2020-21 FAQs about ELLs

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS[1] in PM Secondary Schools

Who is the main source of instruction for ELL students?

"EVERY TEACHER must be prepared to teach academic language and challenging content to all students, including ELLs/MLLs (English Language Learners/Multilingual Learners). All teachers must support ELLs/MLLs as they acquire content knowledge while progressing towards English language proficiency."[2]

Supporting ELLs during Distance/Hybrid Learning[3]

I. EVERYTHING IS LANGUAGE

Language develops most powerfully when it is in the context of building knowledge and interacting with the world. *Everything* that happens in a school day, whether during online interactions, or in the classroom, provides an opportunity for language development. **Language development occurs throughout all content areas**. When students build knowledge and vocabulary around a variety of topics and are provided with multiple opportunities to practice they are able to access, comprehend, and participate effectively in school. ELLs require specific scaffolds and concrete strategies to learn.

Tips for language focus during distance/hybrid learning:

☐ Students engage more deeply with language when they can become "experts" in a particular topic.

☐ Consider incorporating multicultural videos, visuals, articles, stories, artifacts, music, etc.

☐ Scaffold learning with graphic organizers[4].

☐ Provide differentiated sentence frames to support students in constructing increasingly complex sentences.

☐ Encourage students to always speak in complete sentences and model the same.

☐ Use visuals and videos to deepen learning and support students with academic language and concepts.

☐ Close captions help students increase reading fluency in the target language (English). Usually they are available on YouTube videos (settings), they can be turned on for PPT (view or slide show- use captions), and can also be used with EdPuzzle.

☐ Encourage students to use the chat feature in Schoology conferences or Zoom to elevate voices and ideas from students who may not feel comfortable raising their hand and sharing orally.

☐ Translation to first language is a temporary scaffold; simply put, it is not meant to be a long term solution for making class materials comprehensible for ELLs.

☐ Provide a print rich environment, so that students can easily reference the words they need.

☐ Encourage standard English grammar usage; discourage the use of slang, 'textese' or 'chatspeak' in the classroom.

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[1] Prepared by Michelle Marrone, Director of ENL 6-12, World Languages and Bilingual Programs 7-12 & Stephanie Vogel , ENL Teacher on Special Assignment October 2020

[2] http://www.nysed.gov/common/nysed/files/nys-blueprint-for-ell-success.pdf

[3] adapted from: https://seal.org/6-key-considerations-for-supporting-english-learners-with-distance-learning/

[4] https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AbgF7gqkPpr13nGvoYirfshNYqz3GMhv/view

II. ORAL LANGUAGE

This is an essential element of an effective language and literacy development program. **Students must be talking and actively producing language.** Getting our English Learners to engage in oral language is something we need to get creative about in the distance learning space.

Tips for making oral language happen during distance/hybrid learning:

• Emphasize oral language[5] even in virtual spaces.
• Remember that oral language predicts and directly affects reading levels.
• Model thinking aloud, ask comprehension and higher order questions- leave time for students to think, and then respond out loud. (Increase wait time!)
• Practice academic vocabulary and fluency with choral response, chants, poems and/or songs.
• Incorporate technology to break students into smaller groups to discuss content. You can easily create breakout rooms on Zoom or Schoology Conferences.
• Have students record themselves and share with you for feedback using:
  Schoology assessments, Screencastomatic, FlipGrid, Vocaroo, or Google Voice.

III. ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

Explicit focus on complex, precise, rich and academic language is needed. Choose **key vocabulary** to teach, and employ strategies for teaching vocabulary, select materials carefully, and model the use of complex, precise and wonderful language in both the social and the academic realms. **Learning new vocabulary is critical for our English Learners.**

Tips for making academic language happen during distance/hybrid learning:

☐ Select vocabulary you want students to learn (both content and Tier II [6] vocabulary).
☐ Teach language function[7] words and phrases (describe, contrast, caused by, characteristic, etc.) or other language that they need in order to process and discuss the content.
☐ Incorporate technology, images, videos, and total physical response to teach new vocabulary.
☐ Create intentional prompts, questions, and sentence frames that push students to use the new vocabulary.
☐ Pre-teach vocabulary to support comprehension and ability to access content during lessons.
☐ Consider word walls, emphasizing word roots, prefixes, suffixes, use online apps like Quizlet for vocabulary practice

IV. RELATIONSHIPS MATTER:

Strong relationships between home and school are a cornerstone of powerful education for English Language Learners. **Students' learning is strengthened when teachers engage families.** Help families find simple, meaningful ways to connect to students' academic learning and support social-emotional health.

Tips for relationships with ELLs and their families during distance/hybrid learning:
☐ Encourage students to talk with their families about what they are learning because students' academic learning develops when they are engaging in conversations.
☐ Use Language Line to connect with families *(see last page for instructions)*.
☐ Create open-ended assignments where students can express what they are experiencing during this challenging time (orally and/or in writing).
☐ Communicate with families, so you can get feedback on what is working or not working for them and their students. We are all learning, so constructive feedback from families can help us grow and better serve them.

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[5] https://drive.google.com/file/d/1rLFXZSot8ImmmUEKiihVeAbzFw6vn_x2/view
[6] https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist/most-frequent
[7] https://drive.google.com/file/d/1AbgF7gqkPpr13nGvoYirfshNYqz3GMhv/view

How do I know if ELLs/FELLs[8] are in my class? What is the Level of Proficiency?[3]

In eSchool, your class roster shows a column LEP[9]

✓ *(green check)* : CURRENT ELL. Students receive a full academic program of studies with some additional supports depending on the language proficiency levels that are determined by the yearly language assessment test called NYSESLAT[10].

α *(green alpha)*: FORMER ELL student has exited (scored commanding); however, s/he is still given language support and testing accommodations for 2 years.

N.B . 🟠 *(an ORANGE dot) indicates the family's home language is other than English-- does not indicate the student is ELL*

PROFICIENCY LEVEL DESCRIPTORS				
LEVEL 1 – ENTERING great dependence on supports to advance academic language skills; has yet to meet linguistic demands necessary to demonstrate English language proficiency in academic contexts within grade level	LEVEL 2 – EMERGING some dependence on supports to advance academic language skills; has yet to meet linguistic demands necessary to demonstrate English language proficiency in academic contexts within grade level	LEVEL 3 – TRANSITIONING shows some independence in advancing academic language skills, but has yet to meet linguistic demands necessary to demonstrate English language proficiency in academic contexts within grade level	LEVEL 4 – EXPANDING shows great independence in advancing academic language skills, and is approaching linguistic demands necessary to demonstrate English language proficiency in academic contexts within grade level	LEVEL 5 – COMMANDING met the State standard in academic language skills; demonstrates English language proficiency in academic contexts within grade level. Student is now designated as a Former ELL (FELL)

Each ELL receives their overall proficiency level based on NYSESLAT exam, given each Spring. This exam administered over four days analyzes language proficiency in areas: Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing. Scores can be seen in eSchool: by hovering on the green check or by going into the assessment tab in student's profile. The proficiency indicates *only overall proficiency; it does not mean that the student is able to perform at that level for all language skills. I.E.. a student at overall "Level 4 - Expanding", may have a writing proficiency that is at Level 1- Entering, with a speaking proficiency at Level 5 - Commanding.*

At the time of this printing, the 2021 NYSESLAT is scheduled as follows:

NYSESLAT Speaking	Monday, April 19 – Friday, May, 28
NYSESLAT Listening, Reading, Writing	Monday, May 17– Friday, May 28

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[8] ELL= English Language Learners, who have a program called ENL= English as a New Language formerly known as ESL. FELL- FORMER English Language Learner who receive support for 2 years after scoring Lv 5 on NYSESLAT
[9] LEP- Limited English Proficient, an older term no longer in use to refer to ELLs
[10] NYSESLAT- New York State English as a Second Language Assessment Test

How do ELLs receive support at our secondary schools?

"EVERY TEACHER must be prepared to teach academic language and challenging content to all students, including ELLs/MLLs. All teachers must support ELLs/MLLs as they acquire content knowledge while progressing towards English language proficiency."

ENL (English as a New Language) services are provided:
- to all proficiency levels through integrated[11] classes where the teacher is dually certified in content and ENL, or students are co-taught by one content specialist and one ENL specialist
- Level 1-(Entering) and Level 2-(Emerging) students also receive direct English Language instruction in a stand-alone ENL class

Some students ALSO enroll in one or more bilingual classes- which are taught in both Spanish and English by a certified content area bilingual teacher.

What accommodations for EXAMS[12] are provided for ELL/FELL students?

☐ CLASSROOM: for all tests, quizzes, exams; it is highly recommended that students be provided with extra time and have access to bilingual content area glossaries[13].

☐ MIDTERMS, QUARTERLIES, and/or FINALS: for all midterms, quarterlies, and/or finals- provide students with extra time (double) and bilingual glossaries. Content area specific glossaries[14] should be packed with students' exams. Students will take the exams with their peers in regular testing locations unless otherwise noted.

☐ STATE EXAMS: All ELLs and FELLs will be provided with content area specific glossaries[15]. Students will take exams with their peers in regular testing locations unless separate location has been assigned. Students will be allowed additional (double) time and provided with exams in their home language (if available).

How can I contact non-English speaking parents?

ELL families are often at a disadvantage when it comes to supporting their students because of language and cultural barriers. It might feel daunting for an English-speaking teacher to call a non-English speaking parent; HOWEVER, our district subscribes to Language Line to help us communicate with families. This service can be used to make contact with parents when a translator is not available:

- Dial 1-866-874-3972
- Enter your Client ID Number: 502280

Press 1 for Spanish or press 2 for all other languages (at the prompt, state the name of the language you need). *Special Education has a different code for Language Line.*

Who can I contact to help me with other questions about ELLs/FELLs?
Stephanie Vogel is a TOSA (teacher on special assignment) for English as a New Language; she rotates between secondary buildings to provide help with scaffolds and supports for secondary ELL/FELL students. Please stop by to see her or email her: svogel@pmschools.org

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[11] Integrated classes are taught by dually certified ENL/ELA teachers who scaffold ana/or modify grade level curriculum
[12] http://www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed/english-language-learner multilingual-learner-assessment-testing-accommodations
[13] Bilingual Glossaries: subject specific glossaries available at steinhardt.nyu.edu/metrocenter/resources/glossaries
[14/15] Glossaries- should you need glossaries please contact your department chair, director, or building ENL Specialists or SVOGEL@PMSCHOOLS. ORG