



# Supporting English Language Learners in the Content Areas

## Why go this route?

English Language Learners (ELLs) need to develop their English language skills to be successful in general education classrooms where English is the medium of instruction. By understanding the English language proficiency level, first language literacy, cultural influences, learning strategies, prior schooling and academic knowledge base of the ELLs in your school, you are able to:

- Determine appropriate classes/course placement;
- Identify and utilize support services/resources;
- Prepare staff to differentiate instruction and assessment for ELLs;
- Identify instructional materials to support course curriculum; and
- Develop an instructional plan to transition students successfully into mainstream classrooms and course work.

## You'll know you've arrived when...

- Students demonstrate progress in developing accurate listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in English in academic as well as social settings;
- Students are able to learn challenging content in all subjects;
- Students have become independent learners in content classrooms;
- Students are able to participate meaningfully and demonstrate learning successfully in academic classes;
- Staff differentiate instruction and assessment considering an ELL's level of English language proficiency;
- Staff expect that ELLs actively participate in content area classes throughout the entire curriculum; and
- All instructional staff hold high expectations for ELLs.

## Construction Zone

- This packet is designed to help study groups of general education staff committed to on-going professional development to support English Language Learners to achieve academically in content area classes and to participate successfully in a school community that is respectful of cultural and linguistic diversity.
- The activities in this packet serve as the foundation for differentiating instruction and assessment of ELLs and on-going content focused professional development.
- This process is best facilitated by an ESL/Bilingual consultant or knowledgeable district personnel.



## It's about TIME

- 5-6 hour study group sessions
- Reading in preparation for discussion




## Potential COSTS

- Copying of *Michigan English Language Proficiency Standards for K-12 Schools*
- Copying of *Michigan Grade Level Content Expectations*
- Copying of activity sheets
- Potential cost for consultant
- Purchase of cited reference books for study group members to do readings and activities

## The Process

*A step-by-step guide  
to organize opportunities  
to support ELLs in  
content area classes*

**NOTE:** Steps marked with a  are accompanied by one or more inserts, included in this packet.

### 1 What's the Appropriate Placement of ELLs in Content Classes?

While new English Language Learners are placed in age-appropriate grades in elementary schools, decisions about scheduling classes for secondary level students are less clear. Thoughtful consideration of some key information will lead to more purposeful decision-making in developing an educational plan for ELLs in your school.

(INSERT A for Step 1 *Where Do We Begin?*, INSERT B for Step 1 ELP Level Checklist, INSERT C for Step 1 Placement Chart)

### 2 Two Kinds of English

ELLs acquire social English more readily than the academic English needed to succeed in content classrooms. What's the difference between these two kinds of English?

Read and discuss "Language Learning and Content Instruction", *Teaching Content to English Language Learners*. Jodi Reiss. Longman: White Plains, NY. , pp. 9-17.

(INSERT A for Step 2 Article & INSERT B for Step 2 Discussion Questions)

### 3 High Expectations for ELLs in Your Classroom

Like other students, ELLs need to develop critical thinking skills and learning strategies to achieve academically.

(INSERT for Step 3)

Read and discuss Chapter 5: "The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA): An Update", *Academic Success for English Language Learners*. Patricia A. Richard-Amato, Marguerite Ann Snow. Longman: White Plains, NY 2005, pp.87-101.

Discuss questions 2, 3, and 5 on page 101.

### 4 High Expectation for Teachers of ELLs

For ELLs to achieve in all curricular areas at all levels of instruction, general education teachers, in partnership with ESL and bilingual staff, are responsible for making content comprehensible for ELLs. The SIOP Model provides a framework for integrating both language and content objectives.

Read *Making Content Comprehensible for English Language Learners: The SIOP Model*

Chapter 1: pp.1-13

Appendix A, pp. 179-190

Appendix B, pp.191-194

Design a lesson plan using Appendix B.

### 5 Linking Content and English Language Proficiency

Preview the document to see how English language proficiency can be integrated with the academic language of language arts, math, science and social studies.

*Pre-K-12 English Language Proficiency Standards, 2006.*



## **Getting more mileage from supporting English Language Learners in the content areas**

*The Michigan Curriculum Framework, Grade Level Content Expectations (GLCE), and the Michigan English Language Proficiency Standards for K-12 Schools* form an essential intersection. Together they provide foundational information to develop curriculum, instruction, and assessment to meet the needs of English Language Learners (ELLs) in your school and to ensure that ELLs are included in school initiatives that improve academic achievement.

### **No Child Left Behind (NCLB)**

Title III of NCLB requires that schools ensure that children who come from homes where English is not the primary language (English Language Learners-ELLs) are:

- Assessed annually for English proficiency to determine if they are achieving adequate yearly progress in English Language acquisition;
- Assessed in core content areas to determine if they are achieving adequate yearly progress in academic subjects; and
- ELLs are one of the subpopulations for NCLB AYP on statewide assessments.

### **Education YES!**

- A major component of each school's report card is assessment data on student performance based on the MEAP. The school report card includes student performance on a standardized language test. If a school doesn't make AYP under NCLB, then your school loses one letter grade under Education Yes!. AYP is based on scores for all students and ELLs are one of the nine (9) designated sub-populations.

### **School Improvement Framework!**

- School improvement needs to include ELLs in all initiatives.



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## Resources

### Books

***Michigan English Language Proficiency Standards for K-12 Schools***

[www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-28753-47323--,00.html](http://www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-28753-47323--,00.html)

***Academic Success for English Language Learners: Strategies for K-12 Mainstream Teachers***

Richard-Amato, Patricia A., & Snow, Marguerite Ann. Pearson Longman, White Plains, NY: 2005.

***The CALLA Handbook: Implementing the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach***

Chamot, Anna, & O'Malley, J.M. Addison Wesley Longman, White Plains, NY: 1994.

***The Content-Based Classroom: Perspectives on Integrating Language and Content***

Snow, Marguerite Ann, & Brinton, Donna M. Addison Wesley Longman, White Plains, NY: 1997.

***Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners: The SIOP Model***

Echevarria, Jana, Vogt, MaryEllen, & Short, Deborah J. Pearson Allyn & Bacon, Boston, MA: 2004.

***Content-Based Second Language Teaching and Learning: An Interactive Approach***

Haley, Marjorie Hall, & Austin, Theresa Y. Pearson Allyn & Bacon, Boston, MA: 2004.

***The Learning Strategies Handbook***

Chamot, Anna Uhl, Barnhardt, Sarah, El-Dinary, Pamela Bear, & Robbins, Jill. Longman, White Plains, NY: 1999.

***Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners: The SIOP Model***

Echevarria, Jana, Vogt, MaryEllen, & Short, Deborah J. Pearson Allyn & Bacon, Boston, MA: 2004.

***New Ways in Content-Based Instruction***

Brinton, Donna M., & Master, Peter, eds. TESOL, Alexandria, VA: 1997.

***Pre-K-12 English Language Proficiency Standards***

TESOL, Alexandria, VA: 2006.

***Teaching Content to English Language Learners: Strategies for Secondary School Success***

Reiss, Jody. Pearson Longman, White Plains, NY: 2005.

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Office of School Improvement  
Michigan Department of Education  
517/241-4285

### People

#### Specialists

Contact the Intermediate School District in your area for a specialist working in ESL/Bilingual Education.

Michigan Department of Education  
Office of School Improvement  
517/241-4285

#### Associations

TESOL  
(Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages)  
[www.tesol.org](http://www.tesol.org)

MITESOL  
(Michigan Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages)  
[www.mitesol.org](http://www.mitesol.org)

NABE  
(National Association for Bilingual Education)  
[www.nabe.org](http://www.nabe.org)

MABE  
Michigan Association for Bilingual Education  
[www.mabemi.org](http://www.mabemi.org)

CAL  
Center for Applied Linguistics  
[www.cal.org](http://www.cal.org)

U.S. Department of Education,  
Office of English Language Acquisition (OLEA)  
[www.ed.gov/olea](http://www.ed.gov/olea)

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