The Common Core for English Language Learners: Challenges and Opportunities

http://ell.stanford.edu
A Nation at Risk (1983)... call for standards.
No Child Left Behind

This time, bingo!
No Child Left Behind: Three important pieces for ELLs

Sec. 1111(a)(3)(ix)(III) the inclusion of limited English proficient students, who shall be assessed in a valid and reliable manner and provided reasonable accommodations on assessments administered ... including, to the extent practicable, assessments in the language and form most likely to yield accurate data...

Sec. 1111(a)(3)(xiii) enable results to be disaggregated within each State, local educational agency, and school by...English proficiency status.

Sec 3113(b)(2) standards and objectives for raising the level of English proficiency that are derived from the four recognized domains of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, and that are aligned with achievement of the challenging State academic content and student academic achievement standards described in section 1111(b)(1).
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• ESL is necessary but not sufficient; ELLs learn language best when they engage with content.
The new standards afford us a fresh opportunity to reinforce the key findings of our knowledge and experience as the ELL field:

- with support, ELLs can participate in classroom discourse focused on rich and exciting academic content.
- ESL is necessary but not sufficient; ELLs learn language best when they engage with content.
- focusing on both text and discourse gives ELLs opportunities for extended engagement with complex ideas.
The New Standards...

- raise the bar for learning;
- raise the demand for language;
- call for a high level of classroom discourse across all subject areas.
What do the New Standards Imply? Focus on Language

• “Students can, without significant scaffolding, comprehend and evaluate complex texts across a range of types and disciplines and they can construct effective arguments and convey intricate and multifaceted information” (ELA student portraits, p. 7)

• Mathematically proficient students understand and use stated assumptions, definitions, and previously established results in constructing arguments. They make conjectures, and build a logical progression of statements to explore the truth of their conjectures” (Math practices, pp. 6-7)
Science Practices’ focus on Language

![Diagram showing the three spheres of activity for scientists and engineers](image)

**THE REAL WORLD**
- ask questions, observe, experiment, measure

**THEORIES AND MODELS**
- imagine, reason, calculate, predict

**COLLECT DATA TEST SOLUTIONS**

**FORMULATE HYPOTHESES PROPOSE SOLUTIONS**

**ANALYZE**

**INVESTIGATING**

**EVALUATING**

**DEVELOPING EXPLANATIONS AND SOLUTIONS**

Figure 3.1 The three spheres of activity for scientists and engineers (NRC Science Framework p.3-3)
Old Paradigm

- Content
- Language

Mostly vocabulary, Grammar
New Paradigm

Content

Language

- Discourse
- Text (complex text)
- Explanation
- Argumentation
- Purpose
- Typical structure of text
- Sentence structures
- ΔVocabulary practices
New Paradigm

Math

Science

Language Arts

Content

Discourse
Text (complex text)
Explanation
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Purpose
Typical structure of text
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Math

M1. Make sense of problems & persevere in solving them
M5. Use appropriate tools strategically

M7. Look for & make use of structure
M8. Look for & express regularity in repeated reasoning

M4. Model with mathematics

Science

S1. Ask questions & define problems
S3. Plan & carry out investigations
S4. Analyze & interpret data

S2. Develop and use models
S5. Use mathematics & computational thinking

ELA

E1. Demonstrate independence
E2. Build strong content knowledge
E3. Respond to the varying demands of audience, talk, purpose, & discipline
E4. Comprehend as well as critique
E5. Value evidence
E6. Use technology & digital media strategically & capably
M3. Construct viable argument & critique reasoning of others
S6. Construct explanations & design solutions
S7. Engage in argument from evidence
S8. Obtain, evaluate & communicate information

E7. Come to understand other perspectives & cultures
# Major Shifts in New Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELA</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Science</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Regular practice with complex text and its vocabulary</td>
<td>• Provide opportunities for student access to the different mathematical (discourse) practices described in the CCSS</td>
<td>• Developing and using models</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Building knowledge through content-rich informational texts</td>
<td>• Support mathematical discussions and use a variety of participation structures</td>
<td>• Constructing explanations (for science) and developing solutions (for engineering)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Emphasis on reading, writing, and speaking that is grounded in evidence from the text</td>
<td>• Focus on students’ mathematical reasoning, NOT on students’ flawed or developing language</td>
<td>• Engaging in argument from evidence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>• Obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information</td>
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Systemic Challenges that Require Collaboration

- Student
- Teacher
- Site and district leaders
- State leaders
- Preservice and inservice providers
- Testmakers
- Publishers
- Federal leaders
Students are challenged to...

- engage in productive oral and written group work with peers,
- engage in effective oral and written interactions with teachers,
- explain and demonstrate their knowledge using emerging complex language and other communicative strategies in different settings, and
- extract meaning from complex written texts.
Understanding Language Project: Three Goals

1. Engage in a healthy public dialogue around what the CCSS and NGSS imply for ELLs.

2. Develop exemplars of what CCSS and NGSS-aligned instruction looks like, to be used as strategic tools by districts (and others).

3. Develop a vibrant, inquisitive, engaging online community.