

English Language Development Standards: The California Model

There are now over 1.4 million children in California who are not proficient in English. These numbers are triple what they were in 1985. Twenty-five years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court found in *Lau Nichols* (1974) that children who are taught in a language they do not understand do not have equal access to the core curriculum. Since that time, there have been a variety of programs, approaches, theories, and methods used to teach English to these children and to make the core curriculum accessible to them through the primary language. However, none of these approaches have been long-term or systematic. The 1998 passage of Proposition 227 (Unz & Tuchman, 1997) now mandates that children be taught primarily in English except under certain waiver situations.

While 227's proposed "Structured English Immersion" model is also unproven and does not include recommendations for how to teach English or what to include in the way of academic content, the California English Language Development Standards, approved by the State Board of Education on July 15, 1999 (California Department of Education [CDE], 1999) and based on the California English Language Arts Standards (CDE, 1998), provide the framework for such a system to be put into place.

In this article, we will first review a few of the more common models, approaches, and programs used to teach English Learners (ELs) and examine how these children have been assessed. Next, the current standards-based reform efforts for all education, and specifically for teaching English to ELs, will be reviewed. Finally, the foundation and development of the California English Language Development (ELD) Standards will be presented, along with examples.

Programs and Methods for Teaching English Learners

The first and most controversial issue that has been addressed regarding English instruction for ELs is how much of the child's first language (primary language) should be used. After the Lau decision, most models called for extensive instruction to be given in the child's primary language. Second language researchers found that the stronger the proficiency in the first language, the easier it would be to acquire a second language (August & Hakuta, 1997; Cummins, 1981; Gandara, 1997; Krashen, 1981; Samway & McKeon, 1999). This finding was in concert with the common sense dictate that it is easier to learn in a language one understands and that once one learns to read in one language, it is easier to learn to read in another.

Thus, the first language was believed to provide a foundation in reading, writing, and mathematics that could be transferred to English as the child became more fluent in English. Programs varied, however, in the amount of instructional time spent in the first language (L1) and in the length of the programs themselves. This made such programs very difficult to study empirically. Kenji Hakuta has repeatedly suggested that we have not done a good job of researching bilingual education (Hakuta, 1986; August & Hakuta, 1997), but the number of variables alone makes this an onerous task.

The most common model in the United States to extensively use the primary language is Transitional Bilingual Education, in which children are gradually moved from use of the primary language to all English instruction, usually within two to three years. Research results do not show that such early exit Transitional Bilingual Education is particularly effective (Berman, Chamber, Gandara, McLaughlin, Minicucci, Nelson, Olsen & Parrish, 1992; Ramirez, 1992; Thomas & Collier, 1995).

Late exit Transitional Bilingual Education (from four to six years before exit) has been shown to be successful in achieving academic proficiency (Baker, 1996; Ramirez, 1992; Thomas & Collier, 1995). Other models, such as two-way bilingual (also known as dual language immersion), provide for the long-term development of two languages by two populations. For example, native speakers of Spanish and native speakers of English both learn a second language while also learning in their first language, with the goal being that they all become bilingual and biliterate. Many of these programs nationally have shown positive results in attainment of academic achievement in English (Thomas & Collier, 1995).

However, there are only approximately 250 of these programs nationally, and most are limited to elementary schools (Christian, 1994). Academic achievement resulting from these programs has been most often determined by standardized tests such as the California Test of Basic Skills

(Samway & McKeon, 1999). The Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition (SAT-9; 1996) is now used in California for determining the academic achievement of all students.

Gandara (1997) reports that approximately 70% of the 1.4 million children who are not proficient in English are educated in “English only” classrooms. Programs that focus primarily on English instruction, such as pull-out ESL, are considered less effective models (Baker, 1996; Faltis & Hudelson, 1998). In this model, children receive from 20 minutes to an hour per day of English language instruction and are “submerged” in English academic instruction in regular classrooms the remainder of the day. Neither the methods used to teach English nor the specific goals or objectives in these and other programs are usually discussed in the literature.

As mentioned in the introduction, another model, Structured English Immersion (SEI), has received recent attention due to the passage of California Proposition 227 (Unz & Tuchman, 1997). In this model (not defined in 227), the intent is to “shelter” English academic content while at the same time providing instruction that leads to English language proficiency. Neither pull-out ESL nor SEI makes significant use of the primary language, and the teachers are most often monolingual in English.

SEI, also known as “sheltered English”, as originally conceived (Krashen, 1981), made use of the learner’s first language and was intended for those already with intermediate English proficiency. The current model does not have this requirement. What little research currently exists on pull-out ESL and SEI (reviewed in August & Hakuta, 1997; Gandara, 1997) has not shown them to be generally effective in terms of academic achievement. One program begun in Texas has shown some initial success, although not long-term (August & Hakuta, 1997). In response to Proposition 227, which, for the most part, limits services to ELs to one year, it is expected that there will now be extensive research in California on SEI.

Whatever the program model, how English has been taught to ELs also has varied considerably. The approaches and methods used range from the audio-lingual method and the communicative approach, to the natural approach and others (see Richard-Amato, 1996, for an overview of these approaches). No one theory, method, or approach has been found to be most effective. There also have been no standards or goals specifying exactly what children need to know to be successful academically. To some extent, the state-approved proficiency tests, intended for purposes of identification and redesignation of ELs, (e.g., Language Assessment Scales [LAS; 1991], Bilingual Syntax Measure [BSM; 1978], Idea Oral Language Proficiency Test [IPT; 1994]) have been benchmarks, but none of these are specifically tied to academic standards or curriculum.

English language instruction over the years has been guided for the most part by the latest theories and approaches to second language acquisition developed by such researchers as Ellis (1985); Gardner (1985); Genesee (1987); Krashen and Terrell (1983); and McLaughlin (1985). Publishers in the 1980s and 1990's moved away from texts that focused primarily on teaching language without academic content (such texts focused more on grammar and vocabulary), and began creating ESL curricula that were content-based (using modified SEI techniques). Many of these latter materials used scope and sequence models with specific objectives, while others offered theme-based units. Whereas many had clear objectives for a lesson or unit, few if any of these texts had standards or specific overall goals for student achievement that were also tied to the core curriculum for all students.

The Standards Movement

Standards are not a new concept in the United States. The term is used in a variety of ways, but usually means "a criterion, gauge, yardstick, touchstone, a means of determining what a thing should be...something established by authority, custom, or general consent as a model or example" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1977, p. 1133). Dalton (1998) refers to them as "banners guiding the way at the front of a procession" (p. 4).

Standards-based education is a movement that has quickly spread throughout the country in response to reforms in education and a need for accountability for all students. In this context, standards are generally defined as benchmarks for accountability (O'Malley & Valdez-Pierce, 1996) or goals that students will attain. Standards call for consistency in what we expect from students. Darling-Hammond (1997) suggests that if we continue to only make school reform a result of exceptions to rules and/or to provide waivers from programs, such reforms "will surely evaporate in a very short time, long before good schooling spreads to the communities where it is currently most notable by its absence" (p. 211). Standards are clearly a way to provide the stability and consistency Darling-Hammond advocates. However, there are also those who are concerned that the Standards Movement will lead to a lock-step curriculum.

Darling-Hammond asks, "If some system is needed, the question is how much system and of what kind?" (1997, p. 211). She sees a direct connection between standards for student learning and for teaching and that both are necessary for genuine learning to occur. In response to this call for reform, academic standards have been developed nationwide for a variety of subject areas. Standards "identify the types of knowledge and skills that are important in the content areas but do not indicate *how* successful students must be in accomplishing the objectives" (O'Malley & Valdez-Pierce, 1996, p. 27).

Some standards have been developed by the U.S. government, while others have been developed with organizational funding. For example, the English Language Arts Standards (National Council of Teachers of English /International Reading Association, 1996) were developed jointly by the two aforementioned organizations; the Mathematics Standards were developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (2000). Finally, the ESL Content and Assessment Standards were developed nationally by the organization Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (1997) .

Types of Standards

O'Malley and Valdez-Pierce (1996) identify two types of standards. *Content Standards* include *declarative knowledge* that “consists of *what* you know, or knowledge of concepts and facts,” (p. 26), while *procedural knowledge* is what you know how to do. *Performance Standards* are more specific and identify ways in which to demonstrate declarative and procedural knowledge and the level of performance to be attained.

The TESOL ESL Standards and Assessment Project

ESL Standards, unlike other academic content standards, are not intended to stand alone (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages [TESOL], 1997). Rather, they are intended as a pathway to academic content standards. “They assume student understanding of and ability to use English to engage with content” (TESOL, 1997, p. 2). Together with Content standards, ESL Standards can provide this needed guidance about that pathway. ESL Standards can “provide the bridge to general education expected of all students in the United States” (TESOL, 1997, p. 2). For these reasons, TESOL created a task force to develop pre-K-12 ESL content and assessment standards.

Over the past six years, this task force has produced a series of documents under the direction of Deborah Short of the Center for Applied Linguistics. The first of these was an access document* intended to aid schools in determining which programs are helping language minority students to meet the National Education Goals (TESOL, 1997). Next, a conceptual framework was created, published as *Promising Futures* (TESOL, 1996). This document describes why ESL Standards are needed, explains myths about second language learning, lays out TESOL's vision of effective education for all students, and provides general principles for second language acquisition.

* now published as part of the TESOL Standards

It was only after these foundations were laid that the TESOL ESL Standards for Content and Assessment performance standards were created. The TESOL ESL Content Standards (1997) are centered around three general goals, with three standards for each goal. Each standard is delineated with descriptors, progress indicators, and vignettes. The document is further organized around three grade levels (pre-K-3, 4-8, and 9-12) and three proficiency levels (beginning, intermediate, and advanced). The three general goals of the TESOL ESL Content Standards are:

1. To use English to communicate in social settings
2. To use English to achieve academically in all content areas.
3. To use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways. (p. 9)

According to the TESOL Standards:

For ELs, such goals and standards for language development specify the language competencies ESOL students in elementary and secondary schools need to become fully proficient in English, to have unrestricted access to grade-appropriate instruction in challenging academic subjects. (pp.1-2)

A teacher education volume (Snow, 2000) has just been published, as has a draft version of *Scenarios for ESL standards-based assessment* (TESOL, March, 1999), and curriculum guidelines are now being developed based on these standards.

The California ELD Standards and Assessment Project

While national standards tend to be general in nature, state standards are more applicable to local contexts. For this reason, the State of California has been developing academic standards for all the major content areas (e.g., math, science, social studies, and language arts). Standards completed for English Language Arts (ELA) cover all aspects of reading, writing, listening, and speaking (CDE, 1998). They include recommendations for ELs, but are not sufficient to meet the needs of those students. As with the TESOL ESL Standards, guidance is needed so that ELs in California can follow a pathway that leads to California ELA Standards.

A systematic way of determining whether ELs have become proficient in English has long been sought. Various legislative attempts have been made over the past few years in California to establish accountability for bilingual education programs in general and for English language skills in particular; however, these attempts have not completed the legislative process and/or were vetoed by the governor. For the most part, accountability and growth in language proficiency has been measured

through the instruments mentioned earlier (LAS, IPT, BSM) and a standardized test of language and math. These are used to “exit” students from program services.

In the latest effort to set up a statewide system to chart language proficiency growth, Assembly Bill 748 (A.B. 748), the Bilingual Education: Assessment of Language Skills Act (1997), also known as the Escutia Bill, was proposed in the legislature. It authorized the search for and/or development of a statewide assessment of English Language Proficiency for all K-12 students whose primary language is other than English. This assessment was to be standards-based in the areas of listening, speaking, reading and writing. A.B. 748 was signed by Governor Wilson in October 1997. In December 1997, the San Diego County Office of Education was awarded the contract to implement A.B. 748, with Adel Nadeau appointed as Project Director.

Three tasks were identified for the project. First, as with the TESOL Standards, a theoretical framework was to be developed to guide both the standards and the assessment to follow. Barbara Merino of the University of California at Davis was appointed the Task Force coordinator for this aspect of the project. Second, a task force was formed to revise and/or create new English Language Development (ELD) Standards to be aligned with the recently approved English Language Arts Standards. Natalie Kuhlman of San Diego State University became the coordinator for this aspect of the project. The third group, coordinated by Magaly Levandez of Loyola Marymount University, would focus specifically on a technical review of current assessment instruments in the field (A.B. 748, 1997).

The theoretical framework and development of new ELD Standards have been completed. On July 15, 1999, the California State Board of Education adopted the K-12 English Language Development Standards that will serve as the basis for statewide assessment. The assessment group has completed a technical review of existing tests. The second phase of that project, now underway, is the actual development of a statewide measure of English language proficiency. The contract was recently awarded to CTB McGraw Hill, and the test is expected to be available by Fall 2001.

ELD Standards Design

In the following sections, the California ELD Standards, as approved by the State Board of Education, will be discussed. The California ELD Standards are performance expectations and not instructional activities. They do not dictate the method of instruction. As is indicated in much of the literature, standards state what children are expected to know, not how they will learn it.

Regardless of what type of program a child is enrolled in (e.g., dual language immersion, transitional bilingual education, or structured English immersion, as described earlier), the rigor of the ELD Standards holds all teachers accountable for the development of full academic proficiency in English. Similar to the second TESOL ESL goal, the goal of the California ELD Standards is to provide a pathway to the ELA Standards, as well as access to all content areas taught in English. The California ELA Standards detail what is needed for *all* students from kindergarten through 12th grade to become fully literate in the English language. The ELD Standards detail the pathway that ELs need to follow to also reach the ELA Standards. For ELs to become fully literate, the ELD Standards must maintain a high level of rigor.

As such, the ELD Standards represent a system of accountability that will move students more rapidly into the mainstream curriculum but will also assure them more than a superficial level of English proficiency. Specifically, the system represents the following approach to English language development:

1. The ELD Standards provide a clear pathway of performance to achieve grade-level ELA Standards, the same level as for all students in the state. Students use language proficiency level appropriate materials, including reading texts, until they reach the advanced level of proficiency when they are ready for grade-level materials.
2. Academic content is tied to the ELA Standards, but with ELD content integrated throughout the Standards. There is an integration of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading is not delayed, but a distinct pathway to literacy is created that is appropriate to the ELs.
3. Listening and speaking expectations are embedded throughout the categories, not just in a section entitled "Listening & Speaking."
4. There is a balance between communication, language conventions, and academic English.

Organization of the Standards

Grade Spans

The ELD Standards are divided into four grade spans (K-2, 3-5, 6-8, and 9-12) rather than into specific grade levels. Grade spans are needed because children will be entering school at various levels of proficiency in English and with varied levels of school experience. Children who are placed in first grade because of their age may not have acquired the prerequisites in

English language development that are needed to be successful. Children in seventh grade may have neither previous schooling nor experience with English. Both groups of children need much more than just grade-level coursework. The grade span system allows for such variations in needs.

Language Proficiency Levels

ELD Standards address five proficiency levels: Beginning, Early Intermediate, Intermediate, Early Advanced and Advanced. These are roughly equivalent to what is currently used in a variety of language proficiency tests (e.g., LAS, BSM, IPT). One way to understand these levels is through the examples given later in this article. The proficiency levels are distinguished by key words such as “identify” (beginning), “produce” (early/intermediate), “explain” (early advanced), and “apply” (advanced). The ELD Standards for each proficiency level represent the *exit point* for that level.

Categories

The ELD Standards are subsumed under the same categories as those used in the ELA Standards. However, some categories are separated into smaller or slightly different units (see Table 1). The overall ELA categories are Reading, Writing, Written and Oral English-Language Conventions, and Listening and Speaking. In the ELA Standards under Reading there are just three sub-categories; in the ELD Categories, Reading is separated into four sub-categories: Word Analysis; Fluency and Systematic Vocabulary Development; Reading Comprehension; and Literary Response and Analysis. These added divisions allow for the gradual language growth needed in these areas.

In addition, in the ELD Standards, “Written and Oral English-Language Conventions” have been separated rather than combined. Written Language Conventions is a second category in Writing, while Oral Language Conventions has been subsumed under Listening and Speaking.

These variations were made because of the different needs of students developing English as a new language compared to the needs of students using English as their native language. As mentioned above, ELD students who have attained the advanced proficiency level will also meet all the ELA Standards. The ELD Standards represent pathways to the grade-level ELA Standards; those standards are reached upon exit from the “Advanced” proficiency level of the ELD Standards.

Table 1
Comparison of ELA and ELD Categories

	ELA Categories	ELD Categories
Reading	1. Word Analysis, Fluency and Systematic Vocabulary Development	1. Word Analysis 2. Fluency and Systematic Vocabulary Development
Reading	1. Reading Comprehension	1. Reading Comprehension
Reading	1. Literary Response & Analysis	1. Literary Response & Analysis
Writing	1. Writing Strategies 2. Writing Applications	1. Writing Strategies & Applications
Conventions	1. Written & Oral English Language Conventions	1. Writing Conventions
Listening & Speaking	1. Listening & Speaking Strategies 2. Speaking Applications	1. Listening & Speaking Strategies & Applications

ELD content is combined with the skills reflected in the ELA Standards. The ELD Standards then become precursors to ELA expectations. A one-to-one correspondence will not be seen between the ELD Standards and each ELA Standard since several ELD Standards may be needed to reach one ELA Standard. By the Early Advanced and Advanced proficiency levels, the ELD Standards approximate the language of the ELA Standards for equivalent grade spans. The Advanced proficiency level is the level that represents readiness to meet grade-level ELA Standards.

A second important design element of the ELD Standards is that they represent an integrated approach to the various categories of literacy instruction. The teacher approaches the ELD Standards in each ELA category as simultaneous building blocks of language. For example, while the phonemes of the English language are taught receptively, they are heard within the contexts of meaningful vocabulary. This vocabulary is used by the student in standard grammatical sentences and phrases. Students may then engage in activities that help them use the vocabulary and syntax in sentences about a familiar story in order to enhance their reading comprehension.

The Standards

Examples are given below from the ELA and ELD Standards. In addition, the San Diego County Office of Education has now in draft form two shorter versions of the ELD Standards. The first of these, the ELD Profiles (Kuhlman, 1999a) offer teachers and district personnel a thumbnail sketch of the whole set of ELD Standards. The second version, the ELD Descriptors (Kuhlman, 1999b), is intended to be used as rubrics for assessing progress to meet the ELD Standards. Examples of the Profiles and Descriptors are also included below.

ELD Standards Example 1: Grade span K-2, Word Analysis

The first example demonstrates the pathway to a typical ELA phonemic awareness standard at grade one. The appropriate ELA standard is followed by the parallel ELD Standard. This is important for children whose first language has sounds that are different from English, whether they have previous experience in reading in L1 or not. In this example, students are first asked to recognize and produce English sounds that are common to L1 and L2. They are then asked to recognize and produce English sounds that don't occur in the L1, but do in English. They are then expected to connect these English phonemes to the symbols they represent, and finally, use them in the context of oral reading in English.

Word Analysis

Phonemic Awareness

Standards:

1. Distinguish long and short-vowel sounds in orally stated single syllable words (e.g., bit/bite).
2. Blend two to four phonemes into a recognizable word (e.g., /c/a/t/ = cat; /f/l/a/t/ =flat)

Figure 1. *Grade 1 California English Language Arts Standard for Reading. (CDE, 1998, p.8).*

Beginning	Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Early Advanced	Advanced
1. Recognize <i>English sounds</i> that correspond to sounds students already hear and produce in L1.	1. Produce English sounds that correspond to sounds students already hear and produce in L1. 2. Recognize English sounds that do not correspond to sounds students already hear and produce in L1.	1. Produce most <i>English sounds</i> comprehensibly in the context of oral reading. 2. Recognize sound-symbol relationship and basic syllabication rules in self-generated phrases, simple sentences or predictable text.	1. Use common English word parts to derive meaning in oral and silent reading, e.g. basic syllabication rules, regular and irregular plurals and basic phonics.	<i>Standards and reading materials approximate grade level.</i> 1. Apply knowledge of common English word parts to derive meaning in oral and silent reading, e.g., basic syllabication rules, regular and irregular plurals and basic phonics.

Figure 2. *ELD K-2 Word Analysis Profiles (Kuhlman, 1999a).*

Example 2: Grade Span 6-8, Reading Comprehension

The next example is taken from the 6-8 grade span and demonstrates a pathway to two of the ELA Standards under Reading Comprehension. These include understanding the differences among informational materials (e.g., newspapers, magazines, and editorials) and understanding main ideas. The representative ELD Standards include the above content at the beginning proficiency levels but are couched in the English language appropriate to that proficiency level. Students may be expected to respond in simple words and phrases at the early levels but in complete and then detailed sentences at the upper levels when responding to the concepts presented. The California ELA Standard for Reading Comprehension is presented first in Figure 3, followed by the corresponding ELD Standard in Figure 4.

Reading Comprehension

Structural Features of Informational Materials

Standards:

1. Identify and use the structural features of, and differences among, newspapers, magazines, and editorials to gain meaning from text.
2. Connect and clarify main ideas, identifying their relationship to other sources and related topics.

Figure 3. *Reading Grade 6: California English Language Arts Standard for Reading (CDE, 1998, p. 47).*

Beginning	Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Early Advanced	Advanced
<p>1. Use graphic organizers to identify the factual components of compare and contrast patterns in informational materials, newspapers, and magazines.</p> <p>2. Orally identify main ideas and some details of familiar literary text and informational materials using key word or phrases.</p>	<p>1. Orally identify the factual components of compare and contrast patterns found in familiar informational materials using key words or phrases.</p> <p>2. Read and orally identify main ideas and details of informational materials, literary texts and texts in content areas using simple sentences.</p>	<p>1. Read and orally explain main ideas and details of informational materials, literary text and text in content areas, using detailed sentences</p> <p>2. Identify and orally explain the differences among some categories of informational materials using detailed sentences.</p>	<p><i>Students will perform both orally and in writing at this proficiency level.</i></p> <p>1. Identify, explain, and critique the main ideas and critical details of informational materials, literary text and text in content areas.</p> <p>2. Identify and explain the differences among various categories of informational materials.</p>	<p><i>Standards and reading material approximate grade level.</i></p> <p>1. Identify, explain, and critique the main ideas and critical details of informational materials, literary text and text in content areas.</p> <p>2. Identify and analyze the differences among various categories of informational materials.</p>

Figure 4. *ELD 6-8 Standards: Reading Comprehension Profile (Kuhlman, 1999a).*

As the figures demonstrate, it takes several ELD Standards to build the pathway to one ELA Standard.

The next examples come from the K-2 grade span and are taken from profiles of each proficiency level, rather than from the full Standards. Figure 5 shows a Reading Comprehension Profile, a thumbnail sketch of the ELD Reading Comprehension Standards.

Beginning	Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Early Advanced	Advanced
<p>1. Respond non-verbally (drawing or physical action) or with 1-2 words, to stories read to them or simple directions.</p> <p>2. Identify the basic sequences of events in stories read to them, using key words or visual representations such as pictures and storyboards.</p>	<p>1. Respond orally with phrases or simple sentences or by drawing to factual information or simple directions.</p> <p>2. Orally identify the basic sequence of text and make predictions using drawings.</p>	<p>1. Write short captions for drawings from experience or stories and follow multi-step directions.</p> <p>2. Answer factual questions using simple sentences; point out basic text features and make predictions about stories using simple phrases or sentences.</p>	<p>1. Read and use basic text features such as title, table of contents, and chapter headings.</p> <p>2. Orally identify main idea; make predictions using detailed sentences; answer factual questions about cause and effect relationships; write a brief story summary (three or four complete sentences).</p> <p>3. Read and orally respond to stories and texts from content areas by restating facts and details to clarify ideas.</p>	<p>1. Locate and use text features such as title, table of contents, chapter headings, diagrams, and index.</p> <p>2. Use a variety of comprehension strategies with literary texts and texts from content areas; generate and respond to essential questions, make predictions; compare information from several sources; write summary of a story and/or informational materials.</p> <p>3. Read and orally respond to stories and texts from content areas by using facts and details to clarify ideas.</p>

Figure 5. *K-2 ELD Reading Comprehension Profile (Kuhlman, 1999a).*

Beginning	Early Intermediate	Intermediate	Early Advanced	Advanced
L/S • Uses a few words; answers some questions; uses common social greetings	L/S • Begins to be understood with inconsistent grammar; communicates basic needs	L/S • Understood when speaking using mostly standard grammar and pronunciation; asks and answers questions; retells stories	L/S • Uses consistent standard English grammar; actively participates and initiates conversations	L/S • Negotiates and initiates conversations; listens attentively to stories and information
WA • Recognizes English phonemes student already hears and produces in L1	WA • Produces known English phonemes and recognizes those that do not correspond to sounds student knows in L1	WA • Produces most English phonemes comprehensibly; recognizes sound/symbol relationships and basic word formation rules	WA • Uses common English morphemes, phonics, and phonemic awareness to derive meaning in oral and silent reading	WA • Applies knowledge of common morphemes to derive meaning in oral and silent reading
SV • Reads aloud simple words; retells simple stories using visuals	SV • Begins self-correcting errors; communicates basic needs; reads simple words, phrases and sentences	SV • Self-corrects errors; uses more complex vocabulary and sentences and decoding skills to read more complex words; recognizes simple prefixes and suffixes	SV • Self-monitors and corrects errors; recognizes simple antonyms and synonyms	SV • Self-monitors and corrects errors; explains common antonyms and synonyms; reads narrative and texts aloud with appropriate pacing, intonations, and expression
RC • Responds non-verbally or with a few words to stories and simple directions	RC • Responds with phrases, simple sentences or visuals to factual information; follows simple directions; identifies basic sequence of text	RC • Follows multi-step directions; writes short captions for drawings	RC • Answers factual questions about cause and effect relationships; identifies main idea; uses basic text features; restates facts and details to clarify ideas	RC • Uses a variety of comprehension strategies with literary and content area texts; makes predictions; writes summary of a story
W • Copies the English alphabet and writes a few commonly used words	W • Writes key words and simple sentences about an event or character in a text	W • Writes short paragraphs	W • Writes narratives with more detail; some grammatical rules not in evidence	W • Writes short narratives using the writing process and correct grammatical forms
WC • Uses some capital letters and periods	WC • Uses capital letters, periods, and question marks	WC • Uses standard word order, with inconsistent grammar and punctuation	WC • Consistent use of capitalization, periods, and some correct spelling; some editing	WC • Consistent use of conventions and mostly correct spelling
LA • Answers factual comprehension questions using few word responses; draws pictures identifying setting and characters	LA • Identifies setting and characters using simple sentences; recites simple poems	LA • Answers factual questions using simple sentences; reads short poems	LA • Identifies literary elements and beginning, middle, and end of a story	LA • Compares and contrasts literary elements

Figure 6. *ELD Standards Descriptors, K-2 Grade span (Kuhlman, 1999b)*

L/S = Listening/Speaking; WA= Word Analysis; SV=Systematic vocabulary; RC=Reading Comprehension; W=Writing; WC=Writing Conventions; LA=Literary Analysis & Response

ELD Descriptors

Figure 6 provides descriptors or a rubric for all the categories for the K-2 grade span. The descriptors are intended to be used as rubrics for assessing progress to meet the ELD Standards.

Conclusion

Conversion to a standards-based system is an evolving process. It promises to raise the level of knowledge of the children in our schools by forming a consistent goal for achievement throughout California. As curriculum is developed to provide instructional guidance to teachers and as the SAT-9, the California state-wide assessment of academic achievement, is further refined to be aligned with the standards set by the California State Board of Education, we will be able to determine how close our students are to achieving these goals.

However, to understand and be able to achieve these standards (and the English Language Arts Standards in particular) one must have access to English. The existing ELA Standards were developed for those already proficient in English. While some accommodation or comments are made throughout that these Standards are "also good for English learners," the Standards approved in Language Arts and other content areas do not provide the pathways necessary for ELs to be successful. The English Language Development Standards offer these pathways, grouped by grade spans and proficiency levels, to ensure that the 1.4 million ELs of California also have the opportunity to be successful in school, to meet the expectations for achievement for all California children, and to become productive members of our society.

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