

Support for English Language Learners

Center on Instruction

English language learners (ELLs) face a unique set of educational challenges due to the central role played by academic language proficiency in the acquisition and assessment of content-area knowledge. Proficiency in academic language improves ELLs' ability to comprehend and analyze texts, write and express themselves effectively, and acquire and demonstrate academic content knowledge across all areas (Dressler, 2006). Therefore, effective instruction of ELLs must attend to their need to develop proficient academic language skills in English (Francis et al., 2006).

Action Principles

For State

1. Provide technical assistance and professional development to school districts and school personnel as they select and implement curricula as well as instructional models and programs that best fit the needs of their ELL population.

For District

1. Provide technical assistance to schools on a) how to capitalize on ELLs' proficiency in first-language literacy to help them acquire a second language and content knowledge, b) how to make data-based decisions that would facilitate the alignment between instructional needs and the learning environment, and c) how to implement effective use of linguistic accommodations as they acquire English language proficiency.

For School

1. Provide instruction of academic language that is direct, explicit, and systematic.
2. Curricula must include guided instruction in vocabulary (including the multiple meanings of many English words), sentence structure, and syntax as well as the organization of expository paragraphs, the function of transition words and phrases, and the range of words that appear more often in text than in oral conversation (Gersten et. al., 2007; Rivera et. al., 2008; Torgesen et. al., 2007).

References and Resources

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