Reaching English Learners: Aligning the ELA/ELD Framework with SIOP
MaryEllen Vogt, Ed.D. and Jana Echevarria, Ph.D.

Abstract

As educators grapple with implementing the California Common Core ELA/ELD Standards, the instructional supports needed for English learners to be successful is of paramount importance, particularly because of their substantial numbers in California public schools. In this article, we demonstrate the intersections that exist between Integrated ELD, as described in the California ELA/ELD Framework, and SIOP, a research-validated approach for teaching English learners content and academic language simultaneously. Using SIOP, teachers have the means to provide English learners and other students with the purposeful, rigorous, and appropriate language and content instruction needed to meet the CA CCSS and the ELA/ELD standards.

Key words: English learners, language, literacy, CCSS, CA ELA/ELD Framework, SIOP, Integrated ELD, Common Core.

One common area of concern among educators about English learners and the California Common Core ELA/ELD Standards, is that many of these students may be unable to meet them. For most teachers, the worry is not that English learners are incapable of meeting rigorous standards, but rather, as teachers, they feel ill-equipped to accelerate their students’ English proficiency and literacy skills to the extent needed by Common Core.

In this article, we begin with a brief overview of the relationship among the California Common Core State Standards (henceforth, CA CCSS), the ELA/ELD Standards, and the ELA/ELD Framework. We then suggest that with appropriate language, literacy, and content instruction, English learners, like other students, have a better chance of meeting the standards, both CA CCSS and ELA/ELD. Finally, we elucidate the intersections that exist between the Integrated ELD, as described in the Framework, and effective academic language and content instruction for English learners, as depicted in SIOP (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2013; 2014a; 2014b).

CURRENT DEMOGRAPHICS OF CALIFORNIA’S ENGLISH LEARNERS

English learners are the fastest growing segment of the school population. Across the US, there are nearly 5.5
million English learners, but California leads the nation as the state with the largest the number of English learners served. Approximately 25% of the students in California public schools are English learners, over 1.4 million students. However, those numbers reflect students who are enrolled in EL programs. Many more students speak a language other than English in their homes – about 43% of the state’s public school enrollment – with some being former English learners (California Department of Education, 2015b). The reality in California is that nearly half of all students in our schools might benefit from specific language and literacy support to meet the standards, and a quarter of our students have a legal right to language support services.

THE CA CCSS AND ENGLISH LEARNERS

In the introduction to the CA CCSS, the following characteristics of highly literate individuals are listed. As you read them, think of your own students, particularly those who are English learners (California Common Core State Standards, 2013, p. 6). Aren’t these the very qualities you would like to see in all of your students?

- They demonstrate independence.
- They build strong content knowledge.
- They respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline.
- They comprehend as well as critique.
- They value evidence.
- They use technology and digital media strategically and capably.

- In essence, they are “broadly literate.”

As we examine the CA ELA CCSS, we can see that students who meet the standards will, indeed, be broadly literate. But, what about English learners?

THE ELA/ELD STANDARDS

As required by Assembly Bill 124, the California Department of Education (CDE) updated, revised, and aligned the former 1999 ELD standards to the CA CCSS for English-Language Arts, and these were adopted in late 2012. What is especially significant is the correspondence of each ELD standard to the CA CCSS for ELA. The goals for the revised ELD standards are as follows (Cadiero-Kaplan & Linquanti, 2012):

- To elaborate key language knowledge in the CA CCSS that is critical for English learners’ success in school;
- To provide opportunities for English learners to access and attain grade-level academic content while learning English;
- To strengthen students’ English language development given next-generation standards;
- To use the ELD Standards in conjunction with CA CCSS, not in isolation.

These goals represent several important shifts away from the earlier ELD standards, and they include:

- A more linear view of language acquisition has been replaced with a non-linear view that represents a spiraling, vibrant, and complex social process.
THE ELA/ELD FRAMEWORK

In order to assist teachers in planning lessons that integrate content and academic English, the California State Board of Education adopted the English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework (henceforth, ELA/ELD Framework). “Among the core principles guiding the development of this ELA/ELD Framework is that schools should help all students achieve their highest potential” (California Department of Education, 2015a, p. 880; emphasis is CDE’s). Based on the CA CCSS for ELA and the ELD Standards, the new Framework includes:

- Integration of the CA ELA CCSS and the ELD Standards;
- An expanded view of discourse, text structure, syntax, and vocabulary, addressed within meaningful contexts;
- Themes that are woven throughout the Framework, cross-cutting the two sets of standards: Meaning Making, Language Development, Effective Expression, Content Knowledge, and Foundational Skills.
- Designated ELD, described as, “…an opportunity during the regular school day to support ELs in developing the discourse practices, grammatical structures, and vocabulary necessary for successful participation in academic tasks in all content areas. During this protected time, ELs are actively engaged in collaborative discourse in which they build their awareness of language and develop their skills and abilities to use language” (ELA/ELD Framework, 2015a, p. 115).
Integrated ELD is described as: “Effective instructional experiences for English learners throughout the day and across the disciplines:

- Are interactive and engaging, meaningful and relevant, and intellectually rich and challenging;
- Are appropriately scaffolded in order to provide strategic support that moves learners toward independence;
- Develop both content knowledge and academic English;
- Value and build on primary language and culture and other forms of prior knowledge” (ELA/ELD Framework (2015a, p. 114).

SIOP AND HOW IT CAN HELP TEACHERS IMPLEMENT INTEGRATED ELD

SIOP is an empirically-tested, research-based model of sheltered instruction (Echevarria & Short, 2010; Echevarria, Short, & Powers, 2006; Echevarria, Richards-Tutor, Canges, & Francis, 2011; Echevarria, Richards-Tutor, Chinn, & Ratleff, 2011). It is a framework for planning and delivering instruction in content areas such as science, language arts, history, and mathematics to English learners, as well as other students (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2013, 2014a, 2014b). The goal of SIOP is to help all teachers integrate academic language development into lessons, allowing students to learn and practice English as it is used in the context of school, including the vocabulary used in textbooks in each academic discipline. It incorporates best practices for teaching academic English and provides teachers with a coherent approach for improving the achievement of their students. Teachers present curricular content concepts aligned to state standards through strategies and techniques that make academic content comprehensible to students. While doing so, they develop students’ academic English skills across the four domains—reading, writing, listening, and speaking. SIOP includes 30 instructional features grouped within eight components: Lesson Preparation, Building Background, Comprehensible Input, Strategies, Interaction, Practice & Application, Lesson Delivery, and Review & Assessment.

In essence, SIOP operationalizes Integrated ELD in a practical and useful manner. During Integrated ELD, content learning is the primary focus of instruction with language development occurring concurrently but secondarily. Language development is primary during Designated ELD and content is used as a vehicle for learning language (Saunders & Goldenberg, 2010). Designated ELD provides additional teaching, practice and support for learning the academic language derived from ELA content. While the features of the SIOP are applicable to instruction during both Integrated and Designated ELD, for the purposes of this article, we will focus on SIOP’s alignment with Integrated ELD as defined in the Framework, teaching content and language simultaneously. In Table 1, you will see how the SIOP components and features intersect naturally with Integrated ELD. Please note that the statements in the comparison that were taken from the ELA/ELD Framework are representative, rather than inclusive, of the many intersections of Integrated ELD and SIOP.
**Figure 1: Comparison of SIOP and Designated and Integrated ELD**

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<tr>
<th>Integrated ELD</th>
<th>Features of the SIOP Model</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>(California ELA/ELD Framework, 2015a)</strong></td>
<td>(Echevarria, Vogt, &amp; Short, 2013; 2014a; 2014b)</td>
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The Framework uses the term integrated ELD to refer to ELD throughout the day and across the disciplines. All teachers with ELs in their classrooms should use the CA ELD Standards in addition to their focal CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and other content standards to support their ELs’ linguistic and academic progress. (Ch.2, p. 108).

California recognizes that ELs in transitional kindergarten through grade twelve have a double curricular load: They must become proficient in academic English, and they must learn the same rigorous academic content required of all students in California. Because they are learning English as an additional language, ELs require specialized instructional support to ensure that they simultaneously develop academic English and have full access to a rich curriculum across the disciplines (Introduction, p. 10; our emphasis).

Throughout the school day and across the disciplines, ELs learn to use English as they simultaneously learn content knowledge through English. ELs develop English primarily through meaningful interactions with others and through intellectually-rich content, texts, and tasks: interpreting and discussing literary and informational texts; writing (both collaboratively and independently) a variety of different text types; or justifying their opinions by persuading others with relevant evidence, for example. Through these activities, ELs strengthen their abilities to use English successfully in school while also developing critical content knowledge through English. In addition to learning to use English and learning through English, in order to develop advanced levels of English, ELs also need to learn about English, in other words, how English works to communicate particular meanings in different ways, based on discipline, topic, audience, task, and purpose. (Ch. 2, p. 107)

This is why language awareness (the conscious knowledge about language and how it works to make meaning) is prominently featured in the CA ELD Standards " (Ch. 2, p. 107).

Clear Lesson Objectives: Lessons are designed using the CA ELD Standards as the primary standards and are grounded in the appropriate content standards (Ch. 2. Figure 2.23. Essential Features of Designated ELD Instruction, p. 118)

Components and Features of the SIOP Model:

**Lesson Preparation**

1. Content objectives clearly defined, displayed and reviewed with students.
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<tr>
<td><strong>Effective assessment begins with clear conceptions of the goals and objectives of learning</strong> (Ch. 2, p. 97)</td>
<td><strong>2.</strong> Language objectives clearly defined, displayed and reviewed with students</td>
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<td><strong>Academic English Focus: Students’ proficiency with academic English and literacy in the content areas, as described in the CA ELD Standards, the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy, and other content standards, should be the main focus of instruction</strong> (Ch. 2, Figure 2.23. Essential Features of Designated ELD Instruction, p. 117).</td>
<td><strong>3.</strong> Content concepts appropriate for age and educational background level of students</td>
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<td><strong>Planned and Sequenced Events: Lessons and units are carefully planned and sequenced in order to strategically build language proficiency along with content knowledge</strong> (Ch. 2. Figure 2.23. Essential Features of Designated ELD Instruction, p. 118).</td>
<td><strong>4.</strong> Supplementary materials used to a high degree, making the lesson clear and meaningful</td>
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<td><strong>As ELs progress along the ELD continuum, teachers adjust the level of support they provide to meet their students’ language learning needs and promote the use of academic English required for specific topics</strong> (Chapter 2, p. 110).</td>
<td><strong>5.</strong> Adaptation of content to all levels of student proficiency</td>
</tr>
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<td><strong>All students bring to school knowledge and experiences that have the potential to promote school learning</strong> (Ch. 2, p. 65)</td>
<td><strong>6.</strong> Meaningful activities that integrate lesson concepts with language practice opportunities for reading, writing, listening, and/or speaking.</td>
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**Building Background**

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<td><strong>7.</strong> Concepts explicitly linked to students’ background experiences</td>
<td><strong>8.</strong> Links explicitly made between past learning and new concepts</td>
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<td><strong>9.</strong> Key vocabulary emphasized</td>
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**Additional, amplified or differentiated support for linguistically diverse learners may include** (Ch. 2, p. 75):

- Leveraging students’ existing background knowledge
- Drawing on primary language and home culture to make connections with existing background knowledge
- Developing students’ awareness that their background knowledge may live in another language or culture

**Teachers support all students’ understanding of complex text by** (Ch. 2, p. 75):

- Explicitly teaching vocabulary critical to understanding and developing academic vocabulary over time
- Explicitly teaching how to use morphological knowledge and context clues to derive the meaning of new words as they are encountered
- Explicitly teaching particular cognates and developing cognate awareness
- Making morphological relationships between languages transparent (e.g., word endings for
| **Additional, amplified or differentiated support for linguistically diverse learners may include carefully sequencing tasks to build understanding and effective use of the language in texts. (Ch. 2, p. 76)** | **Comprehensible Input**
10. Speech appropriate for students’ proficiency levels
11. Clear explanation of academic tasks
12. A variety of techniques to make content concepts clear |
|---|---|
| **Intellectual challenge is to be the hallmark of every student’s education regardless of background or prior academic performance. The levels of cognitive rigor contemplated by the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium for statewide assessment represent a range that should be considered when designing curriculum, instruction, and assessment for the classroom. The cognitive tasks outlined in the revised Bloom’s Taxonomy (remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating and creating) and Webb’s Depth of Knowledge levels (recall and reproduction, skills and concepts, thinking and reasoning, and extended thinking) are useful for gauging the range and balance of intellectual challenge for students. (Ch. 2, p. 67)** | **Strategies**
13. Ample opportunities provided for student to use learning strategies
14. Scaffolding techniques consistently used, assisting and supporting student understanding
15. A variety of question types that promote higher-order thinking skills |
| **Intellectual Quality: Students are provided with intellectually motivating, challenging, and purposeful tasks, along with the support to meet these tasks (Ch. 2, Figure 2.23. Essential Features of Designated ELD Instruction, p. 117)** | |
| **Scaffolding: Teachers contextualize language instruction, build on background knowledge, and provide the appropriate level of scaffolding based on individual differences and needs. Scaffolding is both planned in advance and provided just in time (Ch. 2, Figure 2.23. Essential Features of Designated ELD Instruction, p. 117)** | |
| **Additional, amplified or differentiated support for linguistically diverse learners may include:**
- Teaching and modeling, through thinking aloud and explicit reference to strategies, how to make meaning from the text using specific reading comprehension strategies (e.g., questioning, visualizing) (Ch. 2, p. 75)
- Providing multiple opportunities to employ learned comprehension strategies (Ch. 2, p. 75) |
- Teaching students to develop outlines, charts, diagrams, graphic organizers or other tools to summarize and synthesize content (Ch. 2, p. 76)
- Explicitly modeling how to use the outlines or graphic organizers to analyze/discuss a model text and providing guided practice for students before they use the tools independently (Ch. 2, p. 77)
- Using the tools as a scaffold for discussions or writing (Ch. 2, p. 77)

While scaffolding is an important notion for all students, the California ELD Standards provide general guidance on levels of scaffolding for ELs at different English language proficiency levels. In the California ELD Standards, the three overall levels of scaffolding that teachers provide to ELs during instruction are substantial, moderate, and light. (Ch.2, p. 101).

### Interaction

16. Frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion between teacher/student and among students, which encourage elaborated responses about lesson concepts

17. Grouping configurations support content and language objectives of the lesson

18. Sufficient wait time for student responses consistently provided

19. Ample opportunities for students to clarify key concepts in L1

Rather than posing a question and taking immediate responses from a few students, teachers employ more participatory and collaborative approaches. Teachers also ensure that students interact with a range of peers. Teachers emphasize extended discourse, that is, multiple exchanges between students in which they engage in rich dialogue. (Ch. 2, p. 86, Figure 2.15)

Extended Language Interaction: Extended language interaction between students with ample opportunities for students to communicate in meaningful ways using English is central. Opportunities for listening/viewing and speaking/signing should be thoughtfully planned and not left to chance. As student’s progress along the ELD continuum, these activities should also increase in sophistication (Ch. 2, Figure 2.23. Essential Features of Designated ELD Instruction, p. 117).

Students engage in a range of collaborative discussions about texts and grade level content, sharing and exploring ideas. They learn to summarize the meaning of texts read aloud and information presented in diverse media and formats. In addition, they learn to present information so that others understand, using media to enhance main ideas and themes (SL.K-12.4-5). Importantly, they use language appropriate to the task and situation in meaningful exchanges (Ch. 2, p. 70).

Teachers support all students’ understanding of complex text by (Ch. 2, p. 75):
- Engaging students in peer discussions—both brief and extended—to promote collaborative sense
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<th>Interaction 16-19 (Continued)</th>
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Additional, amplified or differentiated support for linguistically diverse learners may include (Ch. 2, p. 76, Figure 2.10):
- Providing opportunities for students to talk about their ideas with a peer before (or after) writing
- Providing written language models (e.g., charts of important words or powerful sentences)
- Providing reference frames (e.g., sentence, paragraph, and text organization frames), as appropriate
- Drawing on primary language and home culture to make connections with existing background knowledge

From the earliest grades, children need to learn history/social studies, science, mathematics, literature, languages, physical education, health, and the visual and performing arts. They learn the subjects through hands-on and virtual experiences, explorations and inquiries, demonstrations, lectures, discussions, and texts (Ch. 2, p. 88).

Inquiry–based learning promotes the integration of the language arts as students read and engage with one another to formulate and refine their questions, develop plans for answering them, produce written texts and performances, and share their findings with others. Inquiry–based learning also promotes the integration of reading, writing, speaking, and listening across content areas as students pursue knowledge relevant to their inquiry (Ch. 2, p. 92).

<table>
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<th>Practice &amp; Application</th>
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<tr>
<td>20. Hands-on materials and/or manipulatives provided for students to practice using new content knowledge</td>
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<td>21. Activities provided for students to apply content and language knowledge in the classroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Activities integrate all language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking)</td>
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<th>Lesson Delivery</th>
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<tr>
<td>23. Content objectives clearly supported by lesson delivery</td>
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<td>24. Language objectives clearly supported by lesson delivery</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Students engaged approximately 90-100% of the period</td>
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<tr>
<td>26. Pacing of the lesson appropriate to students’ ability level</td>
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Educators should keep issues of motivation and engagement at the forefront of their work to assist students in achieving the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and CA ELD Standards. Incorporating motivational factors, such as interest, relevance, identity, and self-efficacy, into curriculum design and instructional practice is critical to ensure that students achieve the levels envisioned by these standards (Ch. 2, p. 63).

Build in certain instructional conditions, such as student goal setting, self-directed learning, and collaborative learning to increase reading engagement and conceptual learning (Ch. 2, p. 63).
**Simply stated, motivation and engagement are both psychological and behavioral; students may be motivated (or interested) to read and write, but they also need to sustain their engagement with a task for enough time to achieve learning goals. Incorporating these elements in curriculum materials and instructional sequences requires systematic planning and professional collaboration (Ch. 2, p. 64).**

**Effective assessment begins with clear conceptions of the goals and objectives of learning (Ch. 2, p. 97).**

**Formative Assessment Practices:** Teachers frequently monitor student progress through informal observations and ongoing formative assessment practices; they analyze student writing, work samples, and oral language production to prioritize student instructional needs (Ch. 2, p. 118).

**Corrective Feedback:** Teachers provide students with judiciously selected corrective feedback on language usage in ways that are transparent and meaningful to students. Overcorrection or arbitrary corrective feedback is avoided (Ch. 2, Figure 2.23, Essential Features of Designated ELD Instruction, p. 118).

**While there are several purposes for assessment, the most important purpose is to inform instruction. Using the results of assessment to make decisions to modify instruction in the moment, within a specific lesson or unit of instruction, or across a longer time frame is a dynamic part of the teaching and learning process promoted in this framework (Ch. 2, p. 97).**

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**Lesson Delivery 23-26 (Continued)**

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**Review & Assessment**

27. Comprehensive review of key vocabulary

28. Comprehensive review of key content concepts

29. Regular feedback to students on their output

30. Assessment of student comprehension and learning of all lesson objectives throughout the lesson.

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**SUMMARY**

For teachers to become high-implementing SIOP teachers, effective, focused professional development, practice, and on-going support are necessary. Providing integrated ELD is a complex process but, as studies have shown, with SIOP, teachers have the means to provide English learners and other students with the purposeful, rigorous, and appropriate language and content instruction needed to meet the CA CCSS and the ELA/ELD standards.

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1The final, edited digital version of the ELA/ELD Framework is now available, as of July, 2015, at http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/cf/elaeldfrmwrksbeadopted.asp

2It is beyond the scope of this article to describe Designated and Integrated ELD in detail. We encourage you to read the ELA/ELD Framework carefully, because it is filled with practical ideas for implementing effective, integrated content and language instruction in your classroom.
REFERENCES


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