Interpret grade-level literature • Synthesize grade-level expository text • Draw conclusions from different sources of informational text • Infer significance of data or information in grade-level material • Identify evidence of bias and credibility of source	Level 6 - Reaching
WRITING	• Label content-related diagrams, pictures from word/phrase banks • Provide personal information on forms read orally • Produce short answer responses to oral questions with visual support • Supply missing words in short sentences	• Make content-related lists of words, phrases, or expressions • Take notes using graphic organizers or models • Formulate yes/no, choice and WH- questions from models • Correspond for social purposes (e.g., memos, e-mails, notes)	• Complete reports from templates • Compose short narrative and expository pieces • Outline ideas and details using graphic organizers • Compare and reflect on performance against criteria (e.g., rubrics)	• Summarize content-related notes from lectures or text • Revise work based on narrative or oral feedback • Compose narrative and expository text for a variety of purposes • Justify or defend ideas and opinions • Produce content-related reports	• Produce research reports from multiple sources • Create original pieces that represent the use of a variety of genres and discourses • Critique, peer-edit and make recommendations on others' writing from rubrics • Explain, with details, phenomena, processes, procedures	

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