Designated ELD is a protected time during the regular school day when teachers use the CA ELD Standards as the focal standards in ways that build into and from content instruction in order to develop critical English language skills, knowledge, and abilities needed for content learning in English. This means that designated ELD should not be viewed as separate and isolated from ELA, science, social studies, mathematics, and other disciplines but rather as an opportunity during the regular school day to support ELs to develop the discourse practices, grammatical structures, and vocabulary necessary for successful participation in academic tasks across the content areas. During this protected time, ELs should be actively engaged in collaborative discussions where they build up their awareness about language and develop their skills and abilities to use language. Accordingly, during designated ELD, there is a strong emphasis on oral language development. Naturally, designated ELD instruction will also involve some level of reading and writing tasks as students learn to use English in new ways and develop their awareness of how English works in both spoken and written language.

For students enrolled in a bilingual program (e.g., dual language, two-way immersion, developmental bilingual), it may be appropriate to focus on developing foundational literacy skills during designated ELD time in order to ensure students have the requisite skills to read complex texts in English when they enter the upper elementary grades. Depending on their development of foundational skills in the primary language and on how the instructional program for newcomers is designed at particular schools, some newcomer ELs may also need explicit instruction in foundational skills during designated ELD. However, generally speaking, foundational skills should be addressed during ELA and not during designated ELD.

Content plays a key role in designated ELD since it is not possible to develop advanced levels of English by using texts and tasks that are devoid of the language of academic content topics. However, designated ELD is not a time to teach (or reteach) content. It is a time to focus on the language of the content areas in ways that are closely aligned with what is happening in content instruction. For example, in a fifth grade designated ELD class, ELs at the Expanding or Bridging level of English language proficiency might use a text they have read in one of their content studies to learn about, analyze, and discuss the language in the text. They might learn the meanings of some of the general academic vocabulary and use the vocabulary in different ways in speaking and writing over the course of the week. They might discuss the structure of the text type and identify the text connectives used. They might engage in a debate about the content of the text using the language they have been learning.

ELA/ELD Framework Chapter 2