

HCPS EL Newsletter



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Did You Know?

Basic facts regarding English Learners (ELs):

- ELs are the fastest-growing student population in the country.
- MD has experienced a 94% growth of ELs in the past decade.
- Nationwide, more than 70% of ELs speak Spanish.
- HCPS averages an addition of between 200-250 ELs each year.
- Most EL students are NOT immigrants. They are U.S. citizens.
- It takes an EL between 5-7 years to acquire academic language.



What is English Language Proficiency? Are there standards to consider when working with ELs?

English Proficiency is a student's ability to use the English language to make and communicate meaning in spoken and written contexts while completing their program of study.



Quick Tips For Classroom Teachers

- Provide opportunities for students to practice activities/lesson contents.
- Model what you would like students to do.
- Explicitly teach vocabulary.
- Backwards map when lesson planning.
- Use visuals when possible.
- Use small group work with established roles.
- Add word banks to written activities.
- Give both oral and written directions.
- Allow students to demonstrate their understanding in multiple ways (oral responses, labeling, drawing, acting out, etc.)

Did You Know, cont.

- Providing translations of texts, papers, videos, etc. should NOT be the solution for EL students. Because many of our students are NOT literate in their native language, providing then translated texts will not help them. Additionally, we must remember that we assess what we teach...how will we know if the student understands if we do not assess in their language or directly teach them in their native language?
- EVERY person has the ability to work with EL students. We just have to remember to differentiate and scaffold instruction based upon the student's identified English proficiency and WIDA CAN-DO statements.



Building Background Knowledge

In order to maximize your instructional time on new content, assessing your ELs' background knowledge to gauge your students' level of familiarity on a certain topic can provide valuable insight for lesson planning.

You will need to figure out how much ELs already know about a topic or text prior to your teaching it so you can determine whether to activate prior knowledge, build new background, or do a combination of both.

The framework highlighted consists of (4) sequential steps and takes place within a context of collaboration among teachers. It is important that you remember that not all background knowledge is created equal in terms of relevance when it comes to lesson planning and instruction.

Step 1: Assess

Determine amount of background knowledge ELs already have on a topic or text.

Step 2: Select

Decide which background knowledge is essential to provide ELs access to the topic or text.

Step 3: Activate

Activate prior background knowledge ELs already possess.

Step 4: Teach

Concisely teach ELs new background knowledge.

The initial assessment of the background knowledge should be seamlessly woven into instruction and should be informal in nature. Manners in which to assess may include: oral discussions, anticipation guides, checklists, word sorts, opinionnaires, cloze assessments, caption writing, and self-ratings.

Unlocking English Learners' Potential (2017)



Building Background Strategies to try:

Close Reading
Carousel Brainstorming
Sentence Frames
Sentence Starters
Sticky Notes
Read Aloud
Pair-Share Chart
Pretest
Word Clouds
Word Sorts
Contextualizing Vocab
Word Walls
Concept Map
Word Study
KWL Charts
Quickwrites
Anticipation Guide
Visuals
Fieldtrips
Preparatory Texts
Flip Books
Concept Sort
Play it Again
Questioning
Cognates
Brainstorming
Analogies
Create Curiosity
Preview Material
Personalize
SSR
Direct Vocab. Instruction
Essential Terms
Descriptions

Proficiency- Continued

Each of the five WIDA English language proficiency standards encompasses four language domains that define how ELLs process and use language:

- Listening- process, understand, interpret, and evaluate spoken language in a variety of situations
 - Speaking- engage in oral communication in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes and audiences
 - Reading- process, understand, interpret, and evaluate written language, symbols and text with understanding and fluency
 - Writing- engage in written communication in a variety of situations for a variety of purposes and audiences
- The ELP standards are arranged by grade level cluster, by framework, by standard, and by language domain.

The five language proficiency levels outline the progression of language development in the acquisition of English as an additional language, from 1, Entering the process, to 6, Reaching the end of the continuum.

The language proficiency levels delineate expected performance and describe what ELLs can do within each language domain of the standards for designated grade level clusters.

Standard 1 English language learners communicate for Social and Instructional purposes within the school setting.

Standard 2 English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Language Arts.

Standard 3 English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Mathematics.

Standard 4 English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Science.

Standard 5 English language learners communicate information, ideas and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of Social Sciences.

<https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/WIDA-ELD-Standards-Framework-2020.pdf>