

Programs for English Language Learners

Any program that is developed to meet the needs of ELLs must include instruction based on sound educational and second language acquisition theory. The Center for Equity and Excellence in Education at the George Washington University has developed six guiding principles for a program development for ELL students.

Principle 1: English Language Learners are held to the same high expectations of learning established for all students.

Principle 2: English Language Learners develop full productive and receptive proficiencies in English in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, consistent with those for all students.

Principle 3: English Language Learners reach challenging content and performance standards in all content areas, including reading and language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, the fine arts, health and physical education, consistent with those for all students.

Principle 4: English Language Learners receive instruction that builds on their previous education and cognitive abilities and that reflects their language proficiency levels.

Principle 5: English Language Learners are evaluated with appropriate and valid assessments that are aligned with state and local standards and that take into account the language acquisition stages and cultural backgrounds of the students.

Principle 6: The academic success of English Language Learners is a responsibility shared by all educators, the family, and the community.

While these principles should assist districts in the overall vision of their program for English Language Learners, there are practices that are less effective. For example, it is not appropriate to place students in classrooms without the benefit of English instruction designed for second language learners and without the modification of curriculum and instruction in content areas. In addition, placing students in remedial reading and speech therapy as a substitute for ESL instruction does not constitute an acceptable program that addresses the needs of students with English language deficiencies.

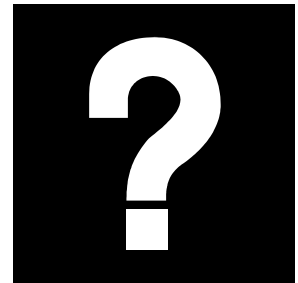
Program development should follow a continuum addressing the activities to identify ELLs, assess and place students in appropriate instruction, implement the program, and evaluate the effectiveness of

Guiding principles of an exemplary program

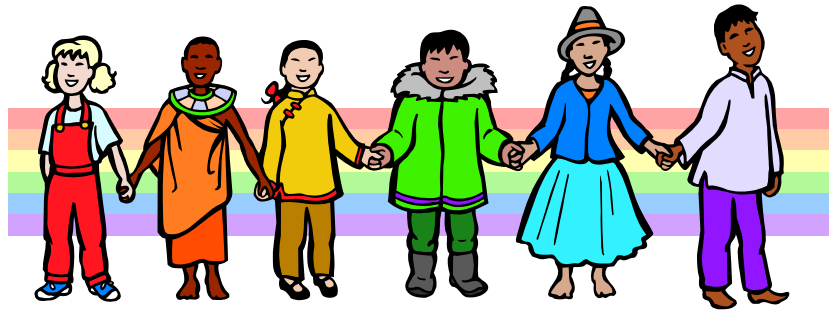
the program. Figure 1 on page five provides a graphic of program components. The program developed by a school district should address issues related to the identification of students, assessment and placement of students, program implementation, and program evaluation.

Guiding Questions for Program Development:

<i>Identification of Students</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the district screen for students with possible English deficiencies? How will the results be maintained? • How will the district assess English language proficiency of possible ELLs?
<i>Assessment and Placement of ELL Students</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the district assess identified ELLs for instructional needs, achievement levels, and native language proficiency? • How will the district place students in appropriate ESL instructional programs to learn English? • What program model will the district utilize? (Programs must be based on sound educational theory appropriate for ELL instruction.)
<i>Program Implementation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the district address program goals for the development of English language skills and meaningful participation in subject area instruction? • How will the district notify parents of program options and school activities? • How will the district provide ELLs with opportunities to participate in all programs for which they qualify (e.g., gifted, special education, advanced placement, extra curricular)? • How will the district provide staff development to implement the program? • How will the district provide instructional facilities comparable to the general student population? • How will the district integrate ELLs into classes with English speaking peers?
<i>Program Evaluation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the district collect information on program effectiveness? • How will the district identify program deficiencies? • How will the district implement improvements to address deficiencies? • How often will the district conduct periodic evaluations on program effectiveness?

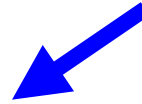


PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS



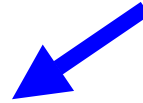
Identify the Student

- Administer Home Language Survey
- File the results in permanent records
- Assess English language proficiency of possible ELLs



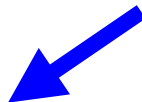
Assessment and Placement of ELL Students

- Assess identified ELLs for instructional needs
- Place students in appropriate ESL instructional program
- Assess students for advancement in proficiency levels or program exit



Implement the Program

- Train staff to implement the program
- Provide quality instruction utilizing an educationally sound program
- Develop English language skills and meaningful participation in subject area instruction
- Notify parents of program options and school activities



Evaluate the Program

- Conduct periodic evaluations of program effectiveness
- Identify program deficiencies
- Address deficiencies
- Improve the program



Developing a program for English Language Learners should involve more than an administrator in a school district. Although it is best if an administrator is appointed as responsible for the program, the development and continual improvement of the program will require a team effort. The district team should be composed of teachers, administrators, parents, and advisors from the community. For example, the ELL program development team might include the following:

- District administrator responsible for the program and who serves as the main contact for issues related to the program
- District ESL/Bilingual Education teachers
- Content area teachers
- Special educators
- Parents of ELLs
- Language acquisition advisors from higher education
- Guidance counselors
- Board members or community advisors

Utilizing a team to discuss program needs and to create a program suited to district needs is essential for success. In addition, the team may help disseminate the details of the program to staff and the community.

