Why You Need This Book to Support ELs

How many of you are language teachers?

When we recently facilitated a professional-development session, we asked a group of approximately sixty content and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) teachers that same question. Only the thirty or so ESOL teachers in the room raised their hands. We then shared with the group that everyone should be raising their hands, which led to some teachers' surprised looks. Both groups of teachers discussed that many changes had taken place in their schools during the past few years, including (but not limited to) new content standards, new English language development (ELD) standards,[1] a new teacher evaluation system, and new state regulations aimed at more inclusive instruction of ELs. The content teachers, in particular, were exhausted and admittedly feeling even more "stretched" at now being expected to also serve as their English learners' (ELs') language teachers. Some of them wondered whether that wasn't supposed to be the ESOL teachers' job.

Times have changed. In the past, ESOL teachers tended to physically remove ELs from the content or grade-level teachers' classrooms, providing them ESOL instruction in a separate location. Now, more and more schools, districts, and even some states are moving to more inclusive instructional models in which ELs spend more of their time with their grade-level peers, and ESOL teachers provide support within content classrooms. The move by states to frame content instruction around challenging college- and

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1. Some states might use the term English language proficiency (ELP) standards.

career-readiness standards (CCRS) solidifies that *all* teachers are to be teachers of academic language as well as content (Gottlieb, 2016; Walqui & van Lier, 2010). But many of you who are content teachers have not yet been trained in how to expand your repertoire to wear both hats—that of language teacher and that of content teacher—and will understandably need some guidance. Many of you who are ESOL teachers may not have received training in how to effectively collaborate with content teachers to learn from each other and work together to educate ELs and will need extra support in this area.

This chapter will provide a new framework for equitable EL education. It will first outline the sense of urgency in providing ELs the type of instructional support they need to be successful in today's challenging classrooms and also be respected and valued on a socioemotional level. It will include a brief synthesis of relevant current research and practice that underscores the dynamic educational landscape in which ELs are educated. It will also address shifts in content standards and subsequent teacher expertise that are necessary to effectively teach ELs. The bulk of the chapter will focus on the five guiding principles that frame the content of this book, as well as all of our work with ELs. For each guiding principle, we provide a brief research-based rationale for the principle, as well as practical tools for you to use to apply the principle to your own practice. The chapter ends with the opportunity for you to develop your own guiding principles, create a school or district vision for the equitable education of ELs, and craft your own "elevator speech" to define your role in supporting ELs.

What Is the Framework for Equitable and Excellent EL Education?

With increased rigor in standards come more challenging assessments, and the achievement gap between ELs and non-ELs is certainly not getting any narrower. Through our work with teachers and administrators who serve ELs, we recognize the need for a framework that identifies and addresses the need for all teachers to adjust their instruction to recognize ELs' strengths, as well as to support their needs. This framework for equitable and excellent EL education encompasses many areas related to instruction that are necessary for ELs to meaningfully engage in challenging content classes and develop their language skills. In addition, our framework is unique in that it also recognizes the need for all teachers of ELs to collaborate and operate within a context of equity, advocacy, and leadership to continually develop as professionals in order to best support ELs. The framework is driven by our five guiding principles, which we share in detail later in this chapter. Figure 1.1 provides a visual representation of the framework.

FIGURE 1.1 Framework for Equitable and Excellent EL Education
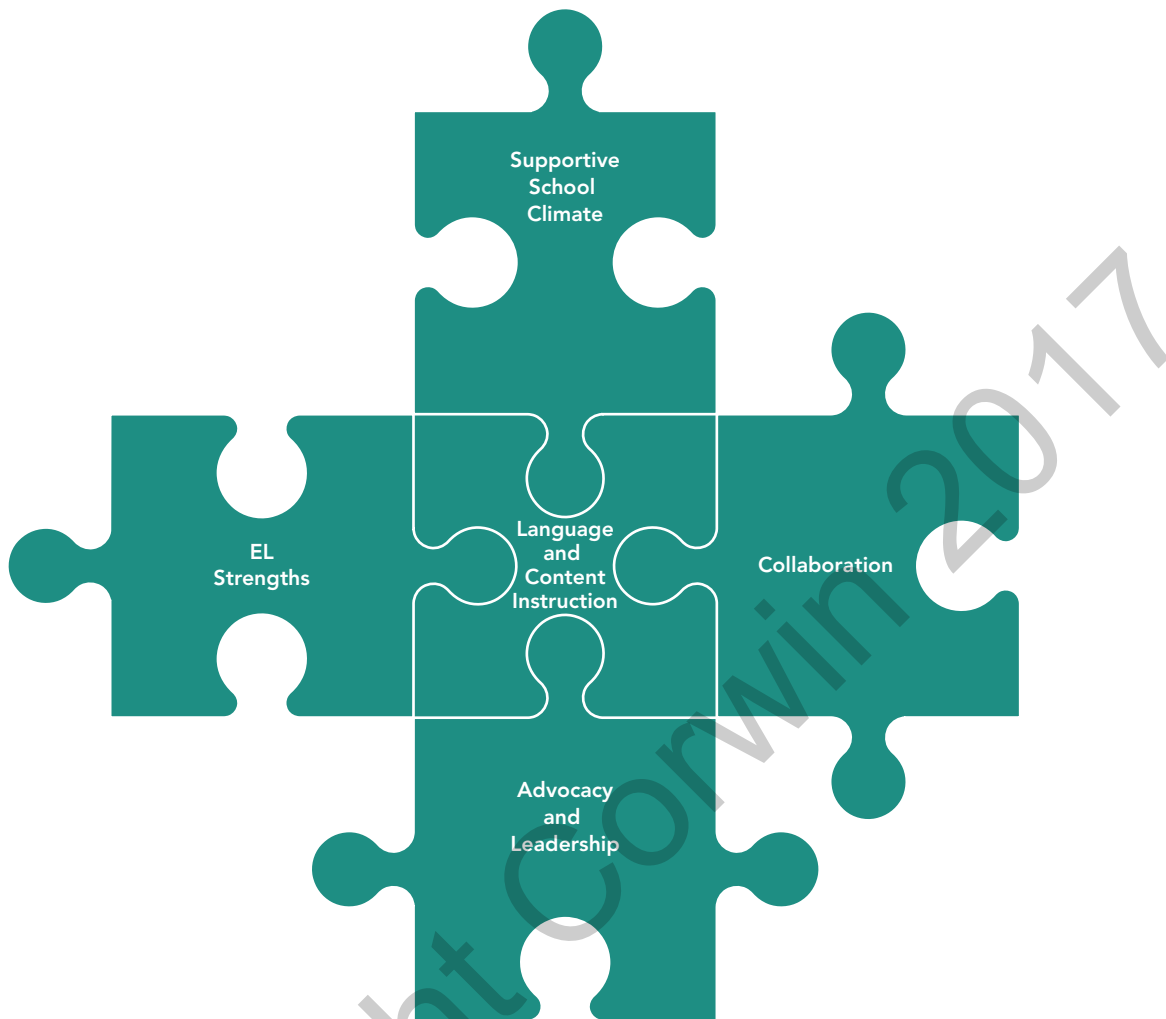
What Is the Sense of Urgency Around ELs' Equitable and Excellent Learning?

Our sense of urgency for this book stems from our synthesis of current research and practice, as well as our taking the pulse of ELs' education in our work with teachers and students across the country. Not only do we recognize the achievement gap that is not going away, but we are also concerned about ELs' and their families' sense of being welcomed and valued members of schools and communities (Ferguson, 2008; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Staehr Fenner, 2014a). When ELs live in families that are struggling economically, as well as with learning English (Staehr Fenner, 2014a), their families' stressors can permeate all aspects of their education and provide an

extra level of anxiety. As educators, it is our duty to promote not only equity but help our ELs reach their potential for excellence.

ELs' equity and excellence go beyond their success inside classroom walls, as assessed by such quantitative measures as test scores and attendance rates. EL equity and excellence extend to our moral obligation as educators to ensure that our ELs, who often navigate complex, conflicting cultural balances between home and school, are supported on a socioemotional, holistic level. ELs must sense that their teachers are providing a safe space in which they can learn and also trust their teachers enough to reach out to them if a personal factor is providing a barrier their learning. At a time in which issues such as immigration and poverty tend to influence ELs in a marked way, we must be especially vigilant and collaborate to provide a support network to embrace our ELs and encourage them to learn and thrive on many levels. While working toward ELs' equity, we must recognize EL students' inherent excellence and strive to unlock it.

As daunting as our charge as educators of ELs may seem on an academic and personal level, it often does not take heroic acts to help ELs feel welcome. One example of supporting ELs on a socioemotional level is an initiative to say ELs' names correctly. Called the "My Name, My Identity" campaign,[2] the National Association for Bilingual Education, the Santa Clara Office of Education, and McGraw-Hill Education have partnered to promote educators pronouncing diverse students' names correctly as a way to support their identities and integration into schools. As educators, we need to be aware of who our ELs are not just academically but also personally in order to develop a plan to recognize and build upon their strengths and meet their needs.

> *What are some ways that you or your school help make ELs and their families feel welcome? What other ideas do you have?*

How Are ELs' Demographics Changing?

Part of understanding who your ELs are begins with having a sense of the larger context for EL education. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, 9.3 percent of students in kindergarten through Grade 12 in the United States are ELs, or an estimated 4.4 million students. Between 2002 and 2003 and 2012 and 2013, thirty-nine states experienced an increase in the percentage of ELs in their public schools (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Eighty-five percent of prekindergarten to fifth-grade ELs

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2. Visit https://www.mynamemyidentity.org.

were born in the United States while 62 percent of sixth- to twelfth-grade ELs were born in the United States (Zong & Batalova, 2015).

Of that 9.3 percent, the top five languages spoken by ELs are Spanish (3,770,816), Arabic (109,170), Chinese (107,825), English (91,669), and Vietnamese (89,705). While it may seem surprising that English is on the list of the top-five languages, there are some cases where English would be reported as the home language. Examples of situations in which English might be reported as an English learner's home language include students who live in multilingual households and students adopted from other countries who speak English at home but also have been raised speaking another language. Although Spanish is the language most often spoken by ELs, five states (Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, Montana, and Vermont) have EL populations whose top language is a language other than Spanish (Migration Policy Institute, 2015).

> *Who are your ELs? What percentage of students in your school or district are ELs? What kind of growth has your school or district experienced over the last 10 years? What languages do your ELs speak?*

What Are ELs' Opportunity and Achievement Gaps?

ELs tend to experience significant opportunity and achievement gaps (NCELA, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). For example, they frequently attend underfunded, under-resourced schools that experience regular teacher turnover. Those students who need the most stability due to the many changes they experience in their lives tend to be confronted with the least. In addition, ELs' achievement scores tend to be lower than those of non-ELs (NCELA, 2015b). Further, ELs experience a disproportionate representation in remedial, special, and gifted education programs. For example, 7 percent of non-ELs are enrolled in gifted and talented programs nationwide, compared with only 2 percent of ELs. (Donovan & Cross, 2002; Zehler et al., 2003). These gaps also extend to EL student retention rates. In Grades K–6, ELs represented 14 percent of students enrolled in public schools nationwide but 18 percent of students retained in 2011–2012. In Grades 9–12, ELs represented 5 percent of students enrolled in public schools nationwide but 11 percent of students held back in 2011–2012 (NCELA, 2015c). Further, wide disparities exist between graduation rates between ELs and non-ELs. Nationwide, 79 percent of all students graduate from high school, compared with 57 percent of ELs, based on data from the 2010–2011 school year, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (Stetser & Stillwell, 2014). There is great variance between and among states in their EL graduation rates. We strongly encourage you to analyze your school or district data to determine what opportunity and achievement gaps exist between your non-ELs and ELs.

What Shifts Have Occurred in Content Standards, and How Do These Affect ELs?

Now that we have situated our work to support ELs within a larger context, we will focus on a major change that has recently occurred that affects ELs' education. States have adopted college and career readiness standards (CCRS), which are rigorous standards in English language arts and mathematics whose goal is preparing all students for college and careers by the time they graduate from high school (U.S. Department of Education, n.d.). Under the umbrella of CCRS are the Common Core State Standards (CCSS).

Over the past few years, many voices of EL teachers, researchers, policy makers, and practitioners have been heard in the discussion of what we should keep in mind when implementing CCRS with ELs. When thinking of what is important when implementing CCRS with ELs at a very high level, we like to ground our thoughts in the three shifts in the CCSS for English language arts and literacy, as defined by Achieve the Core,[3] and adapt those shifts to encompass what *all* teachers must do to support ELs. While we recognize that ELs also take part in CCRS-aligned mathematics instruction, we believe a close examination of how to address the ELA and literacy shifts is a good place to start. In addition, the components of the shifts are transferable to other subject areas. Figure 1.2 provides an overview of the three shifts and what all teachers of ELs must to do support ELs.

What Are the Guiding Principles That We Use to Frame Our Work With ELs and This Book?

In our work supporting ELs and their teachers, we often analyze complex educational issues and try to make sense of them as they apply to ELs (such as the three shifts we detailed earlier), phrasing our findings and recommendations in a way that resonates with educators in different roles. Along those lines, we have developed a set of five guiding principles that synthesize our beliefs, grounded in research and practice, about the education of ELs. You will see these guiding principles exemplified in our recommendations and strategies throughout the chapters of this book. In this chapter, for each guiding principle, we provide an explanation of what

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3. See http://achievethecore.org/page/277/the-common-core-shifts-at-a-glance

FIGURE 1.2 Three Shifts and Teachers of ELs

CCRS for ELA and Literacy Shift	To address this shift, all teachers of ELs must be able to . . .	Strategies That Cut Across All Shifts
1. Regular practice with complex text and its academic language	• Analyze complex texts for academic language that might impede ELs' comprehension • Explicitly teach the academic language necessary to comprehend complex texts so that ELs can draw on these texts to speak and write across content areas • Choose and adapt supplementary texts in English and/or ELs' home language(s) based on ELs' reading level, English language proficiency level, background, and culture • Teach ELs strategies to determine the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary words (e.g., cognates, prefixes, roots, and suffixes) • Teach the meanings of words with multiple definitions, idiomatic expressions, and technical terms	• Collaborate with ESOL teachers to share expertise, plan instruction and assessment, deliver instruction, and revise lesson plans on an ongoing basis • Use English language proficiency and CCRS standards to plan instruction • Scaffold and support instruction for ELs at different proficiency levels • Design appropriate classroom assessments so that ELs can demonstrate what they know and can do
2. Reading, writing, and speaking grounded in evidence from both literary and informational text	• Know students' backgrounds and cultures, and integrate their backgrounds and cultures into instruction • Provide scaffolds and structures so that ELs can cite evidence from different types of text at different levels of complexity and/or in their home language(s) • Create text-dependent questions that are scaffolded for students at different levels of English language proficiency • Teach ELs the academic language necessary so that they can use evidence from literary and informational text in reading, writing, speaking, and listening • Provide ELs with linguistic structures and supports so that they can cite sources, avoid plagiarism, synthesize information from grade-level complex text, and create argumentative and/or persuasive speech and writing	
3. Building knowledge through content-rich nonfiction	• Activate and/or provide an appropriate amount of ELs' background knowledge about the content and structure of nonfiction text • Integrate ELs' background knowledge and culture into instruction to support their comprehension of nonfiction • Teach ELs differences between the structure of informational text and literary text • Draw from ELs' home language reading literacy skills as a support as appropriate • Adapt and/or supplement grade-level complex texts for ELs at lower levels of English language proficiency while also giving them access to scaffolded grade-level text	

that principle means to us, we briefly share the research on which it is based, and we also leave you with reflection questions and practical tools that you can use to support your understanding of the principles as they apply to your context. Our guiding principles are as follows:

1. ELs bring many strengths to the classroom.

2. ELs learn best when they are taught in a welcoming and supportive school climate.

3. ELs should be taught language and content simultaneously.

4. ELs benefit when their teachers collaborate to share their expertise.

5. ELs excel when their teachers leverage advocacy and leadership skills.

Guiding Principle 1: ELs bring many strengths to the classroom.

ELs enter the classroom with a rich background of cultural and linguistic experiences that are often overlooked or underappreciated by their schools and teachers. Teachers and administrators who are not trained in ESOL or bilingual education are more likely to hold "deficit" perceptions of ELs (Baecher, Knoll, & Patti, 2013; Gándara, Maxwell-Jolly, & Driscoll, 2005; Reeves, 2006). In order to effectively educate ELs, it is important to first recognize the set of knowledge and skills that they already have. Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992) refer to these accumulated bodies of knowledge and skills as *funds of knowledge*. ELs' funds of knowledge should be incorporated into instruction, so as to give value to the life experiences of the students and to support their academic learning. For example, a refugee student may enter the U.S. education system with gaps in his or her education due to interrupted schooling, low-level literacy skills, and beginner-level English language proficiency. However, that same student might bring with him or her a strong oral tradition of sharing knowledge, persistence in overcoming obstacles, and creative problem-solving skills. A teacher educating this student should look for ways to build on these strengths as a tool for instruction, such as having oral language activities linked to writing tasks.

Providing ELs opportunities to share their backgrounds, experiences, and ideas benefits other students as well. Listening to and responding to diverse perspectives helps prepare all students to live in a multicultural society and interact with individuals from different backgrounds (Gorski, 2010). In addition, with more states recognizing the value of bilingualism

and biliteracy,[4] ELs can serve as valuable language models for non-ELs studying world languages and in dual-language settings. The growing popularity of dual-language programs, often driven by non-EL parent interest, across the United States has been well documented (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). In such programs, ELs serve as linguistic models for non-ELs who are learning the target language. In addition, ELs can also share cultural and linguistic insights in less formal ways during content instruction. For example, in a discussion on U.S. elections, ELs who were born in countries outside the United States might share what the election process looks like in their home countries. Such straightforward ways to include ELs and highlight their perspectives can go a long way in creating an environment conducive to building their trust and facilitating deeper learning.

What linguistic and cultural strengths do the ELs that you work with bring to your classroom? How do you learn about and build upon these strengths?

Guiding Principle 2: ELs learn best when they are taught in a welcoming and supportive school climate.

A school culture that supports equitable and excellent educational opportunities for ELs includes school-wide beliefs about the potential of ELs, interest in and appreciation for ELs' culture, and the desire to foster positive relationships with the families of ELs. As the leaders of the school, the principals influence this culture in terms of their commitment to the academic success of ELs, how they speak to and about ELs and their families, the types of professional development they offer staff, and how they evaluate teachers' work with ELs (Alford & Niño, 2011; Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). Unfortunately, many school administrators have received insufficient training in how to create a school climate that fully embraces ELs as part of the school community and effectively supports their language and content learning (Staehr Fenner, 2014a). Administrators who are well versed in EL-oriented strengths and dispositions tend to be rare. Most administrators' educational experiences are far removed from ESOL instruction (Shumate, Muñoz, & Winter, 2005). However, in no way do we blame principals for this pervasive lack of training when it comes to ELs.

The principal's role is critical in developing a positive school culture, which includes the values, beliefs, and norms that characterize the school (Deal & Peterson, 2009). In building a school culture that supports high achievement for all ELs, shared beliefs at the school level should include recognition of the benefits of multilingualism, an appreciation of ELs' culture, and the need to overcome stereotypes and a deficit paradigm. The principal influences this culture in serving as a key spokesperson for the school, as an evaluator

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4. State Laws Regarding the Seal of Biliteracy: http://sealofbiliteracy.org.

of practices, and as a model of commitment to student success (Alford & Niño, 2011). While the principal may set the tone in terms of school climate, the teaching staff play a large role in creating a welcoming school culture conducive to supporting ELs and their families. Application Activity 1.1 provides you with an opportunity to reflect on your school climate and whether or not your school uses strategies to help ELs and their families feel welcome.

APPLICATION ACTIVITY 1.1

Action Steps to Create a Welcoming Environment

First, review each of the following strategies found in Figure 1.3 to decide if you are currently making ELs and their families feel welcome in these ways. Then, prioritize three action steps, so you can create a more welcoming environment for ELs and their families.

FIGURE 1.3   EL and Family Welcoming Checklist

EL and Family Welcome Strategy At our school, do we . . .	Yes	No
Display student work on the walls (including work in home languages)?		
Have visible signs in students' home languages?		
Communicate with families in a variety of ways (e.g., information sent home in home language, phone calls, and home visits)?		
Display maps and flags of students' home countries?		
Have a bilingual staff or bilingual volunteers who can meet with families as needed?		
Provide staff opportunities to learn some common phrases in families' home languages and key information about families' cultures?		
Invite EL families to volunteer in the school (e.g., helping in a classroom or being a resource for other families)?		
Provide services that remove barriers that prevent EL families from attending school events (e.g., childcare, interpreters, and transportation)?		
Have bilingual books in students' home languages in the school library and classrooms?		
Connect new families with a contact person who speaks their home language and offer tours of the schools in home languages?		
Host events specifically for EL families (e.g., back-to-school events and international picnics)?		
Have a parent room with bilingual magazines, school information, and a computer for families to use?		

Source: Adapted from Breiseth, L., Robertson, K., & Lafond, S. (2011). *A guide for engaging ELL families: 20 strategies for school leaders.* Washington, DC: Colorín Colorado. Retrieved from http://www.colorincolorado.org/sites/default/files/Engaging_ELL_Families_FINAL.pdf

Action Steps: To make a more welcoming environment for ELs and families of ELs, we will . . .

1.

2.

3.

Guiding Principle 3: ELs should be taught language and content simultaneously.

As we stated earlier in this chapter, the CCRS identify specific language practices that students must engage in as they grapple with new content. In order to assist ELs in meeting challenging content standards, they will need language instruction that closely corresponds to the content they are learning. For example, direct instruction in academic language and language skills that provide a bridge to content standards will bolster ELs' achievement in specific content areas. In addition, language is acquired most effectively when it is taught through meaningful content and includes opportunities for students to practice all four modalities of language learning (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing) using authentic texts and tasks wherever possible. Also, as more districts move toward collaborative, inclusive models of ESOL instruction in which ELs receive language support as part of their content classes, all teachers must learn how to teach language and content in an integrated way. Finally, with teachers' limited time and increasing demands placed on ELs, it is beneficial to maximize instructional time to teach language, as well as content. If you teach both academic language and content, you may find that students who are not ELs may also benefit from your focus on language.

The strategies presented in this book are intended to facilitate the teaching of language and content in tandem by ESOL as well as content teachers. We recognize it can be a challenge to step outside your area of expertise, especially when you may not have received adequate resources or training on teaching ELs. However, we hope that as you work through the chapters and try out the strategies used in this book (ideally, together with a colleague or two), you will gain increasing confidence in how to better support your ELs as they acquire language and content. Since the CCRS call for all teachers to teach academic language and challenging content simultaneously, all teachers must be skilled with new strategies that they can use with their ELs (as well as with their other students) under this new paradigm. Figure 1.4 outlines some—but not all—ways a content and an ESOL teacher can plan and prepare for, teach, and assess lessons that incorporate academic-language instruction along with content instruction.

FIGURE 1.4 Possible Roles of Teachers in Teaching Language and Content

Components of Instruction	Content Teacher	ESOL Teacher	Both
Planning and preparing for the lesson	• Select content • Identify content objectives • Identify content-specific vocabulary and language needed for students to meet content objectives	• Analyze language demands of lesson and texts • Identify language objectives • Develop supporting materials for ELs	• Reach consensus on language objectives • Determine key vocabulary • Decide on strategies for teaching and practicing academic language at sentence and discourse levels
Teaching the lesson	• Incorporate additional opportunities to practice academic language into lesson • Coteach large group of students, embedding scaffolds for ELs	• Work with small groups of ELs as needed to support language development • Coteach large group of students, embedding scaffolds for ELs	• Teach academic vocabulary and language • Teach language-focused minilessons (e.g., compound sentence structure or connecting ideas at discourse level)
Assessing student learning	• Develop assessment of content objectives • Determine scoring mechanism (e.g., rubric or checklist)	• Add assessment of language to assessment of content for ELs • Scaffold assessment as needed for ELs (e.g., word banks, bilingual glossaries, or visuals)	• Determine how ELs will be assessed • Reflect on ELs' assessment results, and determine how to adjust instruction of content and language • Work with ELs needing additional support

Guiding Principle 4: ELs benefit when their teachers collaborate to share their expertise.

The new demands of standards-based instruction call for increased collaboration between ESOL and content teachers (Honigsfeld & Dove, 2010, 2014; TESOL, 2016; Valdés, Kibler, & Walqui, 2014). Not only must the quantity of collaboration increase but also we must pay attention to the quality of the collaboration. In order to strengthen the quality of the collaborative experience, we offer a unique perspective by drawing from Edwards's (2011) framework of distributed expertise. This framework underscores that "building and using common knowledge is an important feature of the relational expertise required for working across the practice boundaries on complex tasks" (p. 33). When teachers successfully collaborate, they are able to leverage their specific expertise in the complex task of supporting of ELs' acquisition of language and content knowledge.

In addition, they can draw on each other's strengths to provide the kind of socioemotional support that is crucial to ELs so that students realize they are welcome and valued members of the classroom and school community.

ESOL teachers can share their knowledge of second language acquisition and language pedagogy and can model strategies that will support content teachers in becoming teachers of language, in addition to teachers of content (Maxwell, 2013; Valdés et al., 2014). Similarly, content teachers can share with ESOL teachers the skills and knowledge that all students, including ELs, will need to be successful in a particular content area. Both types of teachers can support each other in ensuring that ELs' individual personal characteristics (e.g., motivation and learning preferences), as well as their backgrounds (e.g., literacy in the home language and amount and/or quality of previous schooling), are part of the schooling equation.

In order to foster such high-quality collaboration, schools must have a structure in place so that teachers can work together in a systematic and ongoing way and share their expertise with one another. During this time of increased rigor and expectations for ELs, administrators must build time into schedules for collaboration to occur, make it a priority for the entire staff, and ensure it is occurring. If planning time provided by administrators is still insufficient, we recommend that teachers take it upon themselves to creatively look for ways to informally collaborate. In addition, administrators should create structures in which the quality of the collaboration is realized. In this way, all teachers should see themselves as experts in their area of expertise in service of ELs. Application Activity 1.2 provides options to consider when the quantity of coplanning time is limited.

APPLICATION ACTIVITY 1.2

Collaborating With Limited Planning Time

Review each of the options for ESOL and content teacher collaboration when time is limited in Figure 1.5. For each option, determine whether the recommendation is possible to use in your context and what steps you would need to implement it. Add any additional suggestions in the space provided. Then, answer the reflection questions that follow.

FIGURE 1.5 Options for ESOL and Content Teacher Collaboration When Time Is Limited

Option	Consider This Option? (Y/N)	Plan to Implement it
1. Plan online.		
2. Look for informal ways to check in (e.g., during lunch or after school).		
3. Carve out time to plan (begin monthly), and divide the workload.		
4. Identify specific and shared tasks for the ESOL teacher and content teacher to support ELs.		
5. Observe each other teaching, and discuss what you saw.		
6. My/our new idea:		

Discussion Questions

1. Why did you choose the collaboration model or strategy that you did?

2. When and how might you use this model or strategy?

3. What steps do you need to take in order to implement it successfully in your context (i.e., scheduling, planning time, or resources)?

Guiding Principle 5: ELs excel when their teachers leverage advocacy and leadership skills.

Being aware of and using strategies that support ELs' access to content and language is a wonderful start that requires expertise and energy, but it's not enough in order for ELs to experience what it means to have an equitable and excellent education. Because many inequities and injustices still exist for ELs, it's up to educators like you to speak on behalf of those ELs and their families who have not yet developed a strong voice of their own due to their acquisition of English and/or knowledge of the U.S. education system (Staehr Fenner, 2014a). To that end, in each chapter of the book, we include a section on ways in which to draw from your leadership skills to advocate for ELs' equitable education.

Advocating for ELs can sometimes be a daunting task. In order to begin advocating for ELs, it's often helpful to get a sense of what the larger advocacy issues may be to decide which direction your advocacy should take. Figure 1.6 provides an equity audit, which can help you reflect on your context at the school level. Working through this equity audit can support you in deciding which areas of advocacy for ELs present the highest needs. You simply can't take on each injustice simultaneously, and prioritizing the top advocacy issues will help you determine your path forward.

FIGURE 1.6   EL Advocacy Equity Audit

Potential EL Advocacy Issue	Questions to Ask: To What Degree . . .	Response	Action Items
Role of ESOL teacher	Are ESOL teachers working as experts and consultants and collaborating with general-education teachers?	Not at all Somewhat Extensively	
Instructional materials and curriculum	Are instructional materials and curriculum appropriate for ELs?	Not at all Somewhat Extensively	
Professional development	Does professional development focus on preparing *all* teachers to teach academic language and content to ELs?	Not at all Somewhat Extensively	
Assessment	Are teachers aware of demands of content assessments for ELs? Are they using effective formative assessments with ELs?	Not at all Somewhat Extensively	
EL family outreach	Are EL parents and families aware of the school's expectations of all students and supports available to them?	Not at all Somewhat Extensively	
Teacher evaluation and coaching	Is teacher evaluation and coaching for all teachers supporting teachers so that their ELs can access challenging content?	Not at all Somewhat Extensively	

Note: The concept is adapted from Betty J. Alford and Mary Catherine Niño's *equity audit*, which appears in *Leading Academic Achievement for English Language Learners: A Guide for Principals* (Corwin, 2011).

After you have taken the steps to determine which areas of advocacy you might like to prioritize at the school or district level, it's time to consider how you will approach your advocacy. In Figure 1.7, we offer the following EL advocacy steps and implementation suggestions for each step to collaborate and advocate on behalf of ELs.

While it's always beneficial to reflect on your advocacy priorities and steps, in order to effectively advocate for ELs' equitable and excellent learning, you will also need to draw from and, in some cases, develop the necessary leadership skills to do so. With the new roles ESOL and content teachers are taking on in order for their ELs to successfully engage with the CCRS, teachers will also need to leverage a wider range of leadership skills. While many definitions exist, leadership, in general, can be defined as "the process of influencing . . . the behavior of others in order to reach a shared goal" (Northouse, 2007; Stogdill, 1950). To advocate for ELs and support their equitable and excellent education, you have to first increase your awareness of your own leadership skills and build upon those skills to make

FIGURE 1.7   Steps for EL Advocacy and Implementation Suggestions

EL Advocacy Step	Implementation Suggestions for Each Step
1. Begin thoughtfully	Consider all of the areas in which you can advocate for ELs and collaborate to benefit them. Choose one or two areas to focus on in which you have the agency to enact changes, and plan out what your action steps will look like.
2. Build alliances first with those who seem open	Begin by carefully considering colleagues who seem open to working with ELs and supporting them. Approach those colleagues first to ascertain whether they would like to collaborate with you.
3. Demonstrate empathy first	When collaborating with content teachers or administrators, show your empathy for their challenges and frustrations related to working with ELs. Acknowledge those areas they find to be most challenging, such as their comprehension of grade-level texts.
4. Respect educators' expertise	Voice your understanding of their content area expertise so you can leverage it together. Operating within a strengths perspective when it comes to your colleagues (as well as your students) will go a long way.
5. Operate from a strengths-based perspective of ELs	While you acknowledge the challenges ELs may present content teachers and administrators, you may be the lone voice who embodies a strengths-based perspective of ELs. Aim to highlight ELs' contributions to classrooms, such as their home language, culture, and/or families' commitment to education.
6. Showcase EL achievement	Underscore the ways in which ELs make progress, be it academic or social. Often, ELs' progress may not be as apparent or obvious as it is with non-ELs.
7. Offer support and time for collaboration	Suggest concrete ways in which you can offer guidance to other teachers and/or administrators so that they can better serve ELs. Some supports include an ESOL teacher sharing a graphic organizer for ELs with a content teacher or a content teacher sharing a content lesson plan ahead of time with an ESOL teacher.

changes occur. As this is an area that teachers are typically not trained in, administrators need to use their own leadership skills and help develop these skills in their teachers. In our work with ELs, we have seen many educators rise up as leaders who successfully advocate for ELs, serve as allies to ELs, and bring about much-needed changes. It's truly inspiring to witness teachers serve ELs on multiple levels to impact change.

In order to leverage these leadership skills to advocate for ELs, it takes a strong foundation of interpersonal skills, many of which we are not explicitly taught or are not even mentioned in our preparation as educators. These interpersonal skills are increasingly important in today's educational landscape, which relies on more collaboration in order to lead and support ELs' equitable education. Figure 1.8 provides a self-awareness checklist[5] and discussion questions about a sampling of crucial leadership skills that you may need to draw from to advocate for ELs and strengthen your voice as a leader.

5. Adapted from Riggio and Tan (2014).

FIGURE 1.8 Leadership Skills Self-Awareness Checklist

Leadership Skill or Attribute	Description	My Rating: Low (1) to High (5)
Character	The moral self that reflects the principles and ideals of the collective to which the leader belongs, including trustworthiness and credibility	1 2 3 4 5
Political skills	Social astuteness, networking ability, sincerity, integrity, honesty, charisma, and not being seen as manipulative	1 2 3 4 5
Nonverbal communication	Sensitivity to colleagues; use of accepted behaviors, such as nodding; body openness	1 2 3 4 5
Conflict resolution	Managing one's own and others' emotional experiences, establishing norms and rules, and refocusing on tasks at hand	1 2 3 4 5
Interpersonal skills	Relationship development, trust, intercultural sensitivity, providing feedback, motivating and persuading others, empathy, and support	1 2 3 4 5
Interpersonal communication skills	Skill in sending and receiving nonverbal and emotional messages, listening and speaking skills, and effectively engaging others in conversation	1 2 3 4 5

Source: Adapted from Riggio, R. & Tan, S. (2014). *Leader interpersonal and influence skills: The soft skills of leadership.* New York: Routledge.

1. What area(s) am I strongest in?
2. What area(s) am I weakest in?
3. What is one example of how each leadership skill affects my work with ELs?
4. What implications are there for my leadership in advocating for and supporting ELs?

How Do I Get Started Using All Five Guiding Principles?

The following three-step application activity will support you to analyze our five guiding principles, draw from them to create your own guiding principles, create a vision for your school or district's equitable and excellent instruction of ELs, and culminate the process by developing an elevator speech for your role in ensuring ELs' equitable education. We find in our work that we have very precious little time to reflect on where we are in order to plan for where we'd like to go. This application activity will give you the gift of space for reflection. First, you will compare our guiding principles with your own. If you don't already approach your work with ELs from a set of guiding principles, this application activity will allow you the time and place for reflection in order to develop your own guiding principles. Then, you will use your vision to create a succinct elevator speech to define your role and accountability in the process. By doing so, you will use this chapter's contents to create an aligned framework to support your work with ELs that will guide you as you work through the subsequent chapters.

APPLICATION ACTIVITY 1.3

Step 1. Using Figure 1.9, review the book's five guiding principles, compare them with your own, and add any comments you have.

FIGURE 1.9 Comparison of Guiding Principles

Book's Guiding Principle	My/Our Guiding Principle	Comments
1. ELs bring many strengths to the classroom.		
2. ELs learn best when they are taught in a welcoming and supportive school climate.		
3. ELs should be taught language and content simultaneously.		
4. ELs benefit when their teachers collaborate to leverage their expertise.		
5. In order for ELs to have an equitable education, teachers need to develop advocacy and leadership skills.		

Step 2. Drawing from your own guiding principles, create a vision for educating ELs in your school.

Your school or district needs to have a vision so that all stakeholders can share a common direction and destination in order to align their improvement efforts (Gabriel & Farmer, 2009). We suggest convening a group of educators committed to ELs' equitable and excellent education to develop a shared vision statement for your school or district. You may need to meet several times to revise and refine the vision statement, but your work will certainly pay off. For example, the Fairfax County (Virginia) Public Schools' ESOL Department vision reads:

ESOL services prepares students to be college and career ready by developing proficiency in the English language. ESOL services help students achieve academic success, develop critical thinking skills, and solve problems.[6]

To create your vision, consider these questions:

1. Which aspects of your guiding principles from Figure 1.9 resonate the most with you?

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6. See https://www.fcps.edu/academics/academic-overview/english-speakers-other-languages-esol.

2. What content from your guiding principles can you synthesize into succinct key ideas, values, and beliefs regarding equitably educating ELs?

Step 3. Referring to your vision for equitably educating ELs, outline a brief elevator speech that defines your role in the process.

One way for ESOL and content teachers to reflect upon their roles and effectively explain them to others is to develop an *elevator speech*, which is a concise summary of a topic—so concise that it can be delivered during a short elevator ride (Staehr Fenner, 2014b). We recommend limiting your elevator speech to about thirty seconds. ESOL and content teachers can also use it as a tool to clearly define the expertise they bring in serving ELs in their school within their school vision and explain it to administrators. The elevator speech you develop corresponds to your guiding principles and school or district vision for educating ELs. It should outline how you see your role shifting and the unique skills you leverage in supporting your ELs' equitable and excellent education. To develop your elevator speech, consider these questions:

1. What aspects of your school or district's vision resonate the most with you?

2. In which aspects can you take a lead role to equitably educate ELs so that they excel?

Once your elevator speech draft is complete, compare yours with that of your colleagues to ensure you're creating a framework of distributed expertise to support ELs. You may need to revise your elevator speech periodically as your skills with working with ELs evolve.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we shared why it is crucial to equitably instruct ELs so that their potential for excellence is unlocked. We began with a brief review of EL demographics and shared relevant information on the EL opportunity and achievement gaps. Next, we detailed the implications for all teachers of ELs due to the shifts in the CCRS. The bulk of the chapter was devoted to our five guiding principles. For each principle, we described relevant research, as well as provided practical tools for you to use to apply the principles. Finally, we gave you the opportunity to draw from our five principles to create your own guiding principles, a school or district vision, and develop your own personalized elevator speech, which outlines your crucial role in supporting ELs. In the next chapter, we focus on learning about and incorporating ELs' home languages and cultures into instruction.

Reflection Questions

1. Which guiding principles resonated the most with you? Why?

2. What are your three takeaways from this chapter? Why?

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