ELL ‘Shadowing’ Shows Promise

Having teachers experience “a day in the life of an English-language learner” can reveal gaps in academic-language exposure.

By Liana Heitin

It’s a professional development tool that stems from the concept of taking a walk in someone else’s—in this case a student’s—shoes. And in one California school, it has reportedly helped close the achievement gap for English-language learners.

The technique, which second-language acquisition expert Ivannia Soto began using in 2003, is called ELL shadowing. A teacher or administrator follows an English-language learner to several classes. Neither the student nor his or her teachers know the real reason the observer in the back of the room is there, which is to look specifically at the student’s use of academic language. The observer takes notes at five-minute intervals on the student’s actions regarding listening and speaking. Soto, an associate professor of education at Whittier College in California, claims the process is “enlightening.”

What educators tend to notice first and foremost is that many ELLs sit silently through their classes. These students are given very few opportunities to develop their academic oral language—broadly defined as the language of textbooks and testing, though Soto uses it to refer to proper “vocabulary, grammar, syntax, and register.” In fact, English-language learners spend less than 2 percent of the school day improving their academic oral language, she says, even though it’s a critical foundation of literacy.

Overall, Soto adds, ELLs are missing out in one of two ways: “We’ve either dummed down the curriculum so it’s too easy and students stay at the basic levels of social language, or we keep the rigor but don’t provide appropriate scaffolding so students can access the content.”

Creating ‘Urgency,’ Raising Scores

Rudy Gonzalez, the principal at Morrison Elementary School in Norwalk, Calif., began working with Soto to implement ELL shadowing three years ago. Though his school, where 85 percent of students receive free or reduced-price lunch, was already considered high-achieving, he was concerned about a lingering achievement gap between ELLs and English-only students. And while English-language learners—who make up nearly half the student population—were doing well on grade-level academic standards, they were not doing as well with language proficiency.

The shadowing protocol clarified that teachers weren’t using enough academic language in their classes. “We were concerned about giving kids access to the core curriculum versus giving them access through knowing academic language,” Gonzalez says. “That was our downfall as a school. That’s where the achievement gap exists.”
The teachers, who had been effective by many measures, were receptive to the focus on academic language after participating in the shadowing. “It was so eye-opening that kids weren’t talking and didn’t have confidence,” Gonzalez says. “The way we structured classes, we weren’t allowing for the give and take with students.”

The “day in the life of an English-language learner” experience often creates a sense of urgency about helping these students improve their academic language skills, according to Soto, whose book *ELL Shadowing as a Catalyst for Change* will be released by Corwin in February 2012. “Shadowing isn’t about pointing fingers at anybody. ... It’s about being reflective and seeing this as a systemic issue.”

Soto trains teachers in three concrete instructional strategies that foster academic oral language development. Think/pair/share, reciprocal teaching, and the Frayer model of using pictures and context to teach vocabulary all encourage students to converse with and learn from each other.

Some might contend these strategies are simply best practices that can help all learners. But Gonzalez explains that the consequences of not using them are particularly “devastating for a second-language learner.” While English-only students have opportunities to practice English-language skills at home and on the playground, for many ELLs, “this is it. If they’re not getting it in school, they aren’t going to get it.” Soto acknowledges that the strategies are not new, but says the difference is in using them systemically and “being intentional” about integrating them.

Gonzalez says that once his teachers at Morrison began focusing on language development, benchmark test scores went up right away. Increases on state tests followed. California sets a target score for schools of 800 on its Academic Performance Index, the statewide accountability system. For the 2008-2009 school year, Morrison’s overall API was 818, while the score for the ELL population alone was 791. For 2010-2011, the overall score was 856, and the ELL score was 850. “That’s phenomenal growth in two years,” says Gonzalez. In addition, the discrepancy between ELLs and the general population is down to six points, he emphasizes. “We’ve closed the gap.”
ELA/ELD Framework Overview
Presented by Ivannia Soto, Ph.D.
Whittier College

**CABE: DAY 1 AGENDA**
- Welcome and Agenda Overview
- Language at the Center of CCSS and ELD/ELA Framework
  - Video: What is Academic English?
- ELD/ELA Framework Intent and Structure
  - Figure 2.1 Overview
  - Windowpanes: Themes of the Framework
- Lunch
- ELA/ELD Snapshots, Part I
  - Analysis with Current Practice
- Reciprocal Teaching: Key Chapters from the Framework

**OLD PARADIGMS**

(CA Together, 2012)
NEW CCSS PARADIGM: 
LANGUAGE IS CENTRAL TO ALL ACADEMIC AREAS

Math
Science
Language
Language Arts

(CA Together, 2012)

SANDRA CISNEROS ON SPEAKING IN SCHOOL

A House of My Own

“At home I was fine, but at school I never opened my mouth except when the teacher called on me . . . I didn’t like school because all they saw was the outside of me.”

WHAT IS ACADEMIC ENGLISH?

ALL students are AESL
(Academic English as a Second Language)

- Academic English is not natural language. It must be explicitly taught.
- Essential Components of Academic English Language:
  - Vocabulary (Tier 2—high frequency and Tier 3 words—discipline-specific words)
  - Syntax (sophisticated)
  - Grammar (complex)
  - Register/Discourse (differences between social and academic language)

(Kitisella, 2007)

VIDEO: ACADEMIC LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AT WHITTIER HIGH SCHOOL

As you watch the video, write down evidence of the following:

- Take down AHA moments from ELL voices regarding why ALD is important to them.
  - ELL assets
  - ELL gaps
  - Language scaffolds needed
DISTRICTS HAVE A DUAL OBLIGATION TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

1. Provide meaningful access to grade-level academic content via appropriate instruction
2. Develop students’ English language proficiency

(Lau v. Nichols; Castañeda v. Pickard; NCLB; Title III)

INTEGRATED & DESIGNATED ELD: WORKING IN TANDEM

Integrated ELD:
All teachers with ELs in their classrooms use the CA ELD Standards in tandem with the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and other content standards.

Designated ELD:
A protected time during the school day when teachers use the CA ELD Standards as the focal standards in ways that build into and from content instruction.

SCAFFOLDING THINK-PAIR-SHARE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question or Prompt</th>
<th>What I thought (speaking)</th>
<th>What my partner thought (listening)</th>
<th>What we will share (consensus)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What are you hoping to learn about the ELD/ELA framework today?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What was your AHA moment from this morning?</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Adapted by Soto-Hinman, 2009)

LANGUAGE STRATEGIES FOR ACTIVE CLASSROOM PARTICIPATION

Expressing an Opinion
I think/believe that . . .
It seems to me that . . .
In my opinion . . .

Predicting
I guess/predict/imagine that . . .
Based on . . ., I infer that . . .
I hypothesize that . . .

Paraphrasing
So you are saying that . . .
In other words, you think . . .
What I hear you saying is . . .

Acknowledging Ideas
My idea is similar to/related to . . .’s idea.
I agree with (a person) that . . .
My idea builds upon . . .’s idea.

(Kinsella & Feldman, 2006)
**Consensus**

1. What I said and why?
2. What my partner said and why?
3. A combination (for similarities) and why?
4. A whole new idea and why?

**What’s Unique About This Framework**
- Integrates two sets of standards in all chapters - CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and CA ELD Standards
- Discusses the standards in terms of five key themes
- Integrates multiple content areas and literacy
- Tells and shows
  - Deeply grounded in current research
  - Snapshots and vignettes illustrate the standards in action
- Focuses on equity and access
- Promotes collaboration and shared responsibility

**Key Themes of Standards**
1. Meaning Making (comprehension)
2. Language Development (vocabulary, academic language, syntax, and text structure)
3. Effective Expression (L, S, R & W across content areas)
4. Content Knowledge (depth of knowledge across disciplines)
5. Foundational Skills (decoding skills)
METACOGNITIVE SYMBOLS

Connection

Question

Resonates

• Mark up your text (highlight, underline, write notes in the margin, etc.)
• Be prepared to share your notes with others.

KEY THEMES OF ELA/ELD STANDARDS WINDOWPANE

Three Key Words | Two Phrases

One Key Quote | Visual

CALIFORNIA ELA/ELD FRAMEWORK

Context in which instruction occurs

Year-end expectations for student knowledge/abilities

Engage in Intellectually Rich Tasks

Use language meaningfully

Key Themes of Standards

CA ELD Standards

AMPLIFY the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy

The Why: Purposes

The How: Processes

The What: Resources

Apply language awareness

Figure 2.1

Intent, Structure and Elements of ELD Standards

Engage in Intellectually Rich Tasks

Use language meaningfully

CA ELD Standards

Using English Purposefully:
- Describing, explaining, persuading, informing, narrating, negotiating, entertaining, relating, etc.
- Meaningful interaction:
  - Collaborating with others
  - Interpreting meanings
  - Producing meaningful messages

Knowledge of Language:
- Structuring cohesive texts
- Expanding and enriching ideas
- Combining and condensing ideas
**Activity #1**
**ELA/ELD Framework Snapshots**
- Select one snapshot from the Activity 1 packet (try to have each person at your table read a different snapshot).
- After you read your snapshot, share with your elbow partner(s) or table:
  1. What are students doing?
  2. What is the teacher doing?
  3. How does this compare to current instruction in the classroom?

**Activity #2**
**Revisiting the Snapshots**
- After hearing more about Figure 2.1 and the key considerations for ELA/Literacy and ELD instruction:
  1. Revisit your snapshot and share with an elbow partner what connections you see between Figures 2.1 and your snapshot.

---

**ELD/ELA Framework Introduction**

**Values for Educating ELLs**
1. Valuing Language and Culture as Assets
2. Ensuring Equity in Intellectual Richness
3. Building Content Knowledge and Language in Tandem
4. Attending to Specific Language Learning Needs
5. Integrating Domains of Communication
6. Providing Appropriate Scaffolding
7. Evaluating Progress Appropriately
8. Sharing the Responsibility

**Reciprocal Teaching:**
**ELA/ELD Framework Key Chapters**

- **Chapter 2**
  - Key Considerations & Understanding Register

- **Chapter 6**
  - Content and Pedagogy

- **Chapter 8**
  - Assessment

- **Chapter 9**
  - Access and Equity

- **Chapter 11**
  - Implementing High-Quality ELA/Literacy and ELD Instruction: Professional Learning, Leadership, and Program Supports
RECI PROCAL TEACHING

A. **Summarizer:** What are the three most important events/details from the reading and explain why they are important and how they are connected?
B. **Questioner:** Pose at least three questions about the text—these questions could address confusing parts of the text or thoughts you wonder about.
C. **Predictor:** Identify at least three text-related predictions—these predictions should help the group anticipate what will happen next.
D. **Connector:** Make at least three connections between the reading and your own experience, the world, or another piece of text.

What components of the ELD/ELA framework can you begin to use in your own classroom?
- Be specific; and
- Refer back to the snapshots, themes, and figure 2.1 for evidence and examples.

ELA/ELD FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW, PART II

Presented by Ivannia Soto, Ph.D.
Whittier College

CABE: DAY 2 AGENDA

- ELD by Grade Level
  - Frayer Model: Defining Integrated and Designated
- Unpacking Segments of the ELD Standards
  - Home/Expert Groups
- Lunch
- Unpacking ELD/ELA Vignettes
  - Vignette Cheat Sheet
- Team Planning
What’s Unique About This Framework

- Integrates two sets of standards in all chapters - CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and CA ELD Standards
- Discusses the standards in terms of five key themes
- Integrates multiple content areas and literacy
- Tells and shows
  - Deeply grounded in current research
  - Snapshots and vignettes illustrate the standards in action
- Focuses on equity and access
- Promotes collaboration and shared responsibility

California ELA/ELD Framework

Year-end expectations for student knowledge/abilities

Integrates multiple content areas and literacy

Deeply grounded in current research

Snapshots and vignettes illustrate the standards in action

Focuses on equity and access

Promotes collaboration and shared responsibility

Figure 2.1

Integrated & Designated ELD: Working in Tandem

**Integrated ELD:**
All teachers with ELs in their classrooms use the CA ELD Standards in tandem with the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and other content standards.

**Designated ELD:**
A protected time during the school day when teachers use the CA ELD Standards as the focal standards in ways that build into and from content instruction.

Intent, Structure and Elements of ELD Standards

The CA ELD Standards AMPLIFY the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy.

Engage in Intellectually Rich Tasks

Use language meaningfully

Apply language awareness

The Why: Purposes

The How: Processes

The What: Resources
**What themes and patterns do you see emerging about ELD across grade levels?**

- Reciprocal Teaching
  - Grade 6—pp. 565-566
  - Grade 7—pp. 597-599
  - Grade 8—pp. 635-636


**Moving to three proficiency levels with entry and exit points**

**CA ELD Standards: Elements**

- **Section 1**:
  - Goal
  - Critical Principles
  - At-a-glance Overview

- **Section 2: Elaboration on Critical Principles**
  - Part I: Interacting in Meaningful Ways
  - Part II: Learning About How English Works
  - Part III: Using Foundational Literacy Skills

- Appendices
SECTION 2: ELABORATION ON CRITICAL PRINCIPLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Collaborative (engagement in dialogue with others)</td>
<td>A. Structuring Cohesive Texts (understanding text structure and cohesion)</td>
<td>• Print concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Interpretive (comprehension and analysis of written and spoken texts)</td>
<td>B. Expanding and Enriching Ideas (using verbs and verb phrases; nouns and noun phrases)</td>
<td>• Phonological awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Productive (creation of oral presentations and written texts)</td>
<td>C. Connecting and Condensing Ideas (finding similarities and synthesizing)</td>
<td>• Phonics and word recognition</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A CLOSER LOOK AT PARTS I & II

Home/Expert Groups

- With your group, look through your assigned part of the ELD Standards:
  1. Collaborative Mode
  2. Interpretive Mode
  3. Productive Mode
  4. Structuring Cohesive Texts
  5. Expanding & Enriching Ideas
  6. Connecting & Condensing Ideas

- Come to consensus on 2-3 key ideas about this section that you would like to share with the larger group:
  - What does this section focus on?
  - What are the key standards in this section?
  - How does this section supports ELLs to acquire English?
  - How does this section supports ELLs in other content areas (i.e. science, math, history/social studies)?

UNPACKING ELD STANDARDS

http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/el/er/eldstandards.asp#Standards

- Grades 9-10 (pages 122-132)
  - Overview (pages 122-123)
  - Collaborative, Interpretative, and Productive Modes (pages 124-128)
  - Texts and Ideas (pages 129-131)

ELA/ELD FRAMEWORK OVERVIEW, PART III

Presented by Ivannia Soto, Ph.D.
Whittier College
INTEGRATED & DESIGNATED ELD: WORKING IN TANDEM

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All teachers with ELs in their classrooms use the CA ELD Standards in tandem with the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and other content standards.

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LONGER VIGNETTES:
INTEGRATED AND DESIGNATED ELD IN ACTION

REVIEW GRADE LEVEL VIGNETTES

Integrated/Designated Posters
- Grade 6—pp. 568-579
- Grade 7—pp. 601-613
- Grade 8—pp. 638-653


INTEGRATED/DESIGNATED VIGNETTE POSTERS

• Come to consensus with your partner to summarize your vignette, and then share with the rest of your team.
INFORMAL ASSESSMENT: FRAYER MODEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frayer Model</th>
<th>Visual/Auditory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXAMPLES/ODEL</td>
<td>NON-EXAMPLES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

INTEGRATED/Designated ELD

WHAT'S UNIQUE ABOUT THIS FRAMEWORK
- Integrates two sets of standards in all chapters: CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and CA ELD Standards
- Discusses the standards in terms of five key themes
- Integrates multiple content areas and literacy
- Tells and shows
  - Deeply grounded in current research
  - Snapshots and vignettes illustrate the standards in action
- Focuses on equity and access
- Promotes collaboration and shared responsibility

CALIFORNIA ELA/ELD FRAMEWORK

Key Themes of Standards
- Context in which instruction occurs
- Year-end expectations for student knowledge/abilities
- ELD Levels: Emerging, Expanding, Bridging

Intent, Structure and Elements of ELD Standards
- Engage in Intellectually Rich Tasks
- Use language meaningfully
- Apply language awareness

The CA ELD Standards AMPLIFY the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy.

The Why: Purposes
- The How: Processes
- The What: Resources

Using English Purposefully: Defining, sustaining, persuading, informing, facilitating, negotiating, entertaining, relating, etc.
Meaningful Interaction:
- Collaborating with others
- Interpreting meaning
- Producing meaningful messages
Knowledge of Language:
- Structuring cohesive texts
- Expanding and enriching ideas
- Combining and condensing ideas
MOVING TO THREE PROFICIENCY LEVELS WITH ENTRY AND EXIT POINTS

ELD/ELA FRAMEWORK ROLL-OUT PLANNING

Content
- Day 1: Figure 2.1
- Five Themes
- Key Chapters: research base
- Snapshots: Integrated/Designated ELD lessons

Day 2
- Expectations for ELD by grade level
- Integrated/Designated ELD by grade level

Decisions to be Made
- Introduce all together first?
- Work by department or grade level?
- Differentiate PD?

UNPACKING ELD VIGNETTES

Grades 4-5 (AM):  

- Reciprocal Teaching: ELD in Each Grade Level (Grade 4: pp. 444-449; Grade 5: pp. 481-488)
- Posters: Review Grade Level Vignettes (Grade 4: pp. 452-462; Grade 5: pp. 488-498)
  - Group 1: Integrated Vignette (Summarize and Compare to Current Practice)
  - Group 2: Designated Vignette (Summarize and Compare to Current Practice)

UNPACKING ELD VIGNETTES

K-1 (AM):  

- Reciprocal Teaching: ELD in Each Grade Level (Grade K: pp. 221-227; Grade 1: pp. 258-261)
  - Focus: Framing Questions for Lesson Planning
- Posters: Review Grade Level Vignettes (Grade K: pp. 228-238; Grade 1: pp. 263-274)
  - Group 1: Integrated Vignette (Summarize and Compare to Current Practice)
  - Group 2: Designated Vignette (Summarize and Compare to Current Practice)
UNPACKING ELD VIGNETTES


- **Reciprocal Teaching:** ELD in Each Grade Level (Grade 2: pp. 333-339; Grade 3: pp. 372-375)
  - Focus: Framing Questions for Lesson Planning
- **Posters:** Review Grade Level Vignettes (Grade 2: pp. 341-350; Grade 3: pp. 377-386)
  - **Group 1:** Integrated Vignette (Summarize and Compare to Current Practice)
  - **Group 2:** Designated Vignette (Summarize and Compare to Current Practice)

UNPACKING ELD VIGNETTES


- **I.** Review Integrated/Designated ELD Expectations
- **II.** Reciprocal Teaching: ELD in Each Grade Level (Grade 6: pp. 565-566)
- **II.** Posters: Review Grade Level Vignettes (Grade 6: pp. 568-579)

UNPACKING ELD VIGNETTES

High School—10th Grade

- Pair 1—Integrated ELD Vignette: World Literature, ELD, and World History, Grade 10 (pp. 744-756)
- Pair 2—Designated ELD Vignette: Analyzing Texts in World History, Grade 10 (pp. 757-766)
  - Summarize Vignette
  - Compare to Current Practice

SNAPSHOTS, PART II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are students doing?</th>
<th>What is the teacher doing?</th>
<th>How does this compare current practice?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
# Quarter One ELD Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What are students doing?</th>
<th>What is the teacher doing?</th>
<th>How does this compare to the snapshots?</th>
<th>What needs to be modified/accelerated?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Agenda

I. Review Integrated/Designated ELD Expectations

II. Reciprocal Teaching: ELD in Each Grade Level
   - Grade 6—pp. 565-566
   - Grade 7—pp. 597-599
   - Grade 8—pp. 635-636
   

III. Break

III. Posters: Review Grade Level Vignettes
   - Grade 6—pp. 568-579
   - Grade 7—pp. 601-613
   - Grade 8—pp. 638-653

IV. Lunch

V. Planning for Rolling Out ELD/ELA

## Role Play

What’s it like to try to communicate while remembering the rules:

- Chose one person in your group to start
- Begin by saying, “What I usually do each morning”
- Each participant, in turn, will add a sentence
- BUT...none of you may use a word that contains the letter “n”.
- Try to maintain normal conversational speed

## ELA/ELD Framework Overview: ELPAC, Part IV

Presented by Ivannia Soto, Ph.D.
Whittier College
ELD BY GRADE LEVEL (HIGH SCHOOL)

Posters: ELD in Each Grade Level

- Grades 9-10 (pages 737-741)
- Grades 11-12 (pages 787-789)

COMPARISON OF CELDT TO ELPAC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CELDT</th>
<th>ELPAC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Aligned with the 1999 California English Language Development (ELD) Standards, which have five proficiency levels. (Emerging, Expanding, and Bridging)</td>
<td>• Must be aligned with the 2012 California ELD Standards, which have three proficiency levels (Emerging, Expanding, and Bridging)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One test used for two purposes: initial assessment and annual assessment</td>
<td>• Two separate tests for two purposes: (1) initial identification; (2) annual summative assessment. The initial administration will be brief and locally scored.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Paper-pencil tests</td>
<td>• Paper-pencil tests with a potential to transition to computer-based tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• July 1–October 31 Annual Assessment window</td>
<td>• Annual Summative Assessment window to be a four month period after January 1 (proposed February 1–May 31), allowing for more pre-test instructional time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Five grades/grade spans: K–1, 2, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12</td>
<td>• Seven grades/grade spans: K, 1, 2, 3–5, 6–8, 9–10, and 11–12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reported in five performance levels</td>
<td>• Proposed four performance levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reporting domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing</td>
<td>• Reporting domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 In 2015-16, the CELDT will be administered as usual. Pilot testing for the ELPAC will occur in November 2015. The purpose of the pilot is to ensure that test items planned for the ELPAC elicit useful information about language proficiency, as outlined in the 2012 California ELD Standards.

2 Field test administration (no scores reported) in fall 2016. The purpose of the field test is to inform item and test design as well as pre-test instructional time, as described in the 2012 California ELD Standards.

3 Operational administration (scores reported) in fall 2017 and spring 2018. The purpose of the field test is to inform item and test design as well as pre-test instructional time, as described in the 2012 California ELD Standards.

ARTICLE: NEW ASSESSMENT FOR ENGLISH LEARNER STUDENTS FROM THE CELDT TO THE ELPAC

RECIPROCAL TEACHING

A. Summarizer: What are the three most important events/details from the reading and explain why they are important and how they are connected?
B. Questioner: Pose at least three questions about the text — these questions could address confusing parts of the text or thoughts you wonder about.
C. Predictor: Identify at least three text-related predictions — these predictions should help the group anticipate what will happen next.

D. Connector: Make at least three connections between the reading and your own experiences, the world, or another piece of text.
ANALYZING ELPAC BLUEPRINTS

Proposed Test Blueprints for the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California


- What do you notice?
- What do you wonder?
- How does this compare to current practice?
Recent statistics suggest that only 56% of Black students and 55% of Latino students who enter the ninth grade graduate with a high school diploma four years later, and only 12% to 14% graduate having met the requirements to attend a state university (Friedlander & Darling-Hammond, 2007). The reasons most often cited for those statistics are boredom and lack of engagement. For English language learners (ELLs), the odds are just as grave. According to a study by the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute, students reclassified in 8th grade as "proficient" in English [meeting the criteria to no longer be classified as an English learner] had two-thirds the odds of failing the 9th grade, and half the odds of dropping out—some of the lowest figures among all students ever identified as ELL. (Flores, Painter, Harlow-Nash, & Pachon, 2009, p. 2)

The study suggested that meeting the criteria to no longer be classified as an ELL in middle school occurs a little too late for many ELLs. Something must be done sooner and systemically so that ELLs make progress in academic and English language development. How can educators engage all students, especially ELLs who may have academic and English language gaps when they enter secondary settings?

The Needs of ELLs

Many ELLs who enter secondary school settings have obtained long-term English learner (LTEL) status. Those students are in grades 6–12 and are not making adequate progress in either English language proficiency or academic language development across content areas. According to Olsen (2010),

These students struggle academically. They have distinct language issues, including: high functioning social language, very weak academic language, and significant deficits in reading and writing skills.... Long Term English Learners have significant gaps in academic background knowledge. In addition, many have developed habits of non-engagement, learned
passivity and invisibility in school. The majority of Long Term English Learners want to go to college, and are unaware that their academic skills, record and courses are not preparing them to reach that goal. Neither students, their parents nor their community realizes that they are in academic jeopardy. (p. 2)

Because of the lack of structured academic talk in classrooms, many ELLs are allowed to hide out in classes or are perceived as being proficient in English only because they are required to speak for short segments of time. For example, teachers may initiate a discussion with a close-ended question (e.g., “What is the setting of this story?”) that requires only a one-word response (e.g., “New Mexico”). Often, in fact, instead of targeting the specific needs and gaps that students have and using both scaffolding and accelerated instruction as needed, cognitively disrespectful (i.e., too easy and not developmentally appropriate or challenging) curricular materials are watered down to use with ELLs.

Many ELLs are also not receiving appropriate English language development that reflects their language proficiency and developmental levels. In fact, Flores, Painter, Harlow-Nash, and Pachon (2009) also suggested that reclassified ELLs [students who had accelerated through English language proficiency levels, and had met criteria to no longer be classified as ELL] were also significantly less likely to fail 9th grade or to dropout, and much more likely to pass [high school exit exams] or to take an AP course. (p. 2)

Although reclassification to non-ELL status is not necessarily enough to help students meet grade-level academic expectations, it is the first hurdle that ELLs must cross to be subject to the rigorous academic expectations that will prepare them for college and beyond.

Shadowing English language learners (ELLs) helps educators gain firsthand knowledge of where the gaps in their language development lay. On the basis of their observations and achievement data, participants explore strategies to support students. Next steps include selecting and using instructional strategies that support ELLs’ language development in targeted ways.
Creating awareness of ELLs’ schooling by seeing firsthand their academic and language proficiency needs is essential to systemically closing literacy gaps. An eye-opening way to see and create urgency around the academic language needs of ELLs is shadowing, a technique whereby educators spend a day in the life of an ELL to monitor his or her academic language experiences. After receiving professional development about the specific academic language and active listening needs of ELLs, shadowing participants are assigned to individual students and receive profiles of their achievement data (e.g., grade-level state assessment and language proficiency results), as well as recent student pictures, so that they can identify their students.

Once educators have met their ELLs “on paper,” they triangulate the data by monitoring their ELLs’ academic language and active listening at every five-minute interval for at least two hours. Participants use the ELL shadowing protocol to monitor to whom the ELLs are speaking and listening.

**Using the ELL Shadowing Protocol**

The top portion of the ELL shadowing form (see figure 1) is used for demographic data and to begin to analyze trends in the data set. For example, an educator who begins...
to transfer information from his or her ELL profile may notice that the English language development (ELD) level does not match the number of years that the student was in the United States, making the ELL an LTEL because he or she has been in the system as an ELL for six years or more. Participants may also notice that their ELLs have not progressed by one English language development level a year or that they have stalled out at a particular level for several years. Those sorts of observations allow educators to become better acquainted with the specific gaps that ELLs in their own classrooms may be experiencing.

Once participants have reviewed the achievement data for their own ELLs, they use the academic speaking and listening portion of the ELL shadowing form. In the first column, participants note the exact time of the observation at every five-minute interval. It is important that in the second column, only activities that occur at the top of the five-minute interval are documented. Anything else that occurs after the top of the five-minute interval can be added to the comments section.

In the third column, observers use codes one through four to document when students are speaking. Codes five through seven are for teacher talk only and are intended to capture moments when the student is not speaking. The type of student listening, either one way (lecture) or two way (dialogue), is documented in the fourth column. The observers record whether students are either reading or writing silently and not listening in the fifth column. Lastly, additional comments that cannot be coded by the academic speaking or listening modes are then captured in the final column. Observers capture data in this manner at every five-minute interval for two hours.

**Debriefing the Shadowing Experience**

Once all educators within a system have shadowed for a two-hour period of time, they congregate so that general trends regarding ELLs’ listening and speaking needs can be examined. Those data should also be compared with the students’ achievement data. The observation data often answer the *why* of the trends and patterns in the achievement data. Those data also begin to suggest next steps for teachers both individually and within a system, one of which is often that more structured academic oral language development strategies must be planned for and used often within classrooms. As noted by one teacher in District 6 of the Los Angeles Unified School District, where ELL shadowing began, “The person talking the most is the person learning the most, and I’m doing the most talking!”

**Next Steps**

ELL shadowing is not a silver bullet. In and of itself, it is meant to create urgency about the needs of ELL students across a system. After shadowing is completed, it is essential that schools develop a systemic plan to create more opportunities for ELLs to produce academic language across content areas. Some of the schools that I work with have chosen to systemically adopt specific strategies that elicit more academic oral language development across a school day, such as think-pair-share, the Frayer model, and reciprocal teaching.

Think-pair-share (see figure 2) is an explicit way to teach the academic register of language and is a good place to begin when first trying to elicit more academic talk in a classroom setting. Unlike partner talk, which can be used for a brief academic language exchange, think-pair-share, when structured appropriately, explicitly teaches students to think about their thinking (metacognition) and provides ELLs with the additional time that they need to process new language and content.

The think-pair-share strategy also trains all students in how to listen carefully to their
partners and paraphrase responses. Listening and speaking are especially important because they are scaffolds for reading and writing. Teachers also benefit from this strategy as they learn to better develop open-ended questions that are linked to the objectives and standards that they are teaching.

The middle and high schools that I work with in the Norwalk–La Mirada Unified School District in Norwalk, CA, first began with a small teacher-leadership group of representatives from across the content areas. Those teachers began exploring and implementing think-pair-share strategies into their daily practice. I met with teachers over a six-month period in spring 2011 (the professional development has continued in the 2011–12 school year), and we worked to perfect what seemed like a very simple strategy. The teacher leaders learned how to develop open-ended questions using Bloom’s taxonomy, how to incorporate academic language stems so that ELLs knew how to syntactically formulate academic responses, and how to teach students to listen carefully so that they would paraphrase responses and not just hear responses.

Each of those moves within think-pair-share were powerful in amplifying and not simplifying academic language across a school day and across content areas. In this manner, the plan after ELL shadowing is just as important as shadowing itself. The strategies without the shadowing context, however, will often be implemented in vain or without teachers really understanding the true academic language needs of ELLs in a classroom setting. Once you’ve experienced a day in the academic life of an ELL, it is truly difficult to turn away and not change practice.

### Figure 2

**Think-Pair-Share Organizer**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>What I Thought (Speaking)</th>
<th>What My Partner Thought (Listening)</th>
<th>What We Will Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

---

Once you’ve experienced a day in the academic life of an ELL, it is truly difficult to turn away and not change practice.

### REFERENCES


**Ivanna Soto** is an associate professor of education at Whittier College and the author of *ELL Shadowing as a Catalyst for Change*, forthcoming from Corwin Press.
# My Road to Reclassification

**My Name is:** ______________________________________

**My Grade is:** ______________________________________

**Years in the United States:** __________ My Elementary was: _______________________

**My Grades for 7th Grade are:**

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<th>Trimester 3</th>
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<td>Math: __________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science: __________</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE: __________</td>
<td>PE: __________</td>
<td>PE: __________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELD/CELT: __________</td>
<td>ELD/CELT: __________</td>
<td>ELD/CELT: __________</td>
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**My CST scores for the past three years are (Number and Level):**

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<th>5th Grade</th>
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<td>__________</td>
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<td>__________</td>
</tr>
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<td>Science</td>
<td>__________</td>
<td>__________</td>
<td>__________</td>
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**My CELDT overall score for the past three years are:**

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<th>Reading</th>
<th>Writing</th>
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<tr>
<td>5th Grade</td>
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</table>

**My greatest strength is:** __________________________ My area of need is: __________________________

<table>
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<th>Requirements to Reclassify</th>
<th>My Current Situation</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Score early advanced (4) or advanced (5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Score basic or higher on CST in Math</td>
<td>My Math CST is: __________</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have GPA of 2.5 or better</td>
<td>My GPA is: __________</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Ms. Michelle D. Owen – Los Alisos Middle School*
What am I learning about myself as an English Learner?

**Trimester 1:**
What is the one area you want to work on? ____________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What steps can you take to help you succeed in that area?

- __________________________________________________________________
- __________________________________________________________________

What is one thing that your teacher can do to support you?

- __________________________________________________________________

**Trimester 2:**
What is the one area you want to work on? ____________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What steps can you take to help you succeed in that area?

- __________________________________________________________________
- __________________________________________________________________

What is one thing that your parent can do to support you?

- __________________________________________________________________

**Trimester 3:**
What is the one area you want to work on? ____________________________
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________

What steps can you take to help you succeed in that area?

- __________________________________________________________________
- __________________________________________________________________

What is one thing that the school can do to support you?

- __________________________________________________________________

*Ms. Michelle D. Owen – Los Alisos Middle School*
My Road to Reclassification

My Name is: ________________________________

My Grade is: ________________________________

Years in the United States: __________ My Elementary was: ________________________________

My Grades for 6th Grade are:

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</thead>
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<td>Math: ______</td>
</tr>
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My CST scores for the past three years are (Number and Level):

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</tr>
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My CELDT overall score for the past three years are:

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<th>Writing</th>
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<td>4th Grade</td>
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My greatest strength is: __________________________ My area of need is: __________________________

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<td>Score early advanced (4) or advanced (5)</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ms. Michelle D. Owen – Los Alisos Middle School
What am I learning about myself as an English Learner?

**Trimester 1:**
What is the one area you want to work on? ________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

What steps can you take to help you succeed in that area?

- ___________________________________________________________________
- ___________________________________________________________________

What is one thing that your teacher can do to support you?

- ___________________________________________________________________

**Trimester 2:**
What is the one area you want to work on? ________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

What steps can you take to help you succeed in that area?

- ___________________________________________________________________
- ___________________________________________________________________

What is one thing that your parent can do to support you?

- ___________________________________________________________________

**Trimester 3:**
What is the one area you want to work on? ________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

What steps can you take to help you succeed in that area?

- ___________________________________________________________________
- ___________________________________________________________________

What is one thing that the school can do to support you?

- ___________________________________________________________________
My Road to Reclassification

My Name is: ____________________________________________

My Grade is: ___________________________________________

Years in the United States: __________ My Elementary was: ____________________________

My Grades for 5th Grade are:

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My CST scores for the past three years are (Number and Level):

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My CELDT overall score for the past three years are:

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My greatest strength is: __________________________ My area of need is: __________________________

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Have GPA of 2.5 or better</td>
<td>My GPA is: ______________________________</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What am I learning about myself as an English Learner?

Trimester 1:
What is the one area you want to work on? ________________________________
_____________________________________________________

What steps can you take to help you succeed in that area?
 ___________________________________________________________________
 ___________________________________________________________________

What is one thing that your teacher can do to support you?
 ___________________________________________________________________

Trimester 2:
What is the one area you want to work on? ________________________________
_______________________________________
____________________________________

What steps can you take to help you succeed in that area?
 ___________________________________________________________________
 ___________________________________________________________________

What is one thing that your parent can do to support you?
 ___________________________________________________________________

Trimester 3:
What is the one area you want to work on? ________________________________
__________________________________________

What steps can you take to help you succeed in that area?
 ___________________________________________________________________
 ___________________________________________________________________

What is one thing that the school can do to support you?
 ___________________________________________________________________
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