There’s an exciting convergence moving our collective thinking forward with ELD standards expanding and building from the work of Common Core State Standards (CCSS). We are encouraged – obligated! – to think about how we equip English learners with the language they need for all aspects of their academic day.

We are evolving beyond the notion of ‘sheltering’ instruction to considering how we integrate ELD into content instruction so students learn the language needed for subject-matter demands. Rather than thinking of ELD as a time to teach basic vocabulary and grammar – or relying solely on integrated ELD to teach English – the field is acknowledging that English learners deserve a daily designated ELD block that builds foundational knowledge of English into and through the content.

This refined approach to providing language support for English learners aligns beautifully with E.L. Achieve’s research-based and federally compliant model, which illustrates how school systems can structure the school day to ensure English learners receive explicit language instruction for these two related, but distinct, purposes:

- **Integrated ELD** within content instruction
- **Designated ELD** to grow students’ proficiency in English

**Integrated ELD – Beyond sheltered instruction**

Integrated ELD is provided throughout the day and across disciplines. It moves beyond sheltered instruction as the sole approach to content instruction for ELs in considering how ELD standards in conjunction with other content standards are considered to support the linguistic and academic progress of English learners (CA ELA/ELD Framework). While sheltered instruction emphasizes critical elements that are fundamental to student learning – particularly the use of comprehensible input techniques to scaffold instruction – it has been silent on the role of language in content learning. In addition to traditional sheltered techniques and solid pedagogy, English learners need integrated ELD: explicit support in using the language of the topic and task at hand.

The field is acknowledging that English learners deserve a daily designated ELD block that builds foundational knowledge of English into and through the content.
Designated ELD – Developing awareness of how English works

The CA ELA/ELD Framework provides a helpful description:

“Designated ELD is 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 in order to develop critical English language skills, knowledge, and abilities needed for content learning in English. Designated ELD is not separate and isolated from ELA, science, social studies, mathematics, and other disciplines; rather, it is 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 discussions in which they build their awareness of language and develop their skills and abilities to use language.”

The purpose of designated ELD instruction is to equip English learners with the language they:

1. Are not likely to efficiently pick up on their own
2. Are expected to use, but are not necessarily taught, in other content area instruction
3. Need to be able to use everyday for effective academic learning

Language learning in designated ELD should be organized according to a scope and sequence of language that builds from one proficiency level to the next. This protected time is designed to teach and practice key language patterns and functions in increasingly greater depth and complexity. It allows us to incorporate general language that is frequently assumed common knowledge. It also allows us to teach some of the everyday language and registers that most native English speakers take for granted.

What is meant by “into and from content instruction” during designated ELD?

CCSS and ELD standards focus on equipping students with thinking skills, such as retelling and answering questions about the details of a text. The standards articulate the thinking work students must do; they do not specify topics or materials schools must use to teach. The thinking work itself is the content.

While the CA ELA/ELD Framework has provided a helpful description, some confusion has emerged in interpreting the meaning of “into and from content.”
Common misconception #1: We must teach the same topics in ELA and ELD

Some educators have interpreted “into and from content instruction” to mean that if students are involved in a unit about “heroes” during ELA, designated ELD lessons should teach that same topic. However, this misses the point of the thinking work called for in the CCSS. The thinking work is not dependent on a specific topic or text. In fact, it is only when students can apply the skills of that work that they truly know the standards. Specific topics are vehicles for teaching CCSS; they are a means, not an end.

Common misconception #2: We must teach the same thinking skill or genre in ELA and ELD

Sometimes “into and from content instruction” is thought to mean that if we are working on a specific skill or genre during ELA, we should address the same thinking skill or genre during designated ELD. But designated ELD is meant to “develop critical English language skills, knowledge, and abilities needed for content learning in English.” It is not meant to replace content instruction.

Common misconception #3: Designated ELD is a preview or review of literacy learning

Another confusion is that designated ELD can serve as pre-teaching or an extension of literacy instruction. This leads to a troubling question: If we believe designated ELD must be drawn directly from students’ other lessons, does that mean we believe dedicated ELD is a form of remediation? As the ELD standards clearly state, designated ELD is a protected time for English learners to learn the language and build proficiency along a continuum from emerging to expanding to bridging. If students are limited to echoing vocabulary and language patterns from subject-matter classes, their only dedicated time to use language along an identified scope and sequence is undermined. Allowing literacy goals to drive designated ELD time necessarily puts language learning in a secondary position, undermining its purpose. This approach leads to de-emphasizing or even ignoring the proficiency-level needs of English learners and creates gaps in their language knowledge.

The original, full-length article can be found at:
http://www.elachieve.org/blog/teaching-eld-what-every-educator-ought-to-know.html
What is the distinction between integrated and designated ELD?

- Designated ELD
- Integrated ELD

Rich context
Inclusive, student-centered learning environment
Backward mapping from a clear learning goal
I Do, We Do, You Do
Make content comprehensible
Ample practice talking and writing about learning
Checks for understanding and adjustment of instruction

How would you explain this distinction to a colleague?

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