Fostering Academic Discourse & Language Development in the Adult ESL Classroom

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A Sea of Change, indeed!

Massive layoffs in academic English language programs
As Flow of Foreign Students Wanes, U.S. Universities Feel the Sting

Kansas State University is one of a number of colleges cutting programs because of declines in foreign student enrollment. Amy Stroth for The New York Times

By Stephanie Saul

Jan. 2, 2018
Cal State Fullerton administration explains why they axed the American Language Program

IN CAMPUS NEWS, NEWS, TOP STORIES

The closing of the ALP led to student protests and calls to change the decision, including letters and a Change.org petition.

(Gabe Gandara / Daily Titan)

AMY WELLS AND BRANDON PHO
APRIL 10, 2018
New International Enrollments Decline Again

The number of new international students fell by 6.6 percent at U.S. universities in fall 2017, and the decline appears to be continuing this fall, according to new data.

By Elizabeth Redden  // November 13, 2018

New enrollments of international students fell by 6.6 percent at American universities in academic year 2017-18 compared to the year before, marking the second straight year in declines in new enrollments, according to new data from the annual Open Doors survey.
Oceans of Opportunity

You can’t stop the waves, but you can learn how to surf.”
– Jon Kabat Zinn
State’s teacher shortage hitting ‘alarming rates’ for 2016-17, new survey says

California’s teacher shortage is worsening, with many districts struggling to find enough qualified teachers to fill vacancies, according to a new statewide survey by the Learning Policy Institute and the California School Boards Association.

Among the 211 districts that participated in the survey – about a fifth of all the state’s districts – 75 percent indicated having a shortage of teachers. The shortage is particularly severe in high-poverty schools, which are struggling to attract and retain teachers.

Is there an opportunity in this for me?
New funds available to train bilingual teachers in California

In the midst of a statewide teacher shortage, the new California state budget includes $5 million to address a shortfall of bilingual teachers, a shortage a new study concludes will continue following the passage of Proposition 58 and the expected growth of bilingual programs.

The new state law, in effect on July 1, lifted an almost 20-year ban on bilingual education and gives districts more flexibility to offer bilingual education.
There seemed to be opportunities for teaching in our public schools, so I decided to research how to go about it.
**Test Structure for CSET: English Language Development**

CSET: English Language Development consists of three separate subtests, each composed of both multiple-choice and constructed-response questions. Each subtest is scored separately.

The structure of the examination is shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtest</th>
<th>Domains</th>
<th>Number of Multiple-Choice Questions</th>
<th>Number of Constructed-Response Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Knowledge of English Learners in California and the United States</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1 short (focused)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Applied Linguistics</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2 short (focused)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtest Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3 short (focused)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>Cultural Foundations</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1 short (focused)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Foundations of English Learner Education in California and the United States</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1 extended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtest Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1 short (focused) 1 extended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>Principles of ELD Instruction and Assessment to Promote Receptive and Productive Language Proficiency</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2 short (focused)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Subtest Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2 short (focused)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annotated List of Resources for CSET: English Language Development

This list identifies some resources that may help candidates prepare to take CSET: English Language Development. While not a substitute for coursework or other types of teacher preparation, these resources may enhance a candidate's knowledge of the content covered on the examination. The references listed are not intended to represent a comprehensive listing of all potential resources. Candidates are not expected to read all of the materials listed below, and passage of the examination will not require familiarity with these specific resources. A brief summary is provided for each reference cited. Resources are organized alphabetically.


This text summarizes empirical research studies about the development of language and literacy in minority English learners.


This article explores recent literature that addresses the importance of teachers understanding academic language to meet the needs of English learners and the most effective approaches teachers can incorporate into their practice to support English learners' linguistic development.

California Department of Education. (2009). *Core-Components-RtI*


Outlines core components of Response to Instruction and Intervention.


Describes the state-mandated educational standards: what students should know and be able to do in each subject in each grade.
### 2003 California Standards Test Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Gr 2</th>
<th>Gr 4</th>
<th>Gr 7</th>
<th>Gr 9</th>
<th>Gr 11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adv &amp; Proficient</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basic</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Below &amp; Way Below</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All students</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELL</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Problem Plaguing Our Public Schools**

The table above shows the percentage of students proficient in language arts for different levels of proficiency and grades. The data indicates a significant challenge in educating English Language Learners (ELL) compared to other students, particularly in the areas of Below & Way Below Basic proficiency, where the percentage of ELL students proficient is notably higher than that of their African-American peers. This suggests a need for targeted educational strategies to improve outcomes for ELL students.
What is it that differentiates students who make it from those who do not? This list is long, but very prominent among the factors is mastery of academic language.

—Lily Wong Fillmore, Ph.D.
Intensive English language programs for international students

Academic Language

School districts in SoCal with high concentrations of English learners
Executive Summary

English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework

for California Public Schools

Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve
time for innovation
The **CA ELD Standards** are aligned to the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy as they amplify (magnify and make clear) areas of English language development that are crucial for academic learning. The standards emphasize language learning as a social process and language itself as a complex and dynamic meaning-making resource. They promote the notion of supporting English learner (EL) students to develop awareness that different languages and variations of English exist and that their home languages and cultures are valuable resources in their own right and useful for building proficiency in English.

The standards help teachers support EL students to interact in meaningful ways with others and with complex texts, engage in and learn through intellectually challenging tasks across the content areas, develop academic English, and develop awareness about how English works so that they can use it intentionally and purposefully. The standards also provide guidance on teaching foundational skills to English learners, taking into account a variety of factors, including literacy proficiency in the primary language.

The CA ELD Standards are stated by grade level (K–8) and grade spans (9–10 and 11–12) according to the English Language Development Proficiency Level Continuum, which distinguishes three overall English language development levels: Emerging, Expanding, and Bridging. Importantly, the standards position ELs at all English language proficiency levels as capable of high-level thinking and meaningful engagement with complex, cognitively demanding academic tasks in English as long as they are provided appropriate types and levels of scaffolding.
The Circles of Implementation

A model developed to guide curricula in California K-12 schools

The outer ring displays the overarching GOALS of the ELA/ELD Framework.

The white field represents the CONTEXT in which instruction occurs.

The 5 circles within the white field represent the crosscutting THEMES of the ELA-ELD Standards.

The Circles of Implementation
English language development instruction ensures that ELs use English purposefully; interact in meaningful ways with peers, content, and texts; and learn about how English works, as illustrated in the figure below.

In the framework, pairs of vignettes in each grade level (for transitional kindergarten through grade 8) and grade span (grades 9-10 and 11-12) illustrate (1) integrated ELD instruction in the context of a content area and (2) designated ELD instruction that builds into and from the content. Many shorter snapshots of practice in the framework describe effective practices in ELD instruction.

The *Why*, *How*, and *What* of these standards could be applied to the adult ESL classroom.
Inspired by these innovations...

...I decided to integrate some of the approaches and themes described in the ELA/ELD framework into my own teaching of adult ESL classes.
Common Objective of Adult ESL

Develop language and communication skills to achieve the course goals of being ready to transition to "academic, vocational, or general education classes."
Now I tell my adult ESL students that the three overarching goals of each class are:

① To use language purposefully
② To interact in meaningful ways
③ To learn about how English works
Furthermore, I describe the three *modes* of learning we will engage in:

A. Collaborative
B. Interpretive
C. Productive
What *collaborative* means

- It means, *working together*...
- *...because learning in a classroom is primarily a social process.*
- *It is interactive and develops mostly through dialog and conversations...*
- *...especially those where thoughts and ideas are identified, elaborated, clarified, evaluated, and revised.*
- *Meaningful interaction with each other will be a daily focus of this course.*
CONSTRUCTIVE CONVERSATION SKILLS

**Constructive Conversation Skills Poster (PDF)**
This tool shows four important conversation skills, their icons, and sentence starters to help students engage in purposeful and extended interactions.

**Conversation Observation & Analysis Tool**
This assessment tool helps users to observe conversations and take notes on what teachers are doing and can do, what students are doing and can do, and next steps.

**Math Constructive Conversation Skills Poster (PDF)**
This tool helps students build four key conversation skills for working together on math ideas and problems.

**Argument Balance Scale Visual Organizer - 2D (3D version)**
This visual helps students to evaluate and weigh the evidence for and against two different positions.

**Math Paired Conversation Protocol (PDF)**
This tool guides pairs through an effective conversation to collaboratively solve complex math problems.

**Argumentation Activities**
This set of activities helps students practice their abilities to build and challenge ideas using evidence-based reasoning.

**Criteria Bar Graph**
This visual helps students to visually show and explain how well evidence meets certain criteria for an issue.

**Causes & Effects Visual Organizer (PDF)**
This visual helps students to engage in cause and effect thinking and assign values to their ideas.

Everything you need is on Jeff Zwiers’ magnificent website.
Frequently, one-time, one-way communication of thoughts and ideas.

Zwiers makes a distinction between the two. I see them as part of a continuum of speech acts.

“Back-and-forth interactions in which participants build on one another’s ideas to build up ideas that weren’t in their minds before talking.”

(Zwiers, 2015)
Oral Output ↔ Conversation

Unidirectional
- Answering T’s Questions
- Jigsaws (in home group)
- Oral Presentations
- Debates (in delivery)

Interactive
- Speed conversations
- Jigsaws (in expert groups)
- Group discussions
- Debates (in preparation)
- Transition Improv

Constructive
- Conversation Circles
- Stronger-Clearer Each Turn
- Academic Conversations
Student-led instruction
Student-created games
Student-led Activities
Group Discussions
How can we do this with our adult students?
Conversation Line Dance
Summarize Your Experience Speed-Friending

· Time is too short
· A good activity to spend some quality time w/ another person.
· Get useful information about topics that interest you.
· Helps to improve spoken English through interaction.
· Partial or faulty understandings can be discovered & corrected.
4. What would make a “perfect” day for you?

5. When did you last sing to yourself? To someone else?

6. If you were able to live to the age of 90 and retain either the mind or body of a 30-year-old for the last 60 years of your life, which would you want?

7. Name three things you and your classmate appear to have in common.

8. For what in your life do you feel most grateful?

9. If you could change anything about the way you were raised, what would it be?

10. If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one quality or ability, what would it be?

11. If a crystal ball could tell you the truth about yourself, your life, the future, or anything else, what would you want to know?
Conversation Circles

1st time around
2nd time around
3rd time around
across
counter-clockwise

clockwise

A B C D

1 2 3
From encouraging conversational interaction to fostering academic discourse

Once students have engaged in speaking activities that promote lots of oral output—particularly of the interactive kind—gradually introduce the discourse moves developed by Jeff Zwiers when discussing an oral or written text.
5 DISCOURSE MOVES

See blue handout!
**Discourse Move #1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elaborate and Clarify</th>
<th>Elaborate and Clarify</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What does that mean?</td>
<td>7. How so?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What do you mean by…?</td>
<td>8. Can you be more specific?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How does it support your opinion that…?</td>
<td>9. I understand the part about…, but I want to know about…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Can you elaborate on…?</td>
<td>10. I’m a little confused about the part…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Tell me more about…?</td>
<td>11. Can you clarify the part about…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I’d love to hear more about…?</td>
<td>12. Can you unpack that for me?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion participants receive these prompts on a slip of paper which can be folded in half.
Discourse Move #2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support with Examples</th>
<th>Support with Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Like what?</td>
<td>7. Such as?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Why do you say that?</td>
<td>8. Are there any cases of that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Can you give an example?</td>
<td>9. What is a real world example?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Where does it say that?</td>
<td>10. How is that a good example?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What is the evidence for that?</td>
<td>11. What are examples from other sources?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Can you give an example from what we heard/read/saw?</td>
<td>12. Can you give an example from your own life?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion participants receive these prompts on a slip of paper which can be folded in half.
Discussion participants receive these prompts on a slip of paper which can be folded in half.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse Move #3</th>
<th>Paraphrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Let me see if I heard you right…</td>
<td>7. In other words…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. To paraphrase what you just said, you…</td>
<td>8. Let me see if I understand you…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In other words, you are saying that…</td>
<td>9. Am I right in hearing you say that…?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What I understood was…</td>
<td>10. It sounds like you are saying that…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It sounds like you think that…</td>
<td>11. What I am hearing is…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. So, you are saying that…</td>
<td>12. In a nutshell, you are arguing that…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discourse Move #4

Discussion participants receive these prompts on a slip of paper which can be folded in half.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Build on or Challenge Ideas</th>
<th>Build on or Challenge Ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I would add that…</td>
<td>(To challenge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. That idea connects to…</td>
<td>7. I see it in a different way…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Building on your idea that…, I think…</td>
<td>8. Then again, I think that…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. That makes me think of…</td>
<td>9. Another way to look at this could be…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I’m not sure if this is relevant, but…</td>
<td>10. Yet, I wonder also if…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I want to follow up on your idea…</td>
<td>11. If ______, then ______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Discourse Move #5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Synthesize</th>
<th>Synthesize</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What have we discussed so far?</td>
<td>7. The main point seems to be…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How can we summarize what we discussed?</td>
<td>8. We can say that…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How can we bring these ideas together?</td>
<td>9. The evidence seems to suggest that…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What main point do we want to emphasize after our discussion?</td>
<td>10. We can agree that…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What is our conclusion?</td>
<td>11. Even though some might think that…, we conclude that…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What key idea can we take away?</td>
<td>12. It boils down to…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13. How does this sound?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion participants receive these prompts on a slip of paper which can be folded in half.
Building UP Conversation Skills

STRONGER & CLEARER EACH TIME

AESL 505
Directions: Read each statement below and decide whether you agree or not. Put the letter that corresponds to your opinion on the left side. Write your reason under “Why?” Then after our classroom activity, do this again but use the right side. Write your new reason under “Why?” or write “same reason” if your reasoning hasn’t changed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A = Agree strongly</th>
<th>a = agree somewhat</th>
<th>d = disagree somewhat</th>
<th>D = Disagree strongly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BEFORE</td>
<td>AFTER</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>d</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adapted from *Building Reading Comprehension Habits in Grades 6-12: A Toolkit of Classroom Activities* by Jeff Zwiers. Copyright ©2010 by the International Reading Association. May be copied for classroom use. jeffzwiers.org
Everyone must get in a circle now as shown in the diagram.

Have 6-8 people in each circle.

Have 3-4 people in the inner circle and 3-4 people in the outer circle.
Very Important!

Learn everyone’s name in your circle.
Your conversational partner is your classmate in front of you.

Outer Circle Students: *Tell* your partner what your thoughts are to the statement assigned to you.

You have 1 minute.
Inner Circle Students

❖ **Build** on something your classmate just said.

❖ **Then** add something different you thought about.

You have 1 minute.
Outer Circle Students

- **Change** your partner now by moving clockwise.
- **Tell** your new partner what your previous partner just said.
- **Add** your own thoughts.

You have 1 minute.
What it looks like...
Inner Circle Students

❖ **Build** on something your new partner just said.

❖ **Summarize** what your previous partner said.

❖ Then **add** something different you thought about.
Last time!

Outer Circle Students

❖ *Change* your partner again by moving clockwise.

❖ *Tell* your new partner what your previous partners said.

❖ *Add* your own thoughts.
One last time

Inner Circle Students

❖ **Build** on something your classmate just said.

❖ **Tell** your new partner what your previous partner(s) said.

❖ **Then** add something different you thought about.
You may return to your chairs.

Find your paper where you wrote your thoughts 5 minutes ago.
Are you going to modify your opinion and reasoning at all?

*Share your experience.*
The speaking activities described in this presentation are supported by the ELP Standards for Adult Ed.
Table 2. Organization of the English Language Proficiency Standards for Adult Education and Functions of Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELP Standards for AE</th>
<th>Functions of standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>An ELL can...</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. construct meaning from oral presentations and literary and informational text through level-appropriate listening, reading, and viewing.</td>
<td>Standards 1–7 describe the language necessary for ELLs to engage in content-specific practices associated with state-adopted academic content standards. They begin with a focus on extraction of meaning and then progress to engagement in these practices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. participate in level-appropriate oral and written exchanges of information, ideas, and analyses, in various social and academic contexts, responding to peer, audience, or reader comments and questions.</td>
<td>ELP Standards 8–10 support ELP Standards 1–7. They focus on micro-level linguistic features such as determining the meaning of words and using appropriate meaning of speech and conventions of language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. speak and write about level-appropriate complex literary and informational texts and topics.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. construct level-appropriate oral and written claims and support them with reasoning and evidence.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. conduct research and evaluate and communicate findings to answer questions or solve problems.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. analyze and critique the arguments of others orally and in writing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. adapt language choices to purpose, task, and audience when speaking and writing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. determine the meaning of words and phrases in oral presentations and literary and informational text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. create clear and coherent level-appropriate speech and text.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English to communicate in level-appropriate speech and writing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How ELP Standard 2 is articulated...

By the end of English language proficiency level 3, an ELL can...
- participate in conversations, discussions, and written exchanges about familiar topics, texts, and issues
- build on the ideas of others
- express his or her own ideas
- ask and answer relevant questions
- add relevant information and evidence
- restate some of the key ideas expressed
- follow rules for discussion
- ask questions to gain information or clarify understanding.

By the end of English language proficiency level 4, an ELL can...
- participate in conversations, discussions, and written exchanges about a range of topics, texts, and issues
- build on the ideas of others
- express his or her own ideas
- clearly support points with specific and relevant evidence
- ask and answer questions to clarify ideas and conclusions
- summarize the key points expressed.

By the end of English language proficiency level 5, an ELL can...
- participate in conversations, extended discussions, and written exchanges about a range of substantive topics, texts, and issues
- build on the ideas of others
- express his or her own ideas clearly and persuasively
- refer to specific and relevant evidence from texts or research to support his or her ideas
- ask and answer questions that probe reasoning and claims
- summarize the key points and evidence discussed.

...in levels 3, 4, and 5.
That’s all Folks!