English Language Learners
A Diverse Group of Learners

Information for the Classroom Teacher
Objectives

- To understand who English Language Learners (ELLs) are
- To learn more about the state and federal mandates that guide ELL programs
- To obtain information about ELLs in CT & Bristol
- To discover how you can facilitate learning for ELLs in your class
- To find out where you can access more information
Who is an ELL?

A student who:

- Has a first language other than English.
- Is in the process of learning English.
- Needs additional support to acquire language and learn grade level content.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>English Language Learner (Term used in CT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LEP</td>
<td>Limited English Proficient (Term used by federal govt)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language (Term used to describe programs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESOL</td>
<td>English for Speakers of Other Languages (same as ESL)</td>
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</table>
Read this to yourself to experience how an ELL student may feel:

Despite often difficult smerds, the lower delta people have their flaps of schats. They enjoy market days and various takloops. Many of these celebrations have their toops in ancient collian traditions. One of the most popular takloops is the Alacitas Fair. It is blod to honor Ekeko, the Alacitas god of blap fortune. Small strets of this tristyare sold in the thropheet. Each figure is wust sath tiny goods. They include nil the things that a lower delta may want or need – a snupy nick of absop or wigar, a car, two whurds, a television set, house or cow.
How did you do?

- Did you find comprehension more difficult?
- It wasn’t as easy as those paragraphs that are simply missing vowels or consonants.
- Did you notice there were many words that you did not know, even context did not help you?
- For an ELL student to understand any paragraph, many strategies may be required, depending on his/her proficiency in English, acquisition of reading strategies, and background knowledge.
How much do you know about ELLs?

Let’s take a look at some common misconceptions about English Language learners.
ELLs learn English easily and quickly simply by being exposed to and surrounded by native English speakers.

FACT: Learning a second language takes time and significant intellectual effort on the part of the learner. Learning a second language is hard work; even the youngest learners do not simply “pick up” the language.
Debunking the MYTHS - # 2

When ELLs are able to converse comfortably in English, they have developed proficiency in the language.

**FACT:** It can take 6-9 years for ELLs to achieve the same levels of proficiency in academic English as native speakers. Moreover, ELLs participating in thoughtfully designed programs of bilingual or sheltered content instruction remain in school longer and attain significantly higher rates of academic achievement in comparison to students without such advantages.
Debunking the MYTHS - # 3

In earlier times immigrant children learned English rapidly and assimilated into American life.

**FACT:** Many immigrant students during the early part of this century did not learn English quickly or well. Many dropped out of school to work in jobs that did not require the kinds of academic achievement and communication skills that substantive employment opportunities require today.
How would you respond to these statements?

True or False

__  1. Students should be strongly encouraged to speak English from the first day of school.

__  2. Parents of English language learners should be encouraged to speak as much English at home as possible.

(Both are FALSE)
How would you respond to these?

True or False

3. Students need to receive ESL support for at least two or more years in order to be able to demonstrate significant growth in English.

4. Understanding who my ELL student is and his/her culture is beneficial to learning outcomes.

5. Which is the most significant variable as to the length of time it takes for a student to learn English?
   A.) education of an ELL student’s parents  B.) amount of time in an ELL program  C.) amount of formal schooling received in the first language

Answers: 3 & 4 are True; 5-C
Research shows…

- There is clear evidence that tapping into first-language literacy can confer advantages to English-language learners. Moreover, the research indicates that instructional programs work when they provide opportunities for students to develop proficiency in their first language.

- Parents should be speaking their native language until they are proficient in English.

- The amount of formal schooling received in the first language is the most significant variable for the amount of time it takes for a student to learn English.
Research also shows…

- It takes two or more years of ESL support for students to demonstrate any significant growth in English acquisition.
- And finally…if a teacher attempts to make a personal connection with their ELL students and learn/share something of their culture, the learning outcomes are higher.
What’s happening in CT?

- The dominant language for nearly one in every seven students is a language other than English.

- Public school students (K-12) speak a total of 161 different dominant languages.

- Over the last 5 years, the number of students whose dominant language is English decreased while those who speak a non-English language increased.

Source: CT Data Bulletin, 2007
Connecticut ELL Trend Data

In the U.S., by 2030, 40% of students in the U.S. will speak a language other than English in their homes.

Figure 1: ELL Students (Grades K-12), 2003-04 to 2007-08 School Years
How does Bristol look?

- Three percent of Bristol’s students are identified ELLs.
- In addition, three of the twelve schools meet criteria as Bilingual schools. (Bilingual designation means having 20 or more students with the same dominant language)
- The dominant language of these schools is Spanish.
- Bristol employs six full-time ESOL teachers (2 are bilingual) and three ESL tutors (certified teachers), to service 225-275 students per year.
What are the challenges facing school districts regarding ELL programs?
Crucial ELL issues

• Improving current procedures and practices for ensuring proper identification of ELL students;

• Increasing the number and quality of ELL teachers. Examining reasons for the number of bilingual teaching vacancies and implications of the aging of bilingual and TESOL teachers as the number of ELL students increases;

• Monitoring reasons for the rapid increase in the number of ELL students also identified as special education; and

• Improving curriculum and pedagogy to ensure that ELL students meet academic standards and attain proficiency standards, particularly in light of NCLB requirements of all students demonstrating proficiency by 2013-14.
Federal and CT Law Requires that a district **MUST:**

- Identify ELLs
- Provide Equal Access to Education
- Provide Quality Instruction
- Ensure Teacher Quality
- Assess ELL Students
Identify ELLS

All incoming ELLs must be assessed within one month of entrance at the start of the school year or within two weeks if students enter later in the school year.

Use “Home Language Survey” on registration form to inform next steps

English Proficiency test (within one month of entrance at the start of the school year or within 2 weeks) determines if student is not proficient in English language.

Identify on state PSIS report and qualify for Title III grant funding.
ELL Identification Information

- For specific information on our Identification procedures, go to our website at [www.bristol.k12.ct.us/ell](http://www.bristol.k12.ct.us/ell).
- Forms are available in English and Spanish.
- Parents of ELL students must be provided information on test results and approve placement in any ELL Support program.
- This is similar to Special Education consent.
Legal Federal Requirements include:

1964: Civil Rights Act
1974: Equal Education Opportunities Act
1974: Supreme Court case - Lau vs. Nichols

“...there is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.”

Under Lau vs. Nichols, “The Supreme Court stated that school systems must take action to see that LEP students are able to benefit from an education in English.”

Provide Quality Instruction

- Content, language and classroom assessments should be adapted to students’ individual language levels.
- Vocabulary needs to be explicitly taught with many opportunities for interaction.
- Students’ first language and cultural experiences should be validated, respected, and shared.

Instruction in the key components of reading is necessary - but not sufficient - for teaching language-minority students to read and write proficiently in English. Oral proficiency in English is critical as well—but student performance suggests that it is often overlooked in instruction for ELLs.

NCLB 2001: Ensure Teacher Quality and Annual Assessment

- All teachers of ELLs must be certified and qualified to teach ELLs.
- All ELLs must be assessed annually in English language proficiency (i.e. LAS Links) and Reading, Writing, Math, and Science (i.e. DRA2, CMT, CAPT).
- Students meet exit criteria when they are proficient on LAS Links and state content assessments.
What does ELL Support mean in the Bristol Schools?

ELL Support is a separate class in which students are taught the four essential skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, through a BOE approved curriculum (check BOE Intranet).
Based on the CT ELL Frameworks, the three main objectives of the ELL program are:

1. To use English to communicate effectively in social settings,
2. To use English to achieve in academic settings, and
3. To use English in culturally appropriate ways
Types of ELL Support in Bristol

- Pull-out services: Students come out of their regular class for ELL support in small groups.
- Inclusion: The ELL staff goes into the classroom to provide support.
- Sheltered Instruction: Co-teaching a content-area class with ESOL & regular education staff (typically seen at the high school)
- Consult or Monitor: ELL staff track academic progress through progress reports or consult with classroom teacher or guidance
Are all ESL teachers bilingual?

NO. There are two kinds of certification-bilingual and TESOL.
Bilingual teachers utilize their proficiency in both languages to support students. In districts where academic subjects are offered in the dominant native language, bilingual teachers work with content area &/or grade level teachers.

TESOL: Use English and effective teaching strategies to support their ELL students.
Role of the ESL Staff

- ESL staff must identify and collaborate with classroom teachers to increase and improve the receptive and expressive English language skills of their students.
- ESL staff DO NOT tutor students or assist with projects or homework at the request of classroom teachers.
- ESL staff co-teach in specific content areas in some schools.
- ESL staff adhere to a board approved curriculum related to the LAS Links-Annual Spring Assessment.
What can teachers do to facilitate learning in their classrooms for our English Language Learners?
MAKE a CONNECTION

- Many of our ELL students come to the U.S. from various countries, for different reasons, with a range of educational experiences & sometimes without parents.

- KNOW your ELL student’s “story”; Find out information about their native country.

- BUT…start with a welcoming.
Some Basics:

- LOOK in your student’s CUM folder for the ESL file. It contains test information for each year a child is in ELL support.
- LOOK for the LAS Links Modifications Sheet for your ELL student. It will provide helpful start-up information.
- It is important to understand the difference between BICS & CALPS, so you don’t jump to the wrong conclusion.
BICS vs CALPS
(Jim Cummins)

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS):

- Language skills needed in daily social situations – on the playground, in the café, etc
- Context embedded, (occur in a meaningful social context), cognitively not demanding.
- Usually develop within six months to two years after arrival in the U.S.
- REMEMBER: Good social English does not mean academically English proficient!
BICS vs CALPS
(Jim Cummins)

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALPS):

- Formal academic learning- includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing about subject area content material.
- This level of language learning is essential for students to succeed in school. Students need time and support to become proficient in academic areas.
- This usually takes from five to seven years.
- Recent research (Thomas & Collier, 1995) has shown that if a child has no prior schooling or has no support in native language development, it may take seven to ten years for ELLs to catch up to their peers.
Adaptations = Modifications

- ELL students are required to meet the same graduation requirements as other students.
- As previously mentioned, Content, language and classroom assessments must be adapted to students’ individual language levels.
- The ELL staff can answer your questions.
Challenges:

- Children may not have any adults who speak English in their environment.
- Parents or adults may not read to them in English or their first language.
- Parents or adults may not have time to speak with and read to them.
- They may not have books in either their first or second language.
Enhancing Vocabulary Instruction

- **Vocabulary** needs to be explicitly taught with many opportunities for **interaction**.
- Interaction means MORE student talk, more modeling and elaboration from peers or the teacher.
- CONSTANT review – use flashcards
- One knows a vocabulary word when you can draw it, tell the definition, give an example & use it in a meaningful sentence.
Remember, Marzano?

**VOCABULARY RESEARCH**

Four Principles to Guide Effective Instruction:

1. Students must encounter in context more than once to learn them.
2. Instruction in new words enhances learning those words in context.
3. One of the best ways to learn a new word is to associate an image with it.
4. Directly teach students words that are critical to their understanding of new context.

Marzano2001
Vocabulary Strategies for ELLs

Beginner ELLs
(score Level 1 on the LAS Links)

USE Some of these Strategies:

**DRAW a PICTURE** – visual match if unable to write words

**Word Wall** – Highlight words from a class word wall in yellow to indicate which words students should study

**Three column chart** – such as a KWL chart or create your own

**Graphic Organizers** – Keep it simple
[http://everythingesl.net/inservices/graphic_organizers.php](http://everythingesl.net/inservices/graphic_organizers.php)

**Personal Dictionaries** – Students to keep words they need to learn and words they’ve learned in a binder so as to track progress and stay focused/organized.

**Dictation** - using content vocabulary within simple sentences.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What I knew......</th>
<th>What I now know......</th>
<th>What I still don’t know......</th>
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<tr>
<th>What I know........</th>
<th>What I don’t know......</th>
<th>What I wish I knew.........</th>
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<tr>
<th>Most important....</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Not important at all....</th>
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<tr>
<th>Already know........</th>
<th>Want to know....</th>
<th>Learned....</th>
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<tr>
<th>In reading vocab...can read, use in writing &amp; use in discussion</th>
<th>In reading vocab...can read, but don’t use it...</th>
<th>Never heard/saw it before</th>
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</table>
Vocabulary Strategies for ELLs

**Intermediate ELLs**  
(score Level 2 or 3 on LAS Links)

**Word Wall** – Highlight words from a class word wall to indicate which words students should study.

**Word Sort Method** – Use a word splash. Students list all words they can think of related to a given topic. They then categorize the words and label the groupings. Students must be able to offer a rationale for groupings.

**Graphic Organizers** – Should be more complex than those beginners are using.

**Word Generation** – Review of new content vocabulary. Teach meanings of root words, prefixes and suffixes when relevant.

**Concept Definition Map** – Word/concept in the middle, questions… What is it (the unknown word in the middle)? What is it like? What are some examples? (see example of concept definition map at right)

- What is global warming?
- Does everybody agree that global warming exists?
- Global Warming
- What are some effects of global warming?
- What can our school community do to help our environment?
Vocabulary Strategies for ELLs

**Advanced ELLs**
(score Level 4 or 5 on LAS Links)

**Word Wall** – Highlight words from a class word wall in orange to indicate which words students should study.

**Frayer Method** – Students list as many attributes of the word as they can think of, then cross out those that are not essential. The remaining essential attributes will help define the new word.


**Graphic Organizer** – Should be same as those used in mainstream classes.

**Vocabulary Self-Selection** – After reading a content text, students self-select vocabulary that they think is essential to understanding the content concepts.

**Cloze Sentences** – Teacher chooses a sentence that has a strong contextual support for vocabulary focus word. Possible replacement words are brainstormed. Teacher assists students in choosing correct word.
WAIT TIME

WAIT TIME is the most often recommended. However, it is seldom used correctly with ELL students.

When waiting, count to 5 slowly; then, if needed, give student a visual clue or first word, fill-in blank & don’t forget some encouragement!
Use of Native Language

- When possible, use the native language of the ELL student to assist in learning content material.
- If you don’t speak the native language of the student…you might allow a proficient English speaker who also speaks the same language as your ELL student to translate content material for him/her (just don’t overuse or abuse this advantage)
- Utilize word-to-word dictionaries. There are online resources to provide translation on the district’s website.
Who are your students?

Perhaps the majority are Hispanic. Even if that is true, there are so many variations among the Hispanic population that you really need to know which country your students come from. Someone from Columbia may respond differently than someone from Puerto Rico to a particular way of teaching. Knowing your students will also help you understand their behavior (i.e., interaction with you, peers, etc.) and will help you adapt your teaching style to it.
Create a RISK-free Classroom

ELL students need predictability, routine and structure. They also need many opportunities to engage in oral language, but they will not do so unless they feel like the environment supports the making of mistakes. Small group, structured opportunities for learning are very beneficial for ELL students.
CLEAR & HIGH Expectations

- Have high expectations for your ELL students
- Make sure that your expectations are clear from the onset (simple words & if needed, use visuals or gestures)
- Confirm that the student understands - model, then ask to repeat or draw or write.
Modeling & Discovery

Use a discovery or hands-on model of teaching for ELL students.

ELL students tend to understand stated objectives after they have gone through a lesson and “discovered” the lesson for themselves.
Figurative Language

- Model appropriate language in short sentences to start & provide visuals to demonstrate verb or subject or specific concept.
- Avoid idioms unless a clear visual depiction of the idiom is available
- An example of a common yet confusing idiom might be, “We’re running behind today!”
- Pair students with appropriate peer role models for group work/cooperative learning.
Tiered Question Technique

- Ask tiered questions.
- With new ELLs, simple prompts to point or show are appropriate.
- With limited ELLs, expand prompts that elicit phrase or sentence responses.
- Just because ELL students may not speak English well, does not mean that they are incapable of thinking through a problem.
- Design activities that promote higher order thinking skills.
- Use the following charts as guidelines as you plan appropriate questioning for ELLs.
# Stages of Second Language Acquisition

## Links to Tiered Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage Proficiency Level</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Approx. Time Frame</th>
<th>Tiered Questions (Prompts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Preproduction LASLinks 1 BEGINNER | The student  
• Has minimal comprehension  
• Does not verbalize  
• Nods “Yes” and “No”  
• Draws and points  
• May experience silent period | 0-6 months | • Show me…  
• Circle the…  
• Where is …?  
• Who has…? |
| Early Production LASLinks 2 BEGINNER | The student  
• Has limited comprehension  
• Produces one- or two-word responses  
• Participates using key words and familiar phrases  
• Uses present-tense verbs | 6 months-1 year | • Yes/no questions  
• Either/or questions  
• Who, what and how many questions |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Approx. Time Frame</th>
<th>Tiered Questions (Prompts)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speech Emergence</strong></td>
<td>The student</td>
<td>1-3 years</td>
<td>• Why…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Has good comprehension</td>
<td></td>
<td>• How…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LASLinks 3</strong></td>
<td>• Can produce simple sentences</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Explain…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTERMEDIATE</strong></td>
<td>• Makes grammar and pronunciation errors</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Questions requiring a phrase or short-sentence answers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Frequently misunderstands jokes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intermediate Fluency</strong></td>
<td>The student</td>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>• What would happen if…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LASLinks 4</strong></td>
<td>• Has excellent comprehension</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Why do you think…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ADVANCED</strong></td>
<td>• Makes few grammatical errors</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Questions requiring more than a one sentence response.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advanced Fluency</strong></td>
<td>The student has a near-native level of speech.</td>
<td>5-7 years</td>
<td>• Decide if…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LASLinks 5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Retell…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tiered Prompts - Beginners

Appropriate Tiered Prompts when asking questions of Beginner Level ELLs are……

- Show me……
- Circle the……
- Where is……
- Who has…..?
- Yes/No questions
- Either/or questions
- Who, what and how many questions

* Color Code for Beginner Level is Yellow.*
Tiered Prompts - Intermediate

Appropriate Tiered Prompts when asking questions of Intermediate Level ELLs are......

- Why......?
- How......?
- Explain..?
- Questions requiring a phrase or short-sentence answers

* Color Code for Intermediate Level is Blue. *
Tiered Prompts - Advanced

Appropriate Tiered Prompts when asking questions of **Advanced Level** ELLs are…….

- What would happen if…..?
- Why do you think…..?
- Questions requiring more than a one sentence response
- Decide if…….
- Retell…….

* Color Code for Advanced Level is Orange. *

* Note – Question prompts are suggestions. Students should NOT be asked questions based solely on language ability level. Rather, students should regularly be challenged by being asked questions throughout each level. If you are unsure of your students’ language ability level, please ask your building ELL teacher for clarification.
Reading Routine

The following routine incorporates many of Marzano’s effective teaching strategies promoted by Bristol.

For children in the upper elementary grades, try beginning the year with this routine – Read the first selection from a textbook aloud with students. It is a good idea to put this first passage on transparencies so that students have one point of focus while you are teaching. You will be modeling reading strategies and talking through how you are drawing conclusions, pronouncing difficult words, using context clues, making inferences and using the features of nonfiction texts (headings, captions, diagrams etc.) to enhance comprehension as you read. You will be able to elicit participation from students and gain a better understanding of the background knowledge of your students.

From this routine, students should be taught more elaborate strategies, i.e. summarizing & note taking, etc.
Key Points - SUMMARY

- Objectives must be clear and meaningful to students
- Learning must be relevant to students’ lives – “connections”
- Lessons must be engaging
- Hands-on lessons drive home the point well
- Students need to talk in order to practice oral and listening skills
- Your speech/delivery should be somewhat slower
- Wait time should be longer
- Rephrase frequently and constantly check for understanding by asking questions that require more than a one word answer.
- Assessments – Use a variety
Links for Content Area Teachers

- A webcast, **English Language Learners and Academic Language**, Colorin’ Colorado
  (To view, copy and paste the address in your web browser.)
  [http://www.colorincolorado.org/webcasts/academiclanguage](http://www.colorincolorado.org/webcasts/academiclanguage)

- Also, visit [http://www.schoolsmovingup.org](http://www.schoolsmovingup.org) for upcoming and archived webinars on a variety of topics.

- Visit [www.edweek.org/go/qc09](http://www.edweek.org/go/qc09) for a special report on English Language Learners in American Schools.

- Literacy Instruction in the Content Areas - **Author**: Heller, R., Greenleaf, C.- **Publication Date**: 2007 – a short publication [http://www.all4ed.org/publications/LiteracyContent/LitCon.pdf](http://www.all4ed.org/publications/LiteracyContent/LitCon.pdf)

- * Note – Each site except edweek.org is free to use and/or join. *
Bristol’s English Language Learners’ Program contains helpful links to websites appropriate for teachers, parents and students. Go to: www.bristol.k12.ct.us/ell.

- BOE Intranet Website:
  [http://intranet.bristol.k12.ct.us/docs/CD/home.cfm](http://intranet.bristol.k12.ct.us/docs/CD/home.cfm)

for grade level specific curriculum as pertaining to English Language Learners.

- For information on Making Content Comprehensible – SIOP Model Sheltered Instruction and various vocabulary/language based related strategies.
  [http://www.misd.net/bilingual/ELL.pdf](http://www.misd.net/bilingual/ELL.pdf)
Vocabulary Strategies - Links

- Word Sort –

- Word Splash –

- Frayer Model –
  http://www.longwood.edu/staff/jonescd/projects/educ530/aboxley/pdffiles/2.pdf

- Concept Map-
  http://www.graphic.org/concept.html

- Word Walls-
  http://www.teachingfirst.net/wordwallact.htm
Reflection

- Now that you are aware of the District’s ELL website and resources, what further information might you require?
- How will you welcome your ELL students into your classroom?
- What actions will you take to create a risk-free classroom?
- How will you establish a cooperative learning environment for both your ELLs and peers to learn at their appropriate levels?
- How will you react when your ELL student uses his/her native language to express a need/want?
- Based on the information presented on vocabulary, how will you further enhance the strategies you plan to use to teach vocabulary to your ELL students?
Want to know more?

Contact your building ELL teacher or

Maria Groody, ELL Supervisor
Bristol Public Schools

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