

KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTING INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS

This section points out some of the important factors to consider when educating ELs: seeing them as assets to the educational community, sharing the educational responsibility amongst all stakeholders, and using appropriate data to inform instructional practices.

English Learners as Assets

“English learners” is a term that refers to students who come from a myriad of linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and social backgrounds. As integral members of the school community, English learners are assets who enrich the schools with their unique knowledge and experiences built upon their languages and cultures.

Shared Responsibility and Collaboration

The education of English learners is the shared responsibility and vision of all stakeholders involved. Services for English learners must be based on their individual and collective learning needs and characteristics and consider the goals of their families and districts. School districts have the flexibility to design programs that best fit the needs of the culturally and linguistically diverse English learner population while simultaneously meeting federal and state requirements.

Intentional and consistent collaboration between all teachers and school personnel serving English learners is a vital component to all effective English learner programs.

Data-Informed Instructional Practices

High-quality, standards-aligned instruction for English learners is composed of rigorous, grade-level content instruction, intentional language development, and accessibility to content. Teasing apart these components, which must be independently robust and cohesively interdependent, is necessary to ensure that all are consistently present. All decisions regarding instruction for English learners must be informed by a comprehensive analysis of data. Based on continuous analysis of data, instruction must be periodically evaluated by teachers and administrators and adjusted accordingly.

Assessments must be valid measures of English learners' grasp of content knowledge. Where possible and appropriate, English learners' home language should be used as the language of assessment. If English is used, appropriate testing accommodations must be used to further ensure the reliability and validity of the assessment results.