

English Language Arts/ Literacy

CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

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RIDE Rhode Island
Department
of Education

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Section 1: Introduction

Background

The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) is committed to ensuring all students have access to high-quality curriculum and instruction as essential components of a rigorous education that prepares every student for success in college and/or their career. Rhode Island’s latest strategic plan outlines a set of priorities designed to achieve its mission and vision. Among these priorities is *Excellence in Learning*. In 2019 **Rhode Island General Law (RIGL) § 16-22-31** was passed by the state legislature, as part of [Title 16 Chapter 97 - The Rhode Island Board of Education Act](#), signaling the importance of *Excellence in Learning* via high-quality curriculum and instruction. RIGL § 16-22-31 requires the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education and RIDE to develop statewide curriculum frameworks that support high-quality teaching and learning.

The English Language Arts (ELA)/Literacy curriculum framework is specifically designed to address the criteria outlined in the legislation, which includes, but is not limited to, the following: providing sufficient detail to inform education processes such as selecting curriculum resources and designing assessments; encouraging real-world applications; being designed to avoid the perpetuation of gender, cultural, ethnic, or racial stereotypes; and presenting specific, pedagogical approaches and strategies to meet the academic and nonacademic needs of multilingual learners.¹

The ELA/Literacy framework was developed by an interdisciplinary team through an open and consultative process. This process incorporated feedback from a racially and ethnically diverse group of stakeholders that included the Rhode Island Literacy Advisory board, students, families, the general public, and community partners.

Vision for Student Success in Literacy

Rhode Island students will be effective readers, writers, listeners, and speakers within society. Through the use of scientifically based strategies, we will build our students’ knowledge and understanding of literacy and the world to develop lifelong learners and engaged citizens.

Purpose

The purpose of the ELA/Literacy framework is to provide guidance to educators and families around the implementation of the standards, particularly as it relates to the design and use of curriculum materials, instruction, and assessment. The frameworks should streamline a vertical application of standards and assessment across the K–12 continuum within Tier 1 of a Multi-Tier System of Support (MTSS), increase opportunities for all students to meaningfully engage in grade-level work and tasks, and ultimately support educators and families in making decisions that prioritize the student experience. These uses of the curriculum frameworks align with the overarching commitment to ensuring all students have access to high-quality curriculum and instruction that prepares students to meet their postsecondary goals.

¹ The legislation uses the term *English learners*; however, RIDE had adopted the term *multilingual learners* (MLLs) to refer to the same group of students to reflect the agency’s assets-based lens.

Success Criteria

This framework should support educators in accomplishing the following:



Equitably and effectively support the learning of all students, including multilingual learners and differently-abled students.



Support and reinforce the importance of culturally responsive and sustaining education practices.



Prepare students to thrive and succeed in college and/or their careers.

Guiding Principles for Rhode Island's Frameworks

The following five guiding principles are the foundation for Rhode Island's Curriculum Frameworks. They are intended to frame the guidance within this document around the use and implementation of standards to drive curriculum, instruction, and assessment within an MTSS. These principles include the following:

1. Standards are the bedrock of an interrelated system involving high-quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment.
2. High-quality curriculum materials (HQCMs) align to the standards and, in doing so, must be accessible, culturally responsive and sustaining, supportive of multilingual learners, developmentally appropriate, and equitable, as well as leverage students' strengths as assets.
3. High-quality instruction provides equitable opportunities for all students to learn and reach proficiency with the knowledge and skills in grade-level standards by using engaging, data-driven, and evidence-based approaches, such as leveraging home languages for content learning and drawing on family and communities as resources.
4. To be valid and reliable, assessments must align to the standards and equitably provide students with opportunities to monitor learning and demonstrate proficiency.
5. All aspects of a standards-based educational system, including policies, practices, and resources, must work together to support all students, including multilingual learners and differently-abled students.

What is 'Curriculum'?

A common misconception about school curricula is the belief that a curriculum is primarily the collection of resources used to teach a specific course or subject. A high-quality curriculum is much more than this. RIDE has previously defined [curriculum](#) as a "standards-based sequence of planned experiences where students practice and achieve proficiency in content and applied learning skills. Curriculum is the central guide for all educators as to what is essential for teaching and learning, so that every student has access to rigorous academic experiences." Building off this definition, RIDE also identifies specific components that comprise a complete curriculum. These include the following:

- **Goals:** Goals within a curriculum are the standards-based benchmarks or expectations for teaching and learning. Most often, goals are made explicit in the form of a scope and sequence of skills to be addressed. Goals must include the breadth and depth of what a student is expected to learn.
- **Instructional Practices:** Instructional practices are the research and evidence-based methods (i.e., decisions, approaches, procedures, and routines) that teachers use to engage all students in meaningful learning. These choices support the facilitation of learning experiences in order to promote a student’s ability to understand and apply content and skills. Practices are differentiated to meet student needs and interests, task demands, and learning environment. They are also adjusted based on ongoing review of student progress towards meeting the goals.
- **Materials:** Materials are the tools and resources selected to implement methods and achieve the goals of the curriculum. They are intentionally chosen to support a student’s learning, and the selection of resources should reflect student interest, cultural diversity, world perspectives, and address all types of diverse learners. To assist local education agencies (LEAs) with the selection process, RIDE has identified and approved a collection of HQCMs in mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA) in advance of the 2023 selection and adoption requirement for LEAs. The intent of this list is to provide LEAs with the ability to choose a high-quality curriculum that best fits the needs of its students, teachers, and community. Each LEA must choose a curriculum from the list for core mathematics, ELA, and science content areas per the timelines outlined in RIGL§ 16.22.30-33. When possible, LEAs should adopt early because every student in Rhode Island deserves access to high-quality curriculum materials.
- **Assessment:** Assessment in a curriculum is the ongoing process of gathering information about a student’s learning. This includes a variety of ways to document what the student knows, understands, and can do with their knowledge and skills. Information from assessment is used to make decisions about instructional approaches, teaching materials, and academic supports needed to enhance opportunities for the student and to guide future instruction.

Another way to think about curriculum, and one supported by many experts, is that a well-established curriculum consists of three interconnected parts all tightly aligned to standards: the intended (or written) curriculum, the lived curriculum, and the learned curriculum (e.g., Kurz, Elliott, Wehby, & Smithson, 2010). Additionally, a cohesive curriculum should ensure that teaching and learning is equitable, culturally responsive and sustaining, and offers students multiple means through which to learn and demonstrate proficiency.

The *written curriculum* refers to what students are expected to learn as defined by standards, as well as the HQCMs used to support instruction and assessment. This aligns with the ‘goals’ and ‘materials’ components described above. Given this, programs and textbooks do not comprise a curriculum on their own, but rather are the resources that help to implement it. They also establish the foundation of students’ learning experiences. The written curriculum should provide students with opportunities to engage in content that builds on their background experiences and cultural and linguistic identities while also exposing students to new experiences and cultural identities outside of their own.

The *lived curriculum* refers to how the *written curriculum* is delivered and assessed and includes *how* students experience it. In other words, the lived curriculum is defined by the quality of instructional practices that are applied when implementing the HQCMs. This aligns with the ‘methods’ section in RIDE’s curriculum definition. The lived curriculum must promote instructional

engagement by affirming and validating students’ home culture and language, as well as provide opportunities for integrative and interdisciplinary learning. Content and tasks should be instructed through an equity lens, providing educators and students with the opportunity to confront complex equity issues and explore socio-political identities.

Finally, the *learned curriculum* refers to how much of and how well the intended curriculum is learned and how fully students meet the learning goals as defined by the standards. This is often defined by the validity and reliability of assessments, as well as by student achievement, their work, and performance on tasks. The learned curriculum should reflect a commitment to the expectation that all students can access and attain grade-level proficiency. Ultimately, the learned curriculum is an expression and extension of the written and lived curricula and should promote critical consciousness in both educators and students, providing opportunities for educators and students to improve systems for teaching and learning in the school community.

Key Takeaways

- First, the **written curriculum** (goals and high-quality curriculum materials) must be firmly grounded in the standards and include a robust set of high-quality curriculum materials that all teachers know how to use to design and implement instruction and assessment for students.
- Second, the characteristics of a strong **lived curriculum** include consistent instructional practices and implementation strategies that take place across classrooms that are driven by standards, evidence-based practices, learning tasks for students that are rigorous and engaging, and a valid and reliable system of assessment.
- Finally, student learning and achievement are what ultimately define the overall strength of a **learned curriculum**, including how effectively students are able to meet the standards.

What is a Curriculum Framework?

All of Rhode Island’s curriculum frameworks are designed to provide consistent guidance around how to use standards to support the selection and use of high-quality curriculum materials, evidence-based instructional practices, as well as valid and reliable assessments — all in an integrated effort to equitably maximize learning for all students.

The curriculum frameworks include information about research-based, culturally responsive and sustaining, and equitable pedagogical approaches and strategies for use during implementation of high-quality curriculum materials and assessments in order to scaffold, develop, and assess the skills, competencies, and knowledge called for by the state standards.

The structure of this framework also aligns with the five guiding principles referenced earlier. **Section 2** lists the standards and provides a range of resources to help educators understand and apply them. Section 2 also addresses how standards support selection and implementation of high-quality curriculum materials. **Section 3** of this framework provides guidance and support around how to use the standards to support high-quality instruction. **Section 4** offers resources and support for using the standards to support assessment. Though Guiding Principle 5 does not have a dedicated section, it permeates the framework. Principle 5 speaks to the coherence of an educational system grounded in rigorous standards. As such, attention has been given in this framework to integrate stances and resources that are evidence-based, specific to the standards, support the needs of all learners — including multilingual learners and differently-abled students — and link to complementary RIDE

policy, guidance, and initiatives. Principle 5 provides the vision of a coherent, high-quality educational system.

In sum, each curriculum framework, in partnership with high-quality curriculum materials, informs decisions at the classroom, school, and district level about curriculum material use, instruction, and assessment in line with current standards and with a focus on facilitating equitable and culturally responsive and sustaining learning opportunities for all students. The curriculum frameworks can also be used to inform decisions about appropriate foci for professional learning, certification, and evaluation of active and aspiring teachers and administrators.

The primary audiences for the information and resources in the curriculum frameworks are educators in Rhode Island who make decisions and implement practices that impact students' opportunities for learning in line with standards. This means that the primary audience includes teachers, instructional leaders, and school and district administrators.

However, the curriculum frameworks also provide an overview for the general public, including families and community members, about what equitable standards-aligned curriculum, instruction, and assessment should look like for students in Rhode Island. They also serve as a useful reference for professional learning providers and higher education [Educator Preparation Programs](#) (EPPs) offering support for Rhode Island educators. Thus, this framework is also written to be easily accessed and understood by families and community members.

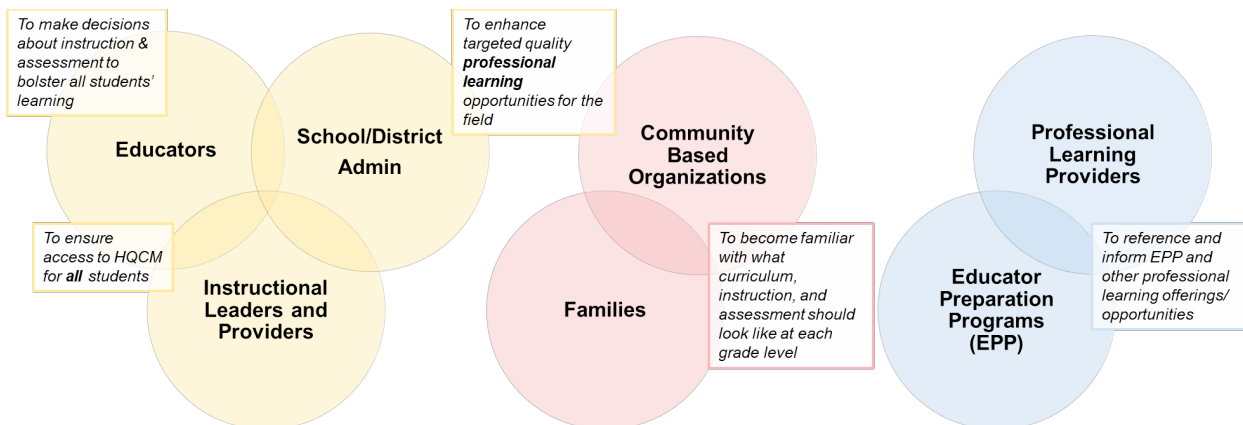
Summary of Section Structure

Section II: Implementing a High-Quality Curriculum	Section III: Implementing High-Quality Instruction	Section IV: High-Quality Learning Through Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The Practice Standards* ✓ Content-Area Standards ✓ Connecting the Content and Practice Standards* ✓ Suggested Pathways/Progressions* ✓ Professional Learning ✓ Selecting HQ Curriculum Materials* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Principles of HQ Instruction ✓ HQ Cross-Content Instructional Practices ✓ Implementing HQ Lessons* ✓ Work-Based Learning* ✓ Professional Learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Principles of HQ Assessment ✓ Designing HQ Performance Assessments ✓ Designing HQ Rubrics ✓ Assessing Work-Based Learning ✓ Professional Learning

*Not applicable to all content areas

What does effective implementation of the Curriculum Framework look like?

Below are examples of how RIDE envisions the guidance and resources within this framework being used. These examples are not exhaustive by any measure and are intended to give educators an initial understanding of how to practically begin thinking about how to implement and use this framework to inform their daily practice.



Educators and instructional leaders such as curriculum coordinators, principals, and instructional coaches can use the curriculum frameworks as a go-to resource for understanding the high-quality curriculum materials that have been adopted in their districts and to make decisions about instruction and assessment that bolster all students' learning opportunities. For example, the frameworks can be used to:

- Unpack and internalize grade-level standards and vertical alignment of the standards;
- Analyze high-quality curriculum materials and assessment(s) adopted in the district and understand how the standards are applied within the instructional materials and assessment(s);
- Norm on high-quality instructional practices in each of the disciplines; and,
- Guide decisions related to instruction and assessment given the grade-level expectations for students articulated in the standards and the high-quality instructional materials.

Educators, curriculum leaders, and instructional coaches can use the curriculum frameworks as a resource when ensuring access to high-quality instructional materials for all students that are culturally responsive and sustaining, and that equitably and effectively include supports for multilingual learners and when available in the home language. For example, the frameworks can be used to:

- Unpack and internalize English language development standards for multilingual learners; and,
- Plan universally designed instruction and aligned scaffolds that ensure all students can engage meaningfully with grade-level instruction.

District and school administrators can use the curriculum frameworks to calibrate their understanding of what high-quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment should look like within and across disciplines and use that understanding as a guide to:

- Make resources available to educators, families, and other stakeholders in support of student learning;
- Norm “what to look for” in classrooms as evidence that students are receiving a rigorous and engaging instructional experience; and,
- Structure conversations with teachers and families about high-quality curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

District and school administrators, as well as EPPs and professional learning providers, can use the curriculum frameworks to enhance targeted quality professional learning opportunities for the field. For example, the frameworks can be used to:

- Enhance educator or aspiring educator knowledge about the standards and pedagogical approaches used in Rhode Island;
- Roll out a vision for curriculum and instruction in the district, followed by curriculum-specific professional learning;
- Build capacity of educators and aspiring educators to engage in meaningful intellectual preparation to support facilitation of strong lessons;
- Aid educators and aspiring educators in making sense of the structure, organization, and pedagogical approaches used in different curriculum materials; and,
- Build capacity of educators and aspiring educators to address individual learning needs of students through curriculum-aligned scaffolds.

Families and community organizations can use the curriculum frameworks to become familiar with what curriculum, instruction, and assessment should look like at each grade level.

Overview and Connection to Other Frameworks

Each content area (mathematics, science and technology, ELA/literacy, history and social studies, world languages, and the arts) has, or will soon have, its own curriculum framework. For educators who focus on one content area, all information and resources for that content area are contained in its single curriculum framework. For educators and families who are thinking about more than one content area, the different content-area curriculum frameworks will need to be referenced. However, it is important to note that coherence across the curriculum frameworks includes a common grounding in principles focused on connections to content standards and providing equitable and culturally responsive and sustaining learning opportunities through curriculum resources, instruction, and assessment. The curriculum frameworks also explicitly connect to RIDE’s work in other areas including, but not limited to, multilingual learners, differently-abled students, early learning, college and career readiness, and culturally responsive and sustaining practices. Below is a brief overview of how this and the other curriculum frameworks are organized, as well as a summary of how the specific curriculum frameworks overlap and connect to each other.

Section	What is common across the content area curriculum frameworks?	What is content-specific in each content area’s curriculum framework?
Section 1: Introduction	Section 1 provides an overview of the context, purpose, and expectations related to the curriculum framework.	Each curriculum framework articulates a unique vision for how the framework can support high-quality teaching and learning.
Section 2: Implementing a High-Quality Curriculum	The introduction to this section defines how RIDE defines high-quality curriculum materials (HQCMs) in relation to standards.	The middle section of each curriculum framework has content-specific information about the standards behind curriculum resources and the vision for student success in the targeted content

Section	What is common across the content area curriculum frameworks?	What is content-specific in each content area’s curriculum framework?
	The final part of this section explains how HQCMs are selected in RI and provides related tools.	area. The final part of this section includes some specific information about the HQCMs for the targeted content area.
Section 3: Implementing High-Quality Instruction	This section provides an overview of how high-quality instruction is guided by standards and introduces five cross-content instructional practices for high-quality instruction. This section also includes guidance and tools to support high-quality instruction and professional learning across content areas.	This section expands upon the cross-content instructional practices by providing content-specific information about instructional practices. This section also includes more specific guidance and tools for considering instruction and professional learning in the targeted content area.
Section 4: High-Quality Learning Through Assessment	The curriculum frameworks are all grounded in common information described here about the role of formative and summative assessment and how these align with standards. Some standard tools and guidance for assessment in any content area are also provided.	Content-specific guidance about tools and resources for assessing students in the targeted content area are included in this section.

Connections to Other RIDE Resources

This curriculum framework is designed to be a valuable resource for educators and families. It is intended to support classroom teachers and school leaders in developing a robust and effective system of teaching and learning. To achieve this, it also connects users to the vast array of guidance and resources that the RIDE has and will continue to develop. Thus, when logical, direct references are made, including direct hyperlinks, to any additional resources that will help educators, families, and community members implement this framework. Of particular significance is the link to college and career readiness.

College and Career Readiness

RIDE’s mission for College and Career Readiness is to build an education system in Rhode Island that prepares all students for success in college and career. This means that all doors remain open and students are prepared for whatever their next steps may be after high school.

Secondary education, which begins in middle school and extends through high school graduation, is the point in the educational continuum where students experience greater choice on their journey to

college and career readiness. Students have access to a wide range of high-quality personalized learning opportunities and academic coursework, and have a variety of options available to complete their graduation requirements. To improve student engagement and increase the relevance of academic content, students may choose to pursue a number of courses and learning experiences that align to a particular area of interest, including through dedicated career and technical education programs or early college coursework opportunities.

Secondary level students have opportunities to be able to control the pace, place, and content of their learning experience while meeting state and local requirements. Rhode Island middle and high school students will have access to a wide range of high-quality early college and early career training programs that enable them to earn high-value, portable credit and credentials.

References

Kurz, A., Elliott, S. N., Wehby, J. H., & Smithson, J. L. (2010). Alignment of the Intended, Planned, and Enacted Curriculum in General and Special Education and Its Relation to Student Achievement. *The Journal of Special Education*, 44(3), 131-145. Retrieved from [Alignment-of-the-Intended-Planned-and-Enacted-Curriculum-in-General-and-Special-Education-and-Its-Relation-to-Student-Achievement.pdf \(researchgate.net\)](#)

Section 2: Implementing a High-Quality Curriculum

Introduction

Having access to high-quality curriculum materials is an important component of increasing equitable access to a rigorous education that prepares every student for college and careers. In answer to this national movement to increase access through high-quality materials, the State of Rhode Island, in 2019, passed [RIGLS 16.22.30-33](#). The legislation requires that all Rhode Island Local Education Agencies (LEAs) adopt high-quality curriculum materials in K–12 schools that are (1) aligned with academic standards, (2) aligned with the curriculum frameworks, and (3) aligned with the statewide standardized test(s), where applicable.

RIDE uses various factors to determine high quality, primarily using information from [EdReports](#), a non-profit, independent organization that uses teams of trained teachers to conduct reviews of K–12 English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science curricula. Informed by EdReports as a baseline, RIDE’s list includes only curricula that are rated “Green” in all three gateways: (1 & 2) alignment to standards with depth and quality in the content area, and (3) usability of instructional materials for teachers and students. Because EdReports’ gateways comprise many indicators, which provide more in-depth looks across the integral components of instructional materials, it is important to note that having a “Green-rated” curriculum is a solid foundation, yet not enough on its own to ensure alignment to local instructional priorities and students’ needs. The curriculum adoption process should include consideration of an LEA’s instructional vision, [multilingual learner \(MLL\) needs, culturally responsive and sustaining education \(CRSE\), and foundational skills](#). Selection is only the starting point in the larger process of adoption and implementation of high-quality instructional materials. LEAs should consider curriculum adoption and implementation an iterative process where the efficacy of a curriculum is reviewed and evaluated on an ongoing basis.

Coherence is one major consideration when adopting a new curriculum. One way of achieving coherence is the vertical articulation in a set of materials, or the transition and connection of skills,

content, and pedagogy from grade to grade. Consideration of coherence is necessary to ensure that students experience a learning progression of skills and content that build over time through elementary, middle, and high school. As such, LEAs who consider the adoption of curriculum materials are cautioned against choosing a curriculum that is high quality at only one grade level, as it is likely it will disrupt a cohesive experience in the learning progression from grade to grade in the school or district.

While the standards describe what students should know and be able to do, they do not dictate how they should be taught, or the materials that should be used to teach and assess those (NGA & CCSSO, 2010). Curriculum materials, when aligned to the standards, provide students with varied opportunities to gain the knowledge and skills outlined by the standards. Assessments, when aligned to the standards, have the goal of understanding how student learning is progressing toward acquiring proficiency in the knowledge and skills outlined by the standards as delivered by the curriculum through instruction (CSAI, 2018).

No set of grade-level standards can reflect the great variety of abilities, needs, learning rates, and achievement levels in any given classroom. The standards define neither the support materials that some students may need nor the advanced materials that others should have access to. It is also beyond the scope of the standards to define the full range of support appropriate for MLLs and for differently-abled students. Still, all students must have the opportunity to learn and meet the same high standards if they are to access the knowledge and skills that will be necessary in their postsecondary lives. The standards should be read as allowing for the widest possible range of students to participate fully from the outset with appropriate accommodations to ensure maximum participation of students, particularly those from historically underserved populations (MDOE, 2017).

Having access to high-quality curriculum materials is an important component of increasing equitable access to a rigorous education that prepares every student for college and careers.

ELA/Literacy High-Quality Curriculum

Rigorous and comprehensive standards are the foundation for quality teaching and learning. The Rhode Island Core Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening, Language, and Literacy in Content Areas, coupled with the implementation of high-quality curriculum materials, provide a vertical roadmap for school systems to empower literate and informed students. The standards articulate the knowledge and skills that students need to be prepared to succeed in college, career, and life. Whereas the high-quality curriculum materials when skillfully implemented by educators become the lever for students to master the ELA/Literacy standards. With these two components firmly established as non-negotiable inputs, educators and school and systems leaders can prioritize the implementation of rigorous, culturally, and linguistically responsive teaching. Educators can focus on assessment, then, is considered the critical output- a structured system to accurately and meaningfully measure student learning given the inputs.

When making a curriculum selection, a key priority should be on the **comprehensiveness** of the instructional materials. A comprehensive curriculum should:

- Include a distinct strand of the curriculum focused on explicit and systematic instruction in reading foundational skills, including a priority on phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, morphology, semantics, and syntax.
- Prioritize both text complexity (predominantly through read-aloud in the primary grades) and volume of reading, such as through extended independent reading time, to build knowledge, vocabulary, verbal reasoning, and knowledge of language structure.

- Demonstrate coherence in the presentation of topics in order to grow content knowledge. Units are organized by topic, and topics are explored deeply and build on one another sequentially over the school year and across years. Reading and writing are integrated with science, social studies, music, and other content areas, to build content knowledge, rather than presented as atomized, skills-based activities.
- Include writing instruction that is embedded within the content of the curriculum, provides explicit writing instruction (e.g., sentence-level strategies), and capitalizes on the power of the planning and revision stages within the writing process.
- Provide a variety of formative assessments and performance assessments engaging students in the content of the unit.

Rhode Island Core Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy

The Rhode Island Board of Education approved the transition to the [Rhode Island Core Standards for English Language Arts \(ELA\)/Literacy](#) from the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in March 2021 ([Comparison Tables](#)). Cohesive and aligned standards, curriculum, and assessment are critical to increasing student achievement. The Rhode Island Core Standards for ELA/Literacy are tightly aligned to the assessments in the Rhode Island state assessment program, including the Rhode Island Comprehensive Assessment System (RICAS) assessment. These standards maintain the focus, coherence, and rigor of the CCSS while providing clarity and highlighting connections among the standards. (MA DESE, 2017)

College and Career Readiness (CCR) Anchor & Grade-Specific Standards

Collectively, the K–12 Rhode Island Core Standards for ELA/Literacy provide a cumulative progression of standards designed to enable students to meet college and career readiness expectations no later than the end of high school. They are composed of both College and Career Readiness (CCR) anchor standards and grade-level standards. The CCR anchor standards and grade-specific standards are necessary complements — the former providing broad standards, the latter providing additional specificity — that together define the skills and understandings that all students must demonstrate. (CCSS) The CCR anchor standards ensure vertical coherence for the strands of Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening, and Language. Within each strand, students are exposed to consistent anchor standards throughout the K–12 continuum.

To access the standards:

[Rhode Island Core Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy](#)

How to Read the Rhode Island Core Standards for ELA/Literacy

The following are important points to keep in mind when reading the standards.

1. Individual CCR anchor standards are identified by strand, CCR status, and number
 - a. R.CCR.6, is decoded as the sixth CCR anchor standard for the Reading strand.
2. Strand coding designations are found in [brackets] at the top of the page, to the right of the full strand title.
3. Individual grade specific standards are identified by strand, grade, and number (or number and letter, where applicable)
 - a. RI.4.3 is decoded as Reading: Informational Text, Grade 4, Standard 3; and,
 - b. W.5.1a is decoded as Writing, Grade 5, Standard 1a.
4. Grade Levels K–8; Grade Bands for 9–10 and 11–12
 - a. K–8 standards are by individual grade level

- i. Except for 6–8 Standards for Literacy in the Content Areas, which is a band to allow for course flexibility
- b. 9–10 and 11–12 standards are by grade bands for all ELA/Literacy standards
 - i. Provides course design flexibility

(MA DESE, 2017)

What the ELA/Literacy Standards Do and Do Not Do

“The standards define what all students are expected to know and be able to do, not how teachers should teach. While the standards focus on what is most essential, they do not describe all that can or should be taught. A great deal is left to the discretion of the teachers and curriculum developers and coordinators.

No set of grade-level standards can reflect the great variety of abilities, needs, learning rates, and achievement levels in any given classroom. The standards define neither the support materials some students may need, nor the advanced materials others should have. It is also beyond the scope of the standards to define the full range of supports appropriate for [multilingual learners and differently-abled students]. Still, all students must have the opportunity to learn and meet the same high standards if they are to access the knowledge and skills that will be necessary for their post-high school lives.

The standards should be read as allowing for the widest possible range of students to participate fully from the outset and with appropriate accommodations to ensure maximum participation of [differently-abled students]. For example, for [differently-abled students] *reading* should allow for the use of Braille, screen-reader technology, or other assistive devices, while *writing* should include the use of a scribe, computer, or speech-to-text technology. In a similar manner, *speaking* and *listening* should be interpreted broadly to include sign language.

While the ELA and content area literacy components are critical to college, career, and civic readiness, they do not define the whole of readiness. Students require a wide-ranging, rigorous academic preparation and particularly in the early grades, attention to such matters as social, emotional, and physical development and approaches to learning.” (MA DESE, 2017)

Reading and Listening

“Students are expected to read extended texts: well-written, full-length novels, plays, long poems, and informational texts chosen for the importance of their subject matter and excellence in language use. Students build stamina by reading extended texts because such works often explore complex topics in ways that shorter texts cannot. Learning to persist in the reading of extended texts predisposes students to read for pleasure as adults and prepares them for academic reading in college, technical and professional reading in the workplace, and reading about issues of civic importance in the community.

Reading full-length works of fiction, drama, poetry, or literary nonfiction allows students to see how an author creates complex characters who change over time in response to other characters and events. In full-length informational texts, authors explore a topic in depth, with levels of argument, evidence, and analysis impossible in shorter texts. Moreover, these longer literary and informational texts often address challenging concepts and philosophical questions.

But of course, there is also a place for shorter texts, both in adult reading and in the curriculum. Literate adults keep current on world, national, and local events and pursue personal and professional interests by reading and listening to a host of articles, editorials, journals, and digital

material. Teachers can build that habit in students and add coherence to the curriculum by ensuring that students read and listen to related shorter texts, such as articles or excerpts of longer works that complement an extended text. These shorter texts can serve a number of purposes, such as building background knowledge, providing a counterargument to the extended text, or providing a review or critical analysis of the longer text. Shorter selections can also show how the extended text’s topic is treated in another literary genre or medium, such as film or visual arts.” (MA DESE, 2017)

Text Complexity and the Growth of Reading Comprehension

The Rhode Island Core Standards for Reading “place equal emphasis on the sophistication of what students read and the skill with which they read. Standard 10 defines a grade-by-grade ‘staircase’ of increasing text complexity that rises from beginning reading to the college and career readiness level. Whatever they are reading, students must also show a steadily growing ability to discern more from and make fuller use of text, including making an increasing number of connections among ideas and between texts; considering a wider range of textual evidence; and becoming more sensitive to inconsistencies, ambiguities, and poor reasoning in texts.” (MA DESE, 2017)

Critical Approaches to Analysis in the Standards

“All successful reading involves understanding the main ideas, themes, and details of a work. Reading Standard 1 through 3, under the cluster heading *Key Ideas and Details*, embodies this idea. There are many approaches to critical reading; the Framework focuses on the two described below.

Formal Analysis or Close Reading

This approach focuses on determining what a complex text means by examining word choice and the structure of sentences. Most effectively applied to poetry or other short complex texts with multiple layers of meaning and nuanced vocabulary, or to excerpts from larger complex texts, this method of analysis is *not* appropriate for reading an entire extended text, because it slows readings and potentially leads them to miss an author’s overarching ideas while focusing on details of vocabulary and syntax. Close reading is also an inappropriate and unnecessary approach to reading texts that are easy to understand.² These are readily accessible texts for a grade level, characterized by literal ideas presented in a straightforward manner, with uncomplicated sentence structure and familiar vocabulary.

In English language arts classes, close reading is often a prerequisite to composing literary analysis. Close reading often involves re-reading a difficult passage several times in order to determine meaning — a useful practice to learn in grades K–12 and one that skilled readers employ automatically. This approach informs the wording of Reading Standards 4 to 6, grouped together under the cluster heading *Craft and Structure*. By design, these standards are echoed in Language Standard 1 through 6, which deal with standard English conventions, language and style, and vocabulary development.

Comparative Analysis

This approach is based on the concept that a reader gains an understanding of a text by setting it in a broader context. This often means comparing it to other texts and seeking similarities and differences among them. A variety of comparisons can be used, including, at the simplest level, comparing what the words in picture books say to what the pictures show. Other forms of comparison involve multiple works by one author, multiple texts on a similar topic or theme by different authors, multiple examples within and across genres, or multiple interpretations of a similar theme across media (e.g., print and video). Comparative analysis can also include

² Timothy Shanahan at shanahanonliteracy.com ([A Fine Mess: Confusing Close Reading and Text Complexity](#), August 3, 2016) and Marilyn Adams in *American Educator* (Advancing Our Students’ Language and Literacy: The Challenge of Complex Texts, Winter 2010–2011).

examining the historical, political, and intellectually contexts of a work as well as using information from an author’s biography in an interpretation. This approach informs the wording of Reading Standards 7 through 9, with the cluster heading *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas.*” (MA DESE, 2017)

Writing Standards

“Teachers expect students to write in school every day – short pieces about what they have read that might be completed in one sitting, and longer compositions that might take a week to a month or longer, with time for research, synthesizing information from multiple texts, drafting, revising, and editing. Cluster headings in the Writing Standards, therefore, include *Text Types and Purposes*, *Production and Distribution of Writing*, *Research to Build and Present Knowledge*, and *Range of Writing*.

The first three Writing Standards, under the cluster heading *Text Types and Purposes*, address in detail the components of writing opinions or arguments, explanations, and narratives. The intent of these standards is to promote flexibility, not rigidity, in student writing. Many effective pieces of writing blend elements of more than one text type in service of a single purpose: for example, an argument may rely on anecdotal evidence, a short story may function to explain some phenomenon, or a literary analysis may use explication to develop an argument. In addition, each of the three types of writing is itself a broad category encompassing a variety of texts: for example, narrative poems, short stories, and memoirs represent three distinct forms of narrative writing.

To develop flexibility and nuance in their own writing, students need to read a wide range of complex model texts. It is also important that students can discuss evidence from texts in formulating their ideas or positions, as well as demonstrate awareness of competing ideas or positions. The Writing Standards are therefore closely linked to the Reading and Speaking and Listening Standards.” (MA DESE, 2017)

For students to write every day within ELA classrooms and within content classes, it is important to note how the Writing Standards are dependent upon strong Language Standards instruction. The Language Standards include “the essential conventions of standard written and spoken English and aspects of vocabulary development, but also approach language as a matter of craft, style, and informed choice among alternatives.” (MA DESE, 2017)

Speaking and Listening Standards

“Students are expected to discuss their school experiences in the curriculum daily with their peers, their teachers, and their families. Speaking and Listening Standards 1 through 3 address conversation, collaboration, responding to media, and gaining information through listening and viewing and by identifying speakers’ points of view and evaluating their reasoning. Standards 4 through 6 address preparing and presenting oral and media presentations. The Speaking and Listening Standards are closely related to preparation for participation in civic life. They also, like the Writing Standards, link to the Language Standards’ expectations for making informed and effective choices in language use.” (MA DESE, 2017)

The Role of Research in the Standards

“Research, addressed most explicitly in Writing Standards 7 through 9, involves identifying a topic; selecting and narrowing a research question; identifying, reading, and evaluating source materials; and using these materials as evidence in an explanation or argument. Though the Writing Standards address the process of research most comprehensively, other strands also link to various

components of academic research: for example, Reading Standard 7 and Speaking and Listening Standard 2 both focus on integrating content from diverse sources.” (MA DESE, 2017)

Language Standards

“The Language Standards address the use of standard English conventions (*Conventions of Standard English*, Standards 1–3) and the development of vocabulary (*Vocabulary Acquisition and Use*, Standards 4–6). Standard 6 emphasizes the importance of developing both general academic and domain-specific vocabulary as a cumulative process. The term ‘general academic vocabulary’ refers to high-frequency words and phrases that are used broadly across disciplines in mature academic discourse and that sometimes have distinctly different meanings depending on the discipline and context. This category includes words such as *affect, analyze, argue, average, coincidence, compose, conclude, contradict, culture, effect, explain, foundation, image, integration, masterpiece, method, percent, region, research, and translate*. ‘Domain-specific vocabulary’ words and phrases are relatively low-frequency terms that have a single, albeit important, meaning and are primarily used within one discipline. This category includes words and phrases such as *glacier, personification, parallelogram, Revolutionary War, and abstract painting*.

Literature on language acquisition often refers to words used in everyday conversations as ‘Tier One’ words, general academic vocabulary as ‘Tier Two’ words, and domain-specific vocabulary as ‘Tier Three’ words.³ Teachers of all disciplines should pay attention to making sure students understand the ‘Tier Two’ words they encounter and can use them properly when speaking and writing. ‘Tier Three’ vocabulary is best taught as students study individual subjects in the curriculum.” (MA DESE, 2017)

Foundational Skills Standards

Strong foundational literacy skills are the driving force for proficient reading and writing and a gateway for accessing grade-level standards. Without explicit, systematic instruction in these essential subskills of literacy, students, particularly students with language-based learning differences, will develop gaps in their knowledge that will widen over time.

Foundational Skills standards in grades K–2 articulate a focus on building print concepts, demonstrating an understanding of spoken words, syllables, and individual phonemes, and applying grade-level phonics and word analysis skills when decoding. The Rhode Island Core Standards for ELA/Literacy include expectations for explicit instruction in a variety of phonics patterns (e.g., digraphs, vowel teams) as well as morphological units (e.g., prefixes, inflectional endings, suffixes) to support the highly reciprocal processes of decoding and encoding. Additionally, the standards articulate the need for recognition of irregularly spelled high-frequency words, which are recommended to be taught by attending to the regular and irregular sound/symbol correspondences within words rather than relying on sight memorization. Context clues are recommended by the standards to be used to confirm meaning but should not be used as a strategy to decode unknown words. Practicing these skills to automaticity with immediate corrective feedback leads to accurate, fluent reading to support comprehension.

Standards for Literacy in the Content Areas

“The standards in this section have been derived from the College and Career Ready Anchor Standards for Reading, Writing, and Speaking and Listening to apply to subjects other than English.

³ Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., & Kucan, L. (2002). *Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction*. New York, NY: Guilford.

They complement but **do not take the place of the grade-level or course-level content standards or practice standards in any of the discipline specific standards.**

Reading, writing, speaking, and listening in subjects other than English, should focus on understanding and practicing discipline-specific literacy skills, using reading selections characteristic of that field.

For example, a history or social studies class might include print and digital texts such as:

- Primary and secondary sources, including visual resources.
- Foundational political documents.
- Charts, graphs, timelines, maps, illustrations.
- Position papers, editorials, speeches.
- Analytical and interpretive articles and books for a general audience.
- Video documentaries on history and social studies topics.

A science class might include print and digital texts such as:

- Articles from scientific journals.
- Technical reports on research.
- Science articles and books for a general audience.
- Position papers and editorials.
- Video documentaries on science topics.

Writing in each subject area includes short and longer research projects culminating in papers or presentations designed to meet the conventions and standards of each academic field.

The Standards for Literacy in the Content Areas are written for grade clusters: 6–8, 9–10 and 11–12, and include:

- *Reading Standards for History/Social Studies (RCA-H)*. The term ‘history and social studies’ is broad and includes political and cultural history, humanities, civics, economics, geography, psychology, archaeology, and sociology. Note that world languages are not included here because they have their own set of standards for communication and language.
- *Reading Standards for Science and Technical Subjects (RCA-ST)*. The term ‘science and technical subjects’ is broad and includes biology, chemistry, earth and space science, technology/engineering, computer science, career and technical subjects, business, comprehensive health, dance, music, theatre, visual arts, and digital arts.
- *Writing Standards in the Content Areas (WCA)*. The Writing Standards apply to all subjects listed above, as well as mathematics.
- *Speaking and Listening Standards in the Content Areas (SLCA)*. Like the Writing Standards, these apply to subjects listed above, as well as mathematics.” (MA DESE, 2017)

Literacy in the Context of a Well-Rounded Curriculum

“Content knowledge is the indispensable companion to improved reading comprehension, since a child needs background knowledge about a topic in order to identify the main ideas and details of an

informational text, or to understand how and why events unfold in a historical novel.⁴ All through the elementary grades, students need to be immersed in classrooms, schools, and libraries that provide a wide variety of books and media at different levels of complexity in a variety of genres — both literature and nonfiction. They need daily activities in which they develop language skills, mathematical understanding and fluency, understanding of experimentation and observation in science, creative experience in visual and performing arts, and the ability to interact with the community in a variety of ways.

The K–5 standards include expectations for reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language applicable to a range of subjects, including ELA, social studies, science, mathematics, the arts, and comprehensive health.

The standards insist that instruction in reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language be a shared responsibility within the school. This is particularly important in middle and high schools, where students encounter several teachers from different academic departments daily. The grades 6–12 standards are divided into two sections: one for ELA; and the other for history/social studies, science, mathematics, and career and technical subjects. This division reflects the unique, time-honored place of ELA teachers in developing students’ literacy skills and literary understandings while at the same time recognizing that teachers in other disciplines have a particular role of developing students’ capacity for reading and writing informational text.

Part of the motivation for the standards’ interdisciplinary approach to literacy is extensive research establishing that students who wish to be college and career ready must be proficient in reading complex informational text independently in a variety of content areas. Most of the required reading in college and workforce training programs is informational in structure and challenging in content; postsecondary education programs typically provide students with both a higher volume of such reading than is generally required in K–12 schools and comparatively little scaffolding.” (MA DESE, 2017)

The RI Core Standards for ELA/Literacy are designed to be used together with all [Rhode Island standards](#) (e.g., RI Core Standards for Mathematics, WIDA, NGSS) to ensure students receive a well-rounded curriculum throughout their K–12 school experience.

WIDA ELD Standards for MLLs

For educators with one or more active multilingual learners (MLLs) on their roster, enacting standards-aligned instruction means working with both state-adopted content standards and state-adopted English language development (ELD) standards. Under ESSA, all educators are required to reflect on the language demands of their grade-level content and move MLLs toward both English language proficiency and academic content proficiency. In other words, every Rhode Island educator shares responsibility for promoting disciplinary language development through content instruction.

Fortunately, the five WIDA ELD Standards lend themselves to integration in the core content areas. Standard 1 is cross-cutting and applicable in every school context, whereas Standards 2–5 focus on language use in each of the content areas. Standard 2 is dedicated to the language for language arts. Educators of English language arts are thus expected to support Standard 1 and Standard 2 as part of their core classroom instruction.

⁴ Liana Heitin in *Education Week* ([Cultural Literacy Creator Carries on Campaign](#), October 12, 2016) and Daniel Willingham in *American Educator* ([How Knowledge Helps](#), Spring 2016).

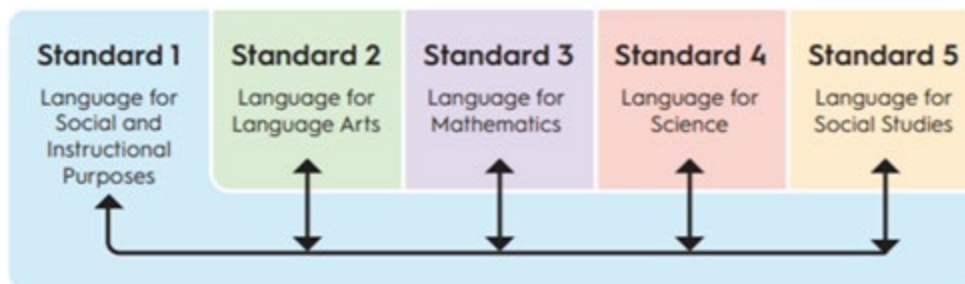


Image Source: [2020 Edition of WIDA ELD Standards Framework](#)

Each of the WIDA ELD Standards is broken into four genre families: *Narrate*, *Inform*, *Explain*, and *Argue*. WIDA refers to these genre families as **Key Language Uses** (KLUs) and generated them based on an analysis of the language demands placed on students by the academic content standards. The KLUs are important because they drive explicit language instruction in each of the content areas. For Standards 2–5, the distribution of KLUs is similar across grades 4–12, but this distribution varies in the early grades, with grades K–3 placing more emphasis on *Inform* than *Explain* or *Argue*. Of the four content areas, only English language arts features *Narrate* as very prominent.

Each KLU is further broken down by language function and feature. **Language functions** reflect the dominant practices for engaging in genre-specific tasks (e.g., students often orient audiences in narratives for ELA by describing the setting or characters). By contrast, the **language features** represent a sampling of linguistic and non-linguistic resources (e.g., connected clauses, noun phrases, tables, graphs) that students might use when performing a particular language function. Together, the KLUs, language functions, and language features capture what it would look and sound like for students to use language deftly in language arts. Please see below for an example of how these three elements appear in the WIDA ELD Standards.

K

KINDERGARTEN

WIDA ELD STANDARD 2

Language for Language Arts

Inform

Language Expectations: Multilingual learners will...

<p>ELD-LA.K.Inform.Interpretive Interpret informational texts in language arts (with prompting and support) by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identifying main topic and key details ● Asking and answering questions about descriptions of familiar attributes and characteristics ● Identifying word choices in relation to topic or content area 	<p>ELD-LA.K.Inform.Expressive Construct informational texts in language arts (with prompting and support) that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduce topic for audience ● Describe details and facts
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Language Functions and Sample Language Features

Introduce topic for audience through...

- Pictures, words, title to identify topic
- Pronouns to reference entity (*farmers-they*)
- Oral recounting to share information (*The farmers grow food.*)

Describe details and facts through...

- Nouns to label visuals (*fruit, oranges*)
- Verbs to label actions (*farming*)
- Prepositional phrases to tell about where (*on the farm, in the trees*)
- Visuals (labeled drawings) to support information

Image Source: [2020 Edition of WIDA ELD Standards Framework](#)

The 2020 Edition of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework contains other resources, such as annotated language samples, that can support educators in promoting integrated language development in English language arts. The annotated language samples show the language functions and language features in action with grade-level texts, as shown in the example below for the KLU *Argue* in grades 9–12 English language arts. It offers insights into how educators might unpack the language of their discipline.

Functions & Features	"Everyday Use"	Functions & Features
<p>Introduce and develop precise claims through...</p> <p>Declarative statements to frame topic, provide background information, state claim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In "Everyday Use" ... invisible conflict. <p>Noun groups to provide details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>unique organization</u> <u>an almost invisible conflict</u> <u>the opposing views in content of adjacent paragraphs</u> <u>the continuing subject of division</u> 	<p>In "Everyday Use" Alice Walker intertwines context, <u>unique organization</u> and juxtaposition to subtly shine a light on <u>an almost invisible conflict</u>.</p> <p>Juxtaposition is <u>the opposing views in content of adjacent paragraphs</u> is used to show <u>the continuing subject of division</u>.</p> <p>The introduction of Dee is begun with <u>what Mama wanted with a T.V. show providing the dream setting</u> and <u>what Dee actually is in real life</u>.</p>	<p>Support claims and refute counterclaims with valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence through...</p> <p>A variety of clauses to support claim</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>what Mama wanted with a T.V. show providing the dream setting</u> <u>what Dee actually is in real life</u>

Image Source: [2020 Edition of WIDA ELD Standards Framework](#)

Curriculum Resources

[Selecting and Implementing a High-Quality Curriculum In Rhode Island: A Guidance Document](#): This guidance document outlines the provisions of RIGL§ 16.22.30-33 with regarding adopting high-quality curriculum and includes a list of approved curricula for ELA and Mathematics.

[Curriculum Used in Rhode Island](#): This list and visualization displays which K–12 curricula are being used in each LEA and designates their quality as either *red*, *yellow*, *green*, *not yet rated*, or *locally developed*.

Resources to Support Standards

Resource	Description
Rhode Island Core Standards for English Language Arts/Literacy	Standards Document: Grade-level and grade-span standards K–12 for ELA/Literacy including Reading Literature & Informational Texts, Writing, Speaking & Listening and Language. And Literacy in the Content Areas (6–12) including Reading, Writing, and Speaking & Listening.
Common Core State Standards / Rhode Island Core Standards Comparison Tables K–12 English Language Arts	Standard-by-standard comparison tables to highlight the differences in content between the CCSS and the Rhode Island Core Standards for ELA/Literacy. These tables should assure users of high-quality instructional materials of the overall alignment, while providing guidance on where minor adjustments may need to be made within instruction.

Resource	Description
<p>Vertical Standards Progressions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing • Reading Foundational Skills • Language • Reading Informational Text • Reading Literature • Speaking and Listening Standards 	<p>Documents that articulate the vertical standard progression within each standard strand for ELA/Literacy.</p>
<p>Quick Reference Guides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anchor Standards for Reading • Reading Closely to Analyze Complex Texts – Elementary • Reading Closely to Analyze Complex Texts – Secondary • Text Complexity and Growth of Reading Comprehension 	<p>Reference Guides provide explanations of text complexity, what it is and its implications for instruction and student learning.</p>
<p>K–5 Standards Support Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range, Quality, and Complexity of Student Reading K–5 • Qualitative Analysis of Literary Texts for K–5: A Continuum of Complexity • Qualitative Analysis of Informational Texts for K–5: A Continuum of Complexity • Texts Illustrating the Range, Quality, and Complexity of Student Reading K–5 • Sample Text Set for the Elementary Grades: Water • Key Cumulative Language Standards, Grades 3–12 • Building Fluency: Unbound, A Guide to Grades K–2 ELA Standards • Building Fluency: Unbound, A Guide to Grades 3–5 ELA Standards 	<p>Support Materials that help to elaborate and define the Rhode Island Core Standards for ELA/Literacy for Grades K–5.</p>
<p>6–12 Standards Support Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range, Quality, and Complexity of Student Reading in English Language Arts, Grades 6–12 	<p>Support Materials that help to elaborate and define the Rhode Island Core Standards for ELA/Literacy for Grades 6–12.</p>

Resource	Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qualitative Analysis of Literary Texts for Grades 6–12: A Continuum of Complexity • Qualitative Analysis of Informational Texts for Grades 6–12: A Continuum of Complexity • Texts Illustrating the Range, Quality, and Complexity of Student Reading in English Language Arts, Grades 6–12 • Sample Text Set for Middle School Language Arts: Powerful Friendships • Key Cumulative Language Standards, Grades 3–12 • Glossary of Terms • Resources for Implementing the Grades 6–12 Standards for Literacy in the Content Areas • Building Fluency: Unbound, A Guide to 6–12 ELA/Literacy Practices 	
<p>RIDE Resources: Academic Vocabulary, Close Reading, Text Dependent Questions, Writing and Argument Modules</p>	<p>Professional Learning Modules to deepen understanding of the shifts within the CCSS.</p>
<p>Structured Literacy</p>	<p>Instructional examples and tools to support classroom instruction.</p>
<p>RI Comprehensive Literacy Guidance</p>	<p>Guidance document: The RICLG supports educators in understanding the components of literacy and implementation of best practices in daily instruction. Included are strategies, methods, and resources for assessment, intervention, and content area literacy.</p>
<p>Personal Literacy Plans</p>	<p>Guidance document: A Personal Literacy Plan (PLP) is a plan of action used to accelerate a student’s learning in order to move toward grade level reading proficiency. Students in K–12 must have a PLP in place if reading below grade level, per legislation and the secondary regulations.</p>

Footnotes

Timothy Shanahan at shanahanonliteracy.com ([A Fine Mess: Confusing Close Reading and Text Complexity](#), August 3, 2016) and Marilyn Adams in *American Educator* (Advancing Our Students' Language and Literacy: The Challenge of Complex Texts, Winter 2010–2011).

Beck, I. L., McKeown, M. G., & Kucan, L. (2002). *Bringing words to life: Robust vocabulary instruction*. New York, NY: Guilford.

Liana Heitin in *Education Week* ([Cultural Literacy Creator Carries on Campaign](#), October 12, 2016) and Daniel Willingham in *American Educator* ([How Knowledge Helps](#), Spring 2016).

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Section 3: Implementing High-Quality Instruction

Part 1: Introduction and Overview

As described in Sections 1 and 2 of this framework, while robust standards and high-quality curriculum materials are essential to providing all students the opportunities to learn what they need for success in college and a career of their choosing, high-quality instruction is also needed. Standards define what students should know and be able to do. High-quality curriculum materials that are aligned to the standards provide educators with a roadmap and tools for how students can acquire that knowledge and skill. It is high-quality instruction that makes the curriculum come alive for students. High-quality instruction gives all students access and opportunity for acquiring the knowledge and skills defined by the standards with a culturally responsive and sustaining approach. “When teachers have great instructional materials, they can focus their time, energy, and creativity on meeting the diverse needs of students and helping them all learn and grow.” (Instruction Partners Curriculum Support Guide Executive Summary, page 2 [Executive-Summary-1.pdf](#) [[curriculumssupport.org](#)])

The process of translating a high-quality curriculum into high-quality instruction involves much more than opening a box and diving in. This is because no single set of materials can be a perfect match for the needs of all the students that educators will be responsible for teaching. Therefore, educators must intentionally plan an implementation strategy in order to have the ability to translate high-quality curriculum materials into high-quality instruction. Some key features to attend to include:

- Set systemic goals for curriculum implementation and establish a plan to monitor progress,
- Determine expectations for educator use of high-quality curriculum materials,
- Craft meaningful opportunities for curriculum-based embedded professional learning,
- Factor in the need for collaborative planning and coaching (Instruction Partners Curriculum Support Guide Executive Summary, page 4 [Executive-Summary-1.pdf](#) [[curriculumssupport.org](#)]), and,
- Develop systems for collaboratively aligning high-quality curriculum materials to the WIDA ELD Standards.

Thus, with a coherent system in place to support curriculum use, teachers will be well-positioned to attend to the nuances of their methods and make learning relevant and engaging for the diverse interests and needs of their students.

Given the above, what constitutes high quality instruction? In short, high-quality instruction is defined by the practices that research and evidence have demonstrated over time as the most effective in supporting student learning. In other words, when teaching is high quality, it embodies what the field of education has found to work the best. Therefore, this section provides a synthesis of research- and evidence-based practices that the Rhode Island Department of Education believes characterizes high quality instruction in ELA/Literacy. This section begins by describing the high-quality instructional practices that apply across content areas and grades with details and examples that explain what these instructional practices look like in ELA/Literacy, and also explains other specific instructional practices that are at the core of high-quality instruction in ELA/Literacy. The instructional practices articulated in this section are aligned with and guided by best practices for multilingual learners and for differently-abled students, and specific information and resources are provided about how to support all students in their learning while drawing on their individual strengths. These instructional practices also contribute to a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) in which *all* students have equitable access to strong, effective core instruction that supports their

academic, behavioral, and social emotional outcomes. This section on instruction ends with a set of resources and tools that can facilitate high-quality instruction and professional learning about high-quality instruction, including tools that are relevant across content areas and grade levels and those that are specific to ELA/Literacy.

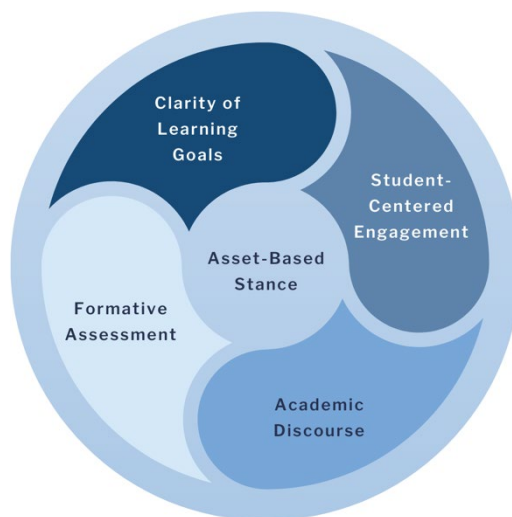
In reviewing this section, use Part 2 to understand what high-quality instruction should look like for all students in ELA/Literacy. Use Part 3 to identify resources that can promote and build high-quality instruction and resources for learning more about how to enact high-quality instruction.

Part 2: High-Quality Instructional Practices

In order to effectively implement high-quality curriculum materials, as well as ensure that *all students* have equitable opportunities to learn and prosper, it is essential that teachers are familiar with and routinely use instructional practices and methods that are research- and evidenced-based. Below are instructional practices that are essential to effective teaching and learning and are common across all disciplines and curriculum frameworks. For additional guidance, there are also descriptions and references to instructional practices that support specific student groups, such as multilingual learners and differently-abled students.

High-Quality Instruction in All Disciplines

Below are five high-quality instructional practices that RIDE has identified as essential to the effective implementation of standards and high-quality curriculum in all content areas (see figure to the right). These practices are emphasized across all the curriculum frameworks and are supported by the design of the high-quality curriculum materials. They also strongly align with the instructional framework for multilingual learners, the [high-leverage practices \(HLPs\) for students with disabilities](#), and RIDE’s teacher evaluation system. Below is a brief description of each practice and what it looks like in ELA/Literacy.



Assets-Based Stance

Teachers **routinely** leverage students’ strengths and assets by activating prior knowledge and connecting new learning to the culturally and linguistically diverse experiences of students while also respecting individual differences.

What this looks like in ELA/Literacy

Developmentally, students are naturally curious about learning new words, concepts, and ideas and making arguments with evidence to support their thinking. Students also bring a wealth of prior knowledge to new learning based on their lived experiences. Because of this, it is essential that teachers tap into this knowledge when embarking on a literacy unit or whenever appropriate during routine instruction. Inherent within the Rhode Island Core Standards for ELA/Literacy is a focus on helping students increasingly be able to access and construct knowledge within and across content areas (e.g., mathematics, science, social studies) and grade-level texts. As teachers implement their high-quality curriculum materials, they must build upon and honor each student’s understanding and knowledge base to further their own understanding. Students’ home language is also an asset that should be accessed to help build knowledge and understanding of language within the classroom.

What this looks like in relation to Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Differentiated core instruction based in UDL provides access and equity for each student providing multiple options for learning and expression without changing what is being taught. Differentiation is proactive with the goal of adjusting the how, based on understanding learner assets and needs, so students may achieve maximum academic growth. High-quality curriculum and instruction implemented through UDL and differentiation support access to grade-level curriculum as part of Tier 1 of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS).

What this looks like for Multilingual Learners (MLLs)

Educators with MLLs in their class assume an asset-based stance will advance student learning. They can do this by drawing on MLLs’ home languages, academic and personal lived experiences, and world views, and the knowledge and skills used to navigate social settings. Although RIDE encourages student use of academic registers, it is important that educators and administrators maintain an asset-oriented stance in facilitating academic discourse and student understanding of standard English conventions, particularly when working with learners from minoritized groups. Educational agencies can play a role in sustaining the linguistic traditions of their students. Thus, classroom discourse, when done well, will reflect the discourse practices of local communities— capturing the rich ways families actually use language, rather than making prescriptive judgements about how students and their families ought to talk.

What this looks like for Differently-Abled Students (DAS)

Implementation of HLP 3: Collaborate with Families to Support Student Learning and Secure Needed Services promotes an assets-based stance for students with IEPs. Effective collaboration between educators and families is built on positive interactions in which families and students are treated with dignity. Educators affirm student strengths and honor cultural diversity maintaining open lines of communication with phone calls or other media to build on students’ assets and discuss supports or resources. Trust is established with communication for a variety of purposes and not just for formal reasons such as report cards, discipline reports, or parent conferences. In ELA, this could mean learning from communication with the families that one student enjoys reading or listening to non-fiction text while another student thrives when writing creatively. These areas of strength can create bridges to areas of needed support for DAS.

To Learn More

Resource	Description
3 Steps to Developing an Asset-Based Approach to Teaching	Article on how to build upon what your students bring to the classroom
Five Ways to Build an Asset-Based Mindset in Education Partnerships	Article on developing an asset-based mindset
An Asset-Based Approach to Support ELL Success	Article on strategies for engaging and supporting MLLs
HLP #3: Collaborate with Families to Support Student Learning and Secure Needed Services	Leadership Guide for HLP #3: Collaborate with Families to Support Student Learning and Secure Needed Services
Stories from the Classroom: Focusing on Strengths within Assessment and Instruction Progress Center	Video from Progress Center on including students in examining their data and setting ambitious goals by focusing on their assets

Resource	Description
TIES TIPS Foundations of Inclusion TIP #6: Using the Least Dangerous Assumption in Educational Decisions Institute on Community Integration Publications (umn.edu)	Article on how the least dangerous assumption pushes educators to consider all students as capable. The challenge is to replace a deficit mindset and consider what can educators do to support students in how they access, engage in, and respond not only to both academic and life skills content
Beyond IEPs and 504 Plans: Why You Should Consider Asset-Based Accommodations	Article on how asset-based accommodations beyond IEPs and 504s can be effective tools for supporting academic achievement and future success
Classroom Supports: Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction CTE Series 3 NTACT:C (transitionta.org)	Webinar on the CAST framework of UDL and explanations for how one district incorporates UDL into their CTE programs
MTSS for All: Including Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities	Brief from the TIES Center that provides suggestions for ways in which MTSS can include students with the most significant cognitive disabilities

Clear Learning Goals

Teachers routinely use a variety of strategies to ensure that students understand the following:

1. *What they are learning* (and what proficient work looks like),
2. *Why they are learning it* (how it connects to what their own learning goals, what they have already learned and what they will learn), and,
3. *How they will know when they have learned it.*

What this looks like in ELA/Literacy

The Rhode Island Core Standards for ELA/Literacy articulate clear, consistent expectations about knowledge, skills, and practices students should know and be able to do at each grade level. As teachers prepare for and implement high-quality instructional materials, it is imperative that they have a full understanding of the depth, breadth and rigor of each standard in order to make efficient and effective decisions within instruction. Instructional materials that have met the benchmark of high quality, should include clear learning goals aligned with the Rhode Island Core Standards. It is within the teacher’s implementation of the high-quality instructional materials that they articulate the clear learning goals consistently throughout the teaching and learning so that students always know what they are expected to learn, why it is important, and how they need to demonstrate it. Teachers utilizing their deep knowledge of the standards, coupled with their use of high-quality instructional materials and their knowledge of current student understanding will enable them to achieve the learning goals and student proficiency by providing clear systematic and explicit instruction.

What this looks like for Multilingual Learners (MLLs)

For educators with one or more active MLLs on their roster, clear learning goals for MLLs will consist of explicit language goals to guide instruction in ELA/Literacy. Educators will model effective use of disciplinary academic vocabulary and syntax, creating opportunities every day for explicit disciplinary language development, aligned to the WIDA ELD Standards.

What this looks like for Differently-Abled Students (DAS)

HLP 14, Teach Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies to Support Learning and Independence, supports the high quality instruction practice of Clear Learning Goals. Through task analysis, educators can support DAS by determining the steps they need to take to accomplish goals, then create and teach a procedure to help the student meet the goals. The educator uses explicit instruction (HLP 16) to teach the student self-regulation strategies such as self-monitoring, self-talk, goal-setting, etc. Clear, step-by-step modeling with ample opportunities for practice and prompt feedback coupled with positive reinforcement (HLP 22) in different contexts over time ensure that DAS become fluent users of metacognitive strategies toward understanding and achieving learning goals. For example, when writing in science or social studies, the Self-Regulated Strategy Development approach can support DAS to achieve content area writing goals.

To Learn More

Resource	Description
High-Leverage Practice (HLP) Leadership Guides from the Council for Exceptional Children	<p>Leadership Guides for the following HLPs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> #11: Identify and Prioritize Long- and Short-Term Learning Goals #12: Systematically Design Instruction Toward Learning Goals #13: Adapt Curriculum Materials and Tasks #14: Teach Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies to Support Learning and Independence #16: Use Explicit Instruction #22: Provide Positive and Constructive Feedback to Guide Students’ Learning and Behavior (academic)
High-Leverage Practice Videos for HLP #11 and HLP #16	<p>Videos highlighting HLP #11 (identify and prioritize long- and short-term learning goals) and HLP #16 (use explicit instruction) found under “Access Videos.”</p>
Culturally Responsive Teaching for Multilingual Learners: Tools for Equity	<p>Videos to support culturally responsive and sustaining teaching that showcase strategies, such as activating background knowledge and partnering with MLL families</p>
Stories from the Classroom: Focusing on Strengths within Assessment and Instruction Progress Center	<p>Video from Progress Center on including students in examining their data and setting ambitious goals</p>
Intensive Intervention Course Content: Features of Explicit Instruction National Center on Intensive Intervention	<p>Course content to support educators in providing explicit instruction in whole groups or small groups</p>

Student-Centered Engagement

Teachers routinely use techniques that are student-centered and foster high levels of engagement through individual and collaborative sense-making activities that promote practice, application in increasingly sophisticated settings and contexts, and metacognitive reflection.

What this looks like in ELA/Literacy

The Rhode Island Core Standards for ELA/Literacy include standards for Reading, both Literature and Informational Texts, Writing, Speaking & Listening, Language, and Literacy in the Contents. As teachers engage students within all the literacy strands, they need to ensure that students are active participants in their learning. High-quality instructional materials include a plethora of materials and options from which educators make professional decisions regarding selecting what components and which instructional strategies would best support their students for success.

Student-centered engagement within ELA/Literacy instruction examples include by are not limited to:

- Multisensory foundational skills activities that incorporate visual, auditory, and kinesthetic/tactile modalities (e.g., utilizing Elkonin boxes in kindergarten for phonemic awareness practice),
- Read alouds, multiple reads, access to audiobooks that build students' background knowledge and vocabulary and/or understanding of the author's craft,
- Pairing fiction/nonfiction texts to build students' content knowledge,
- Engage students to activate their prior knowledge,
- Student texts are relevant, challenging, worthwhile, and reflective of their own experience and pushing students to learn about others' experiences,
- Students are exposed to multiple modalities and mediums for analyzing text (e.g., art, music, popular culture),
- Student choice in opportunities for reading, writing, speaking and listening with peers, other audiences,
- Students present learning utilizing various modes of communication to convey and demonstrate understanding and meaning,
- Students build language comprehension skills including work with vocabulary, morphology, and cohesive devices (e.g., pronoun referents, transition words, coordinate and subordinate conjunctions), and,
- Engaging students to persevere through complex text.

Engaging students is key as teachers work with their high-quality instructional materials and is a critical component to ensuring student success in literacy achievement.

What this looks like for Multilingual Learners (MLLs)

Educators with MLLs in their class can promote student-centered engagement by providing scaffolded opportunities for students to build conceptual understanding and fluency with core disciplinary skills, appropriate to their English language proficiency levels. Home language materials and instruction are particularly powerful in promoting student-centered engagement with MLLs.

What this looks like for Differently-Abled Students (DAS)

Student-centered engagement is maximized when educators implement HLP 7: Establish a Consistent, Organized, and Respectful Learning Environment. DAS benefit from educators who explicitly teach consistent classroom procedures and expected behaviors while considering student input. Viewing behavior as communication, re-teaching expectations and procedures across different

school environments, and helping students understand the rationale for the rules and procedures as part of HLP 7 implementation will enhance student-centered engagement for DAS. In any content area, this may mean providing additional opportunities for DAS to learn and practice routines that some peers might already have mastered. Some IEPs may call for self-monitoring checklists and visual schedules to support students in active participation in learning activities. Individual DAS will need specific supports unique to their learning profiles. Educators can implement HLP 7 in conjunction with HLP 18: Use Strategies to Promote Active Student Engagement, and HLP 8: Provide Positive and Constructive Feedback to Guide Students’ Learning and Behavior, for individualized student supports.

To Learn More

- [Measuring student engagement in upper elementary through high school: a description of 21 instruments](#)
- Evidence-based practices on how to improve student engagement, particularly in ELA can be found in various [What Works Clearinghouse practice guides](#). These include the following:
 - [Improving Reading Comprehension in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade, Recommendation 5: “Establish an engaging and motivating context in which to teach reading comprehension.”](#)
 - [Teaching Elementary Students to Be Effective Writers, Recommendation 4: “Create an engaged community of writers.”](#)
 - [Structuring Out-of-School Time to Improve Academic Achievement, Recommendation 4: “Provide engaging learning experiences.”](#)

Resource	Description
High-Leverage Practice (HLP) Leadership Guides from the Council for Exceptional Children	<p>Leadership Guides for the following HLPs:</p> <p>#7: Establish a Consistent, Organized, and Respectful Learning Environment</p> <p>#8: Provide Positive and Constructive Feedback to Guide Students’ Learning and Behavior</p> <p>#17: Use Flexible Groupings</p> <p>#18: Use Strategies to Promote Active Student Engagement</p> <p>#21: Teach Students to Maintain and Generalize New Learning Across Time and Settings</p>
Fundamental Skill Sheets Videos	<p>Video playlist from the Iris Center: Choice Making, Proximity Control, Wait Time, Behavior Specific Praise</p> <p>Note: Video 6 focuses on proximity control in a high school mathematics class. The mnemonic used in the lesson is employed as a support after initial instruction that focused on developing conceptual understanding of the trigonometric functions and their relationship to right triangles.</p>

Resource	Description
High-Leverage Practices Video: Use Strategies to Promote Active Student Engagement	Video highlighting HLP #18 which focuses on strategies to promote active student engagement
Including Voice in Education: Addressing Equity Through Student and Family Voice in Classroom Learning	Infographic on incorporating student voice and/or family voice into student learning, a promising strategy for teachers striving to foster culturally responsive and sustaining classrooms to enhance education access, opportunity, and success for students who are historically marginalized within the pre-kindergarten to grade 12 education systems
SEL for Self-Management	RIDE resources on Social Emotional Learning Indicators for Self-Management
SEL for Social Awareness	RIDE resources on Social Emotional Learning Indicators for Social Awareness
WWC Organizing Instruction and Study to Improve Student Learning (ed.gov)	<p>Guide including a set of concrete actions relating to the use of instructional and study time that are applicable to subjects that demand a great deal of content learning, including social studies, science, and mathematics. The guide was developed with some of the most important principles to emerge from research on learning and memory in mind.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space learning over time. • Interleave worked example solutions with problem-solving exercises. • Combine graphics with verbal descriptions. • Connect and integrate abstract and concrete representations of concepts. • Use quizzing to promote learning. Use quizzes to re-expose students to key content. • Ask deep explanatory questions.

Academic Discourse

Teachers routinely facilitate and encourage student use of academic discourse through effective and purposeful questioning and discussion techniques that foster rich peer-to-peer interactions and the integration of discipline-specific language into all aspects of learning.

What this looks like in relation to Social Emotional Learning

The five core [competencies](#) of Rhode Island’s Social Emotional Learning [standards](#) and [indicators](#) support academic discourse across the content areas. Learners must engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions with diverse partners, building on each other’s’ ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- Self-Awareness: Identifying one’s strengths and weaknesses while working within a group, staying motivated and engaged throughout the work.

- **Self-Management:** Controlling one’s emotions, responding calmly to comments, questions, and nonverbal communication.
- **Social-Awareness:** Understanding others’ perspectives and cultures, compromising with peers when the situation calls for it, accepting feedback from peers and teachers, listening to the opinions of others and taking them into consideration.
- **Relationship Skills:** Expressing one’s perspective clearly, following agreed upon rules of the group and carrying out assigned role(s), gaining peers’ attention in an appropriate manner, asking questions of group members, limiting the amount of information shared with others, and actively listening to peers when they speak.
- **Responsible Decision Making:** Coming to the group prepared, demonstrating independence with work tasks, dividing labor to achieve the overall group goal efficiently.

Social and emotional skills are implicitly embedded in the [content standards](#), and students must learn many social and emotional competencies to successfully progress academically. Social Emotional Learning skills are instrumental for each student and are [crucial for differently-abled students](#).

What this looks like in ELA/Literacy

The high-quality instructional practice of Academic Discourse is explicitly taught within literacy instruction as the Rhode Island Core Standards for ELA/Literacy include standards that articulate expectations for not only vocabulary development, but also Speaking and Listening, including Speaking and Listening Standards in the Content Areas for grades 6–12. As teachers implement high-quality curriculum materials, they will make professional decisions regarding the teaching of academic language, as well as questioning and discussion techniques that foster student interaction. Additionally, teachers are encouraged to use complex vocabulary in their daily interactions with students as multiple interactions with a word are needed prior to becoming memory.

Within ELA/Literacy instruction, students will understand the audience and determine mode(s) of communication to demonstrate their understanding and meaning of media. It is important that discourse is embedded within high-quality tasks which require students to read, write, speak, and listen to encourage student engagement.

What this looks like for Multilingual Learners (MLLs)

Though beneficial for all students, academic discourse is especially important for MLLs because engaging in authentic interaction with discipline-specific oral language facilitates MLLs’ overall development of English language proficiency. In RIDE’s *High-Quality Instructional Framework for MLLs to Thrive*, academic discourse is defined as a sustained spoken interaction between two or more students in which knowledge is shared using the conventions of particular genres and disciplines.

What this looks like for Differently-Abled Students (DAS)

Educators plan mixed-ability small groups to increase DAS student engagement in academic discourse through a variety of cooperative learning structures consistent with HLP 17: Use Flexible Groupings. Effective groupings are monitored for learning and student interactions to meet various

academic, behavioral, and interpersonal instructional objectives. DAS may require varied group sizes and types based upon specific IEP goals and accommodations. A student engaging in intensive instruction of a particular math or reading skill may do so in a supplemental homogenous group of only 2-3 peers while also having regular opportunities to engage in heterogeneous collaborative groups during core instruction with scaffolded supports.

To Learn More

- [Narrowing the Language Gap: The Case for Explicit Vocabulary Instruction](#)⁵
- [A Teaching Routine for Academic Vocabulary in Grades PreK-1](#)
- [8 Strategies for Teaching Academic Language](#)
- [Effective Questioning Strategies](#)

Resource	Description
High-Leverage Practice (HLP) Leadership Guides from the Council for Exceptional Children	Leadership Guides for the following HLPs: #15: Provide Scaffolded Supports #17: Use Flexible Groupings
Instruction High-Leverage Practices	Resources for high-leverage practices related to instruction. When instruction is well designed, strategic, and adaptable, special education teachers have the skills to improve student learning.
TIES TIP #2: Using Collaborative Teams to Support Students with Significant Communication Needs in Inclusive Classrooms	Tip sheet on additional planning for general and special education teachers as well as related service providers. These include speech-language pathologists, physical and occupational therapists, and vision/hearing specialists. Coordinating the work of these service providers and leveraging their expertise can result in a high-quality experience for all the learners in an inclusive class.

Formative Assessment

Teachers routinely use qualitative and quantitative assessment data (including student self-assessments) to analyze their teaching and student learning in order to provide timely and useful feedback to students and make necessary adjustments (e.g., adding or removing scaffolding and/or assistive technologies, identifying the need to provide intensive instruction) that improve student outcomes.

What this looks like in ELA/Literacy

Within the ELA/Literacy classrooms, teachers and students are focused on clear learning goals within their high-quality instructional materials. Collecting formative assessment data is crucial in leveraging student progress towards these learning goals.

⁵ All students come to RI schools with abundant linguistic resources. Some arrive with a strong command over the language of school, while others use different language practices at home — practices that are just as sophisticated as those common in academic English. Thus, the term “language gap” does not reflect RIDE policy.

Across the grade levels of ELA/Literacy instruction, formative assessments take many forms including but not limited to:

- [foundational skills checklists](#),
- phonemic awareness tasks,
- sentence dictation,
- rhyming games,
- repeated readings,
- one sentence summaries,
- student writing sample to analyze spelling/grammar,
- exit tickets, and,
- targeted questions.

Additionally, formative assessments can support educators to understand students' prior knowledge in ELA/Literacy which will enable them to ascertain what students know and leverage student's background knowledge as they encounter complex text. Also, it is important for educators to utilize their formative data so that they can provide immediate corrective feedback to students and ensure they do not reinforce an incorrect concept.

What this looks like for Multilingual Learners (MLLs)

For educators with one or more active MLLs on their roster, formative assessment practices should include the collection of discipline-specific language samples and progress monitoring of MLLs' language development in ELA/Literacy. These language samples and assessment practices will give educators the data needed to provide students with language-focused feedback aligned to their language goals for ELA/Literacy. When designing or amplifying formative assessments for disciplinary language development, educators should draw on the [English language proficiency level descriptors](#) for their grade level(s) in the [WIDA ELD Standards Framework](#). For additional information about how these descriptors can assist educators in offering targeted feedback based on the word, sentence, or discourse level dimension of students' language samples, please see Section 4.

What this looks like for Differently-Abled Students (DAS)

HLP 4: Use Multiple Sources of Information to Develop a Comprehensive Understanding of a Student's Strengths and Needs, describes assessment as a collaborative process that includes informal assessments to plan instruction that is responsive to individual needs. DAS participation in formative assessments may require specific accommodations specified in IEPs. Implemented in conjunction with HLP 22: Provide Positive and Constructive Feedback to Guide Students' Learning and Behavior, DAS will receive immediate and specific feedback on their performance that is goal-directed and thoughtful in considering the specific learner profile. Feedback on formative assessment is positive and constructive when it avoids words like "should, but, however" and includes statements that highlight what they did appropriately followed by a question (what is another way?) or a suggestion (try adding or continuing with). A diagram or image can support DAS to understand feedback and their progress on formative assessments.

To Learn More

- [Revising the Definition of Formative Assessment](#)
- [Every Child Shines: Using Formative Assessment to Reflect on Children's Individual Knowledge and Skills](#)

Resource	Description
CCSSO Revising the Definition of Formative Assessment	This resource provides an overview of the FAST SCASS 's revised definition on formative assessment, originally published in 2006. The revised definition includes an overview of the attributes of effective formative assessment and emphasizes new areas emerging from current research, theory, and practice.
High-Leverage Practice (HLP) Leadership Guides from the Council for Exceptional Children	<p>Leadership Guides for the following HLPs:</p> <p>#4: Use Multiple Sources of Information to Develop a Comprehensive Understanding of a Student’s Strengths and Needs</p> <p>#6: Use Student Assessment Data, Analyze Instructional Practices, and Make Necessary Adjustments that Improve Student Outcomes</p> <p>#8: Provide Positive and Constructive Feedback to Guide Students’ Learning and Behavior (SEL)</p> <p>#22: Provide Positive and Constructive Feedback to Guide Students’ Learning and Behavior (academic)</p>
High-Leverage Practices Video: Provide Positive and Constructive Feedback to Guide Students’ Learning and Behavior	<p>Video highlighting HLPs #8 and #22 on providing positive and constructive feedback to guide students’ learning and behavior. This resource supports both SEL and academic domains.</p>
Stories from the Classroom: Focusing on Strengths within Assessment and Instruction Progress Center	<p>Video from Progress Center on including students in examining their data and setting ambitious goals</p>
Assessment High-Leverage Practices	<p>Resources for using multiple sources of assessment, communicating assessment data, and using data to inform instruction</p>

High-Quality Instruction in ELA/Literacy

High-quality instruction in ELA/Literacy should reflect confirmed scientific research regarding literacy development, intervention, and the prevention of reading difficulties. All students should be given multiple opportunities to read, discuss, and write about grade-level texts throughout their ELA/Literacy instruction. Utilizing high-quality instructional materials and student learning goals, teachers should implement instruction that meets the needs of students in their classrooms by being accessible, flexible, and engaging.

The Rhode Island Core Standards for ELA/Literacy are designed to promote [vertical alignment](#) across grade-level. Therefore, given this intentional design, instruction should focus on current grade level work with teachers scaffolding high-quality instructional materials for students. Additionally, it is paramount that students in grades K–3 receive systematic, cumulative, and explicit instruction in Structured Literacy.

Given the years of confirmed scientific research about the way students learn to read, a structured literacy approach is the foundation of successful teaching and learning in ELA/Literacy. [Structured Literacy](#) is explicit, systematic, diagnostic, cumulative instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, syllable types, morphology, semantics, and syntax. Providing a strong foundation in each of these skills develops the neural routes necessary to become a proficient reader. In early grades, an emphasis should be placed on phonemic awareness, phonics, encoding, and practice in decodable texts until students are able to read real and nonsense words of all syllable types. While developing these skills related to decoding, students should simultaneously be developing vocabulary, syntactic awareness, and background knowledge through read alouds. As students progress beyond these skills, the emphasis should shift to explicit instruction in vocabulary, morphology, fluency, syntax, and writing to further comprehension.



Our Vision of Excellent Literacy Instruction

In our literacy classrooms, we strive to build readers, writers, and communicators prepared to meet the demands of college and career and to engage as productive citizens of the world. In our classrooms:

Students read worthwhile texts. By reading rich, [challenging texts](#) that build our students' understanding of the world, we empower them with the understanding that reading is their pathway to knowledge. We put meaningful, [complex texts](#) at the heart of nearly every lesson and set students up to do lots of reading on their own so that all of our students, regardless of their reading level, build their knowledge of the world, gain confidence with challenging texts, and develop the critical thinking skills and vocabulary necessary for long term success.

Students ground daily writing and discussion in evidence. Our students need daily practice discussing and writing about informational and literary text and other media in order to be successful in college and their careers. We give our students the support they need to [read texts closely](#), then challenge them to [speak](#) and [write](#) about what they have read or viewed using evidence to back up their positions. Supporting our students' ability to read critically, build arguments, cite evidence, and communicate ideas today prepares them to be better citizens tomorrow.

Students do the thinking. We know how to read, write, speak, and think about our content, and we also know that our students won't gain these skills if we do the work for them. We check the ratio of teacher work to student work in each and every lesson and ensure that our students get many opportunities to be critical thinkers, readers, writers and speakers, offering our support and feedback to help them find success.

Student Actions	Teacher Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read and re-read difficult texts worth reading and engage with authors and his/her choices in texts Gain content knowledge and exposure to the world through reading Read for large portions of class time and at home Learn how to tolerate frustration and overcome it Use high-utility vocabulary across content areas to build their "language of power" databases Read a high volume of texts at their independent level and across a wide variety of genres that reflect topics studied in class as well as students' choice. Learn foundational skills, like phonics and fluency, in order to comprehend worthwhile text, not solely as isolated skills Form their own judgments and find evidence to support their arguments in discussion and writing about texts Learn to build a case using evidence in discussion and writing about texts Compare, evaluate, and write about multiple sources Write every day Respond to one another's ideas through listening and speaking, as well as discussion Tackle complex, tasks that require reading, writing, speaking, listening, and language skills, independently and with peers Persevere in the face of challenging work Do more and harder work to catch up to grade level expectations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spend more time reading and analyzing texts and other media, like high-quality films or artwork, to prepare for instruction Carefully select a balance of informational and literary texts worth reading to build content knowledge and students' knowledge of the world Put high-quality texts at the center of lessons with scaffolds that can promote independence (e.g. read alouds, small excerpts) Reinforce effort and give students strategies to tolerate and overcome frustration Teach high-utility words and reinforce student efforts to use academic vocabulary and determine meaning from context Provide independent reading texts and opportunities in and out of class to build knowledge, reading proficiency, and vocabulary Teach foundational literacy skills, like phonics and fluency, as gateways to comprehending worthwhile texts, not solely as isolated skills Plan questions and prompts that are text-dependent, worth answering and lead students in the direction of deep and complete understanding of all they read. Facilitate evidence based conversations about text and other media Regularly present formal and informal opportunities to write for a purpose and from sources Develop students' voice so that they can argue a point with evidence Provide students structures to engage in academic discussions Allow students to reach and articulate their own evidence-based conclusions Anchor instructional units with high-quality performance assessments When learners are behind, strategically remediate to provide a pathway to grade-level work

Our Vision of Excellent Instruction

([TNP Tools](#), 2021)

Resource	Description
<p>What Works Clearinghouse: Practice Guides</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundational Skills to Support Reading for Understanding in Kindergarten through 3rd Grade 	<p>Guides: Evidence-based practices on how to improve student engagement, particularly in ELA, can be found in various What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guides</p>

Resource	Description
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching Elementary School Students to be Effective Writers • Improving Adolescent Literacy: Effective Classroom and Intervention Practices • Teaching Secondary Students to Write Effectively 	
<p>ELA/Literacy: Vertical Standards Progressions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing • Reading Foundational Skills • Language • Reading Informational Text • Reading Literature • Speaking and Listening Standards • Quick Reference Guides • Anchor Standards for Reading • Reading Closely to Analyze Complex Texts – Elementary • Reading Closely to Analyze Complex Texts – Secondary • Text Complexity and Growth of Reading Comprehension 	<p>Rhode Island Core Standards for ELA/Literacy support materials include Vertical Standards Progressions across the strands and Quick Reference Guides that dive into text complexity and the role it plays in students’ reading comprehension</p>
<p>Rhode Island Comprehensive Literacy Guidance: Implications for Classroom Instruction Charts</p>	<p>Guidance document: Throughout the RICLG, charts articulating implications for classroom instruction provided for Components of Literacy and Literacy in Content Areas</p>
<p>Structured Literacy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phonological and Phonemic Awareness • Phonics • Encoding • Decodable Text • High-Frequency Words • Vocabulary/Morphology • Syntax • Background Knowledge 	<p>Resources and tools that support Structured Literacy implementation in classrooms</p>
<p>Early Reading Skills</p>	<p>Resources to support Simple View of Reading</p>
<p>Checklist of Foundational Literacy Skills</p>	<p>Checklist provides one possible sequence for teaching foundational literacy skills from simple to complex</p>

Resource	Description
Text Complexity Guiding Students through Complex Texts: Effective Scaffolding Text Complexity and Instructional Practices	Resources to support understanding and use of complex text
Writing Calibration Writing Standards in Action	Include protocol for calibrating student work and Annotated Student Writing Samples aligned to RI Core Standards for ELA/Literacy
Lesson Plan Analysis Tool “What to Look For” Observation Guides Instructional Practice Guide & Discussion Guide : Reflection on Content within larger instructional unit/year Student Work Review Tool Literacy Classroom Observation Protocol	Professional Learning Tools for ELA/Literacy
Equitable ELA Instruction: Immersing Students in Grade-Level Reading & Thinking	Article highlighting the importance of teachers supporting students engaging with grade level texts
Rhode Island Core Standards for ELA/Literacy	Resources to support understanding the ELA/Literacy standards

High-Quality Instruction for Multilingual Learners

The development of a second, third, or fourth language is a lifelong process – one that cannot take place in isolation or within a stand-alone hour of the school day. If we are to ensure all students have meaningful access to core instructional programs, all educators must share responsibility for the education of MLLs, including teachers of ELA/Literacy. For those not certified in English to Speakers of Other Languages or Bilingual/Dual Language, shared responsibility might beg the question: What is high-quality instruction for MLLs? What practices are evidence-based in promoting content and language learning with MLLs?

RIDE offers in-depth guidance about the key components of high-quality MLL instruction in its *High-Quality Instructional Framework for MLLs to Thrive*, but the research is clear: language development is most effective when integrated within content area instruction. Integrated language and content teaching gives MLLs rich, highly contextualized opportunities to use disciplinary language, which in turn reinforces content learning. Rather than teaching a discrete set of grammar rules or vocabulary lists, devoid of disciplinary context, educators must reflect on the language demands of content-based tasks from the core curriculum, offering explicit language instruction and ample scaffolds so MLLs can linguistically access and engage in core content area instruction.

Resource	Description
WIDA Focus Bulletin- Collaboration: Working Together to Serve MLLs	Article with overview of language-focused collaborative teaching models and cycles
Professional Learning: Purposeful Instructional Design Part 1 Professional Learning: Purposeful Instructional Design Part 2	Self-paced courses on designing asset-based core instruction for MLLs This two-part course sequence is available on BRIDGE-RI, the learning management system for Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) in the state of Rhode Island. Educators can participate in these professional learning opportunities online at no cost. Critical aspects of Part 1 include: Tier 1 instructional design, data collection, and use of evidence-based instructional delivery practices for language learners, such as scaffolds. Critical aspects of Part 2 include: the role of physical environment and classroom climate in teaching and learning as well as translanguaging strategies and cross-linguistic features of common home languages.
Professional Learning Communities Facilitator's Guide for the What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guide Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School	Videos and Facilitator's Guide for four evidence-based practices: promoting academic vocabulary, integrating language and content instruction, providing structured opportunities to engage in writing activities, and conducting small-group interventions.
The GO TO Strategies: Scaffolding Options for Teachers of English Language Learners, K-12	Implementation Guide for educators with a list of scaffolding strategies for MLLs
Focusing Formative Assessment on the Needs of English Language Learners	Article about conducting formative assessments with MLLs
Using Formative Assessment to Help English Language Learners	Article about conducting formative assessments with MLLs

High-Quality Instruction for Differently-Abled Students

Equity requires participation and a sense of belonging. To ensure that all students participate in ELA/Literacy instruction — not just the hand raisers — teachers will need a continuum of proactive strategies that increase opportunities for student engagement. Students with IEPs or a 504 plan are general education students who access the grade-level curriculum through the support of high-quality instruction, as described in the preceding sections, which utilizes data on learner characteristics to differentiate and scaffold. Accommodations determined by the IEP team or a 504 plan complement the differentiation and scaffolds to ensure that accessibility needs specific to the individual learner are met. General education and content area teachers are responsible for providing instruction that is differentiated, scaffolded, and where appropriate for individual learners,

includes accommodations. Some learners will also require instructional modifications as determined by the IEP team. When students receive quality supplementary curricula as part of their specially designed instruction (SDI), then inclusion can provide accommodations for generalizing skills they mastered in SDI. [Collaborative planning](#) with special educators and related service providers will support general educators in developing their repertoire of rigorous and accessible instructional practices.

The Leadership Implementation Guides from the High Leverage Practices for Students with Disabilities include tips for school leaders to support teachers; questions to prompt discussion, self-reflection and observer feedback; observable behaviors for teachers implementing the HLPs; and references and additional resources on each HLP. These guides, referenced throughout this section, were developed to help leaders integrate the HLPs into professional development and observation feedback.

Resource	Description
High-Leverage Practice (HLP) Leadership Guides from the Council for Exceptional Children	Leadership Guides for the following HLPs: #1: Collaborate with Professionals to Increase Student Success #5: Interpret and Communicate Assessment Information with Stakeholders to Collaboratively Design and Implement Educational Programs #14: Teach Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategies to Support Learning and Independence
Unit Co-Planning for Academic and College and Career Readiness in Inclusive Secondary Classrooms	Article describing the UCPG, a tool to support general and special education teacher collaboration and planning in inclusive general education classrooms
Big Ideas in Special Education: Specially Designed Instruction, High-Leverage Practices, Explicit Instruction, and Intensive Instruction	Article describing the differences between specially designed instruction, high-leverage practices, explicit instruction, and intensive instruction
IEP Tip Sheet: What are Supplementary Aids & Services?	Tip Sheet from Progress Center on accommodations for instruction and assessment, modifications, and other aids and services
IEP Tip Sheet: What are Program Modifications & Supports?	Tip Sheet from Progress Center on program modifications and supports that promote access to and progress in general education programming and shares tips for implementation
Can you implement DBI to support students with intellectual and developmental disabilities?	In this brief video , Dr. Chris Lemons shares considerations for implementing data-based individualization (DBI) to support students with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Resource	Description
Classroom Supports: Universal Design for Learning, Differentiated Instruction CTE Series 3 NTACT:C (transitionta.org)	Webinar from the National Assistance Center on Transition – UDL at secondary: “Fundamentals of differentiated instruction to support effective teaching, individualized learning and maximize student engagement are shared.”
TIES Center: Inclusive Instruction: Resources on Inclusive Instruction	Resources on Inclusive Instruction: TIES Brief #4: Providing Meaningful General Education Curriculum Access to Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities TIES Brief #5: The General Education Curriculum- Not an Alternative Curriculum! Lessons for All: The 5-15-45 Tool
TIES Center: TIES TIPS: Foundation of Inclusion TIPS	TIES Inclusive Practice Series TIPS #15 Turn and Talk in the Inclusive Classroom #16 Making Inferences in the Inclusive Classroom #19 Creating Accessible Grade-level Texts for Students with Cognitive Disabilities in Inclusive Classrooms
Evidence-based practices for children, youth, and young adults with Autism	Report on evidence-based practice including a fact sheet for each that provides a longer description, information about participant ages and positive outcomes, and a full reference list.

Part 3: Resources for Professional Learning

Enacting the high-quality instructional practices described above is an essential yet complex task for teachers. Thus, ensuring high-quality instruction for all students in school often requires a team effort involving grade-level/content-area teachers, specialists and educators working with multilingual learners and differently-abled students in particular, and the administrators, leaders, and coaches who support all these educators. In addition, effective professional learning that helps teachers enhance their knowledge and application of high-quality instructional practices should strategically integrate multiple types of professional learning, as described in this section.

First, as mentioned in earlier sections of this framework, high-quality instruction begins with a deep understanding of the standards since they provide the foundation for instruction by defining what students need to know and be able to do. Professional learning suggestions and guidance for deepening the understanding of standards can be found in Section 2 of this framework.

Professional learning for high-quality instruction must also focus on developing a solid understanding of the high-quality instructional practices listed above. Readers are encouraged to review the many resources listed with each instructional practice and to establish ‘book study’ groups with colleagues to read, review and discuss any of the resources shared in Part 2 of this section of the framework.

In addition, supporting effective professional learning requires supporting teachers’ application of the practices described above. As with any complex skill, when supporting the application of high-quality instructional practices, the key ingredient is timely and targeted feedback. For feedback to be provided in a targeted and timely fashion, practices must be made visible so that the application of instructional practices can be observed. Once observed, feedback can then be generated. Most professional learning tools designed to provide feedback align with three key phases of the instructional cycle where it is very helpful for teachers to receive feedback about their instruction. The first phase is during lesson planning, before instruction actually takes place. The next phase is the actual instruction where teachers can be observed engaging with students. The final phase is after teaching has taken place and focused on the review of student work and evidence of learning. Below are a variety of tools and resources that are designed to provide teachers with feedback during these three phases. They are organized into the following three categories: Planning Tools, Observation Tools, and Evidence of Learning Tools. These tools come from a variety of sources, but all are intended to guide coaches, professional learning providers, and other leaders in offering support to teachers in this work.

Planning Tools

Resource	Description
30-Minute Tuning Protocol	Protocol designed to be used within collaborative teacher teams. It can be used to provide teachers with feedback on any artifact of their teaching and is a great tool to solicit feedback about lessons. In the protocol, a presenting teacher shares the goal, need, and plan of their professional work. Participants share feedback in rounds. The presenter then reflects on what was said that was helpful and what feedback they will try to incorporate to improve their plan.
UDL Tip for Designing Learning	Tip sheet with teacher questions, examples, and further resources to help anticipate learner variability and make instruction flexible and useful for all learners
CAST Key Questions to Consider When Planning Lessons	One-pager of question prompts for teacher to improve lesson accessibility
Whole-Group Response Strategies to Promote Student Engagement in Inclusive Classrooms	Article on whole-group response systems paired with formative assessment charts to provide instruction that actively engages students in the learning process “These strategies can be implemented easily in classrooms with minimal additional resources and are applicable across grade levels and content areas with appropriate modifications.”
Approaching Explicit Instruction Within a Universal Design for Learning Framework (Refer to references section)	Article on implementation suggestions for using EI and UDL in tandem to better support students access and understanding lesson content with improved

Resource	Description
	student engagement and demonstration of what they know and can do

Observation Tools

Resource	Description
30-Minute Atlas Protocol	Protocol describing a collaborative process for examining students’ performance data to inform next steps in teaching.
Explicit Instruction Rubric	Rubric focused on explicit instruction. The Recognizing Effective Special Education Teachers (RESET) project, funded by U.S. Department of Education Institute for Education Sciences (IES) and led by Evelyn Johnson at Boise State University, developed a series of rubrics based on evidence-based practices for students with high-incidence disabilities. One set of rubrics focuses on explicit instruction. Based on the main ideas of Explicit Instruction, the Explicit Instruction Rubric was designed for use by supervisors and administrators to reliably evaluate explicit instructional practice, to provide specific, accurate, and actionable feedback to special education teachers about the quality of their explicit instruction, and ultimately improve the outcomes for differently-abled students.

Evidence of Learning Tools

Resource	Description
Student Work Analysis Protocol	Protocol describing a process that groups of educators can use to discuss and analyze student work. It is intended to be applicable across subjects and grades, including literacy, mathematics, science, the arts, and others. Analyzing student work gives educators information about students’ understanding of concepts and skills and can help them make instructional decisions for improving student learning.
Instructional Rounds / Atlas Protocol	Protocol describing a process for conducting 8-minute instructional rounds in groups.

Resource	Description
Calibration Protocol for Scoring Student Work	Protocol describing a process that groups of educators can use to discuss student work in order to reach consensus about how to score it based on rubric/scoring criteria. It is intended to be applicable across subjects and grades, including literacy, mathematics, science, the arts, and others. Examples of student work that can be used as practice for calibration are included as appendices.

Additional Tools and Resources

Resource	Description
School Reform Initiative (SRI)	Website with a wide range of protocols that support teaching and learning. The mission of the School Reform Initiative is to create transformational learning communities that are fiercely committed to educational equity and excellence.
National School Reform Faculty (NSRF)	Website with a wide range of protocols that can be used in collaborative settings, such as PLCs and Critical Friends groups, to enhance teaching and learning.
CASEL School Guide: Integration of SEL and Instruction	Document drawing on CASEL reviewed evidence-based programs to identify and describe some of the most common strategies used to promote student SEL.
Using Explicit and Systematic Instruction to Support Working Memory	Article with implementation examples in elementary expository text and math lessons
Effective Practices Alignment Matrix	Tool describing Montana's Effective Practices Alignment Matrix of Three major national and statewide professional development initiatives: the Danielson Framework, Teaching Works High-leverage Practices (HLPs), and the Council for Exceptional Children HLPs for Students with Disabilities – using the effective practices ratings system developed by John C. Hattie.
Collaborative Team Tool Kit	Toolkit from the State of New Jersey's Collaborative Teams intended to help schools establish productive collaborative teams of teachers and administrators working and learning together to help their students.
Questioning strategies to engage all learners	Guide to questioning strategies for teachers. Teachers strategically vary the types of questions they ask to

Resource	Description
	generate meaningful dialog that supports the development of higher-order thinking skills.
Strategic Questioning	Article on strategic questioning. Strategic questioning is intentional, systematic and targets students’ learning. Within such a process, students are not just listening and answering questions, but they are also involved in analyzing their teacher and peer’s questions, raising more questions, taking turns to discuss each other’s answers, and evaluating them.
Student Discourse	Article on six ways to move students’ thinking to deeper understanding.

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Section 4: High-Quality Learning Through Assessment

Introduction and Overview

As described in previous sections, the curriculum frameworks are built upon the foundation of rigorous standards and high-quality curriculum materials. Section 3 discussed how this foundation informs high-quality instruction. This section focuses on how it should also ensure high-quality learning through assessment. When properly designed and implemented, a comprehensive assessment system provides multiple perspectives and sources of data to help educators understand the full range of student achievement. Assessment information may be used to evaluate educational programs and practices and make informed decisions related to curriculum, instruction, intervention, professional learning, and the allocation of resources to better meet students' needs.

Assessment information also informs educators and families on student performance and their relationship to ongoing instructional practice. Various types of assessments are required because they provide different types of information regarding performance. A comprehensive assessment system must be appropriate for the student population and address the assessment needs of students at all grade levels, including those who speak languages other than English, are differently-abled, who struggle, or who excel. Most multilingual learners and differently-abled students participate in typical statewide and classroom-based assessment systems for ELA/Literacy.

Student learning is most maximized with an aligned system of standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment. When assessment is aligned with instruction, both students and teachers benefit. Students are more likely to learn because instruction is focused and because they are assessed on what they are taught. Teachers are also able to focus, making the best use of their time. Assessments are only useful if they provide information that is used to support and improve student learning.

Assessment inspires us to ask these hard questions:

- "Are we teaching what we think we are teaching?"
- "Are students learning what we want them to learn?"
- "Is there a way to teach the subject and student better, thereby promoting better learning?"

Section 4 will orient you to the purposes and types of assessment, the concepts of *validity*, *reliability*, and *fairness* in assessment, factors to consider when selecting or developing assessments, and considerations when assessing differently-abled students or multilingual learners.

Purposes and Types of Assessment

Assessment has an important and varied role in public education. Assessments are used to inform parents about their children's progress and overall achievement. Teachers use assessment to make decisions about instruction, assign grades, and determine eligibility for special services and program placement. They are used by evaluators to measure program and instructional effectiveness. They are also used to track progress toward school and LEA goals set by the state in accordance with federal regulations. When it comes to assessment of student learning, the why should precede the how because assessments should be designed and administered with the purpose in mind. The vast majority of assessments are used for one of three general purposes: to inform and improve instruction, to screen/identify (for interventions), and to measure outcomes.

When assessments are used to inform instruction, the data typically remain internal to the classroom. They are used to provide specific and ongoing information on a student’s progress, strengths, and weaknesses, which can be used by teachers to plan and/or differentiate daily instruction. This daily process is most typically referred to as formative assessment. However, interim and summative assessments can also be used to impact instructional decision-making, though not in the short-cycle timeline that characterizes formative assessments. Assessments such as unit tests and even state assessment data can be used to reflect on and inform future instructional decisions.

When assessments are used to screen/identify, the data also typically remain internal to the school or LEA. Assessments that are used primarily to screen are administered to the total population of students and generally assess key skills that are indicators of students’ larger skill set, rather than an in-depth analysis of the standards. They should be relatively quick to administer and easy to score. Assessments used for screening purposes can inform decisions about the placement of groups of students within an academic program structure or individual students’ needs for academic interventions or special programs. When needed, screening assessments are followed by diagnostic assessments to determine if more targeted intervention is necessary or if a student has a disability.

Finally, when assessments are used to measure outcomes, data are communicated to parties external to the classroom. Whether it is a unit test that is entered into a grade book and communicated to parents or a standardized test that is reported to the State. Assessments used to measure outcomes attempt to measure what has been learned so that it can be quantified and reported. No single type of assessment, and certainly no single assessment, can serve all purposes.

From informal questioning to final exams, there are countless ways teachers may determine what students know, understand, and are able to do. The instruction cycle generally follows a pattern of determining where students are with respect to the standards being taught before instruction begins, monitoring their progress as the instruction unfolds, and then determining what knowledge and skills are learned as a result of instruction. Assessments, based on when they are administered relative to instruction, can be categorized as formative, summative, or interim.

The primary purpose of **formative assessment** is to inform instruction. As an instructional practice, it is described more fully in Section 3 of this framework. The Chief Council of State School Officers (CCSSO, 2018) updated its definition of formative assessment in 2021 and defines formative assessment in the following way:

Formative assessment is a planned, ongoing process used by all students and teachers during learning and teaching to elicit and use evidence of student learning to improve student understanding of intended disciplinary learning outcomes and support students to become self-directed learners.

Effective use of the formative assessment process requires students and teachers to integrate and embed the following practices in a collaborative and respectful classroom environment:

- *Clarifying learning goals and success criteria within a broader progression of learning;*
- *Eliciting and analyzing evidence of student thinking;*
- *Engaging in self-assessment and peer feedback;*
- *Providing actionable feedback; and*
- *Using evidence and feedback to move learning forward by adjusting learning strategies, goals, or next instructional steps.*

Additionally, formative assessment is integrated throughout instruction with the purpose of gathering evidence to adjust teaching, often in real time, to address student needs (Black and William, 2010), and capitalize on student strengths. There is ample evidence to support that this process produces “significant and often substantial learning gains” (Black and William, 2010) and these gains are often most pronounced for low-achieving students. Eliciting evidence of student thinking as part of the formative assessment process should take varied forms. Examples of strategies for gathering evidence of learning during the formative assessment process include exit slips, student checklists, one-sentence summaries, misconception checks (Alber, 2014), targeted questioning sequence, conferences, and observations.

Formative assessment becomes particularly powerful when it involves a component that allows for student self-assessment. When teachers clearly articulate learning goals, provide criteria for proficiency in meeting those goals, and orchestrate a classroom dialogue that unveils student understandings, students are then positioned to monitor their own learning. This self-knowledge, coupled with teacher support based on formative assessment data, can result in substantive learning gains (Black and William, 2010). Learner involvement in monitoring progress on their goals strengthens engagement for all students but is especially important for differently-abled students. Specific feedback comparing the students’ achievement against the standard – rather than only against other students – increases personal performance. With specific feedback, learners should then have the opportunity to resubmit some items in response. Opportunities for students to monitor their own progress and make improvements based on specific feedback connect to the Social Emotional Learning competency of **Self-management** – learning to manage and express emotions appropriately, controlling impulses, overcoming challenges, setting goals, and persevering and Self-awareness Learning Standards 1B – I can identify when help is needed and who can provide it. **Self-Awareness** means students understand their areas of strength as well as areas of need. This skill is strengthened as they monitor their progress. By incorporating Universal Design for Learning guidelines, assessment feedback that is relevant, constructive, accessible, specific, and timely with a focus on moving the learner toward mastery is more productive in promoting engagement. The assessment process creates a continuous feedback loop, which systematically checks for progress and identifies strengths and weaknesses to improve learning gains during instruction.

Summative assessments are formal assessments that are given after a substantial block of instructional time, for example at the end of a unit, term course, or academic year. **Interim assessments** are administered during instruction and depending on the type of interim assessment can be used to screen students, inform instruction, or measure outcomes. By design and purpose, high-quality summative and interim assessments are less nimble in responding to student strengths and needs than formative assessments. They provide an overall picture of achievement and can be useful in predicting student outcomes/supports or evaluating the need for pedagogical or programmatic changes. These assessments should be written to include a variety of item types (e.g., selected response, constructed response, extended response, performance tasks) and represent the full scale of Webb’s Depth of Knowledge (DOK). To maximize the potential for gathering concrete evidence of student learning as facilitated by curriculum and instruction, educators should routinely draw upon the assessments provided within their high-quality curriculum materials (RIDE, 2012).

State assessments are summative assessments that are given annually and provide a valuable “snapshot” to educators and families and help us see how we are doing compared with other districts, compared with the state as a whole, and compared against several other high-performing states. State assessments only account for about 1 percent of most student’s instructional time. Results from state assessments that are part of a comprehensive assessment system keep families and the public at large informed about school, district, and state achievement and progress.

Interim assessments include screeners and diagnostic assessments. Screening assessments are a type of interim assessment used as a first alert or indication of specific instructional need and are typically quick and easy to administer to a large number of students and easy to score. Assessments used for screening purposes can inform curriculum decisions about instruction for groups of students and for individual student's academic supports. Schools and districts often use interim assessments to screen and monitor student progress across the school year.

Examples of these assessments used in schools and districts include STAR, i-ready, NWEA, IXL, and Aimsweb. Some of these screening tools also have progress monitoring capability to track a student's response to intervention at a more frequent interval. Progress monitoring tools may be general outcome measures or mastery measures. While general outcome measures (GOMs) measure global skill automaticity, mastery measurement closely looks at one aspect or specific skill. When needed, screening assessments can be followed by more intensive diagnostic assessments to determine if targeted interventions are necessary. Diagnostic assessments are often individually administered to students who have been identified through the screening process. The diagnostic assessments help to provide greater detail of the student's knowledge and skill.

Performance assessments/tasks can be an effective way to assess students' learning of the standards within a high-quality curriculum. Performance assessments/tasks require students to apply understanding to complete a demonstration performance or product that can be judged on performance criteria (RIDE, 2012). Performance assessments can be designed to be formative, interim, or summative assessments of learning. They also allow for richer and more authentic assessment of learning. Educators can integrate performance assessments into instruction to provide additional learning experiences for students. Performance tasks are often included as one type of assessment in portfolios and exhibitions, such as those used as part of Rhode Island's Proficiency Based Graduation Requirements (PBGR).

	Inform Instruction	Screen/Identify	Measure Outcomes
Summative	Generally, not used as the primary source of data to inform instruction. May be useful in examining program effectiveness.	Generally, not used as the primary source of data to screen/identify students. May be one of multiple sources used.	Primary purpose is to measure outcomes (at classroom, school, LEA, or state level). Can be used for accountability, school improvement planning, evaluation, and research.
Formative	Primary purpose is to inform instruction.	Generally, not used to screen/identify students.	Generally, not used to measure long term outcomes; rather, it is used to measure whether students learned what was just taught before moving on to instructional "next steps." Evidence gathered as part of the formative assessment process may inform a referral to special education and may be used to help measure short-term objectives on IEPs.

	Inform Instruction	Screen/Identify	Measure Outcomes
Interim	May be used to inform instruction.	May be used to screen/identify students.	May be used to measure outcomes in a longer instructional sequence (e.g., end of a unit of study or quarter, semester, MTSS intervention goal, IEP goal). May be part of a special education referral.

What do educators need to know about validity, reliability and fairness?

Assessments must be designed and implemented to accurately collect student information. To do this they should all possess an optimal degree of

- *Validity* (the degree to which the assessment measures what it is supposed to measure – i.e., what is defined by the standards),
- *Reliability* (the consistency with which an assessment provides a picture of what a student knows and is able to do), and,
- *Fairness* (lacks bias, is accessible, and is administered with equity). (RIDE, 2012)

In other words, within an assessment, the items must measure the standards or content. It is also critical that the assessment provide information that demonstrates an accurate reflection of student learning. Ensuring fairness is equally important within the assessment, particularly for differently-abled and multilingual learners, because lack of accessibility can impact validity. For example, an assessment may not measure what it was designed to measure if students cannot access the assessment items or stimuli due to linguistic barriers or inattention to other demonstrated learning needs.

One component of ensuring fairness is using assessments that are accessible to all students. Accessible assessment practices may include offering assessments in different modalities (e.g., Braille, oral) or languages, allowing students to respond in different modalities, or providing additional accommodations for students. Accessibility features are available for all students to ensure universal access to the assessment. To further support differently-abled students (DAS) and multilingual learners (MLLs), accommodations are also available on all state assessments. Accommodations refer to changes in setting, timing (including scheduling), presentation format, or response format that do not alter in any significant way what the test measures, or the comparability of the results. For example, reading a test aloud may be appropriate when a student is taking a history assessment, but would not be appropriate to assess a student’s decoding ability. When used properly, accessibility features and appropriate test accommodations remove barriers to participation in the assessment and provide students with diverse learning needs an equitable opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

To ensure language access for MLLs, universal accessibility features and accommodations can be leveraged during administration of assessments, in a manner consistent with Rhode Island State Assessment Program policy. For example, breaks and familiar test administrators are available to MLLs on all statewide assessments except PSAT/SAT. For additional information about accessibility features, please see RIDE’s [Accommodations and Accessibility Features Manual](#). Accommodations are also available to MLLs on all statewide assessments. Examples of accommodations include bilingual dictionaries, reading aloud the test directions in the student’s native language, and Spanish editions of math and science assessments. A full list of accommodations available to MLLs on each state assessment is available in RIDE’s [Accommodations and Accessibility Features Manual](#).

For both MLLs and DAS, assessment accommodations should reflect instructional accommodations used on a regular basis with a student. Educators evaluate the effectiveness of accommodations through data collection and the consideration of the following questions:

1. Did the student use the accommodation consistently?
2. Did the accommodation allow the student to access or demonstrate learning as well as their peers?
3. Did the accommodation allow the student to feel like a member of the class?
4. Did the student like using the accommodation?

Most students with IEPs participate in regular statewide assessments with accommodations as outlined in their IEP. DAS who receives testing accommodations must take the same statewide assessment as peers without IEPs. IEP team members collaborate to select accommodations based on educational needs demonstrated by current data, not based on placement or disability category. All students with disabilities should be included in educational accountability systems and a small percentage (~1%) of students with significant cognitive impairments participate in alternate state assessment. Educators should engage students and families in decisions about appropriate testing accommodations or participation in alternate assessments (i.e., DLM and Alternate ACCESS).

IDEA also speaks to accommodations on district assessments as well as statewide assessments. According to IDEA Sec. 300.320(a)(6), each child's individualized education program (IEP) must include: a statement of any individual appropriate accommodations that are necessary to measure the academic achievement and functional performance of the child on state **and districtwide assessments** consistent with section 612(a)(16) of the Act. When determining accommodations for district assessments, IEP teams, including the general educator, must consider the difference between target skills (the knowledge or skills being assessed) and access skills (needed to complete the assessment, but not specifically being measured) along with data on the strengths and needs of the individual student.

Another component for ensuring fairness is making sure the items do not include any bias in content or language that may disadvantage some students. For example, when assessing multilingual learners, it is important to use vocabulary that is widely accessible to students and avoid colloquial and idiomatic expressions and/or words with multiple meanings when it is not pertinent to what you are measuring. Whenever possible, use familiar contexts or objects like classroom or school experiences rather than ones that are outside of school that may or may not be familiar to all students. Keep sentence structures as simple as is possible while expressing the intended meaning.

Even with valid, reliable, and fair assessments, it is important for educators to consider multiple data points to ensure that they have a comprehensive understanding of student strengths and needs, especially when supporting DAS and MLLs. In addition to interim and diagnostic assessment, sources of information can range from observations, work samples, and curriculum-based measurement to functional behavioral assessments and parent input. These data points should be gathered within the core curriculum by general educators, rather than only by those providing specialized services, because data should guide daily decisions about instruction within general education. Multiple sources of information help educators collaborate to develop a comprehensive learner profile of strengths and needs. Educators can analyze the learning environment against that profile to identify necessary scaffolds and accommodations to remove barriers for DAS. Multiple sources of data are also important, seeing as language access can impact student data from content assessments in English.

Selecting and Developing Assessments

Building or refining a comprehensive assessment system begins by agreeing upon the purposes of the assessments the LEA will administer. One assessment cannot answer every question about student learning. Each type of assessment has a role in a comprehensive assessment system. The goal is not to have some – or enough – of each type; rather it is to understand that each type of assessment has a purpose and, when used effectively, can provide important information to further student learning. Some questions educator teams may ask themselves as part of any discussion of purpose include:

- “What do we want to know about student learning of the standards?”
- “What do we want to learn about students’ skills and knowledge?”
- “What data do we need to answer those questions?”

Once claims and needs are identified, the appropriate assessments are selected to fulfill those data needs by asking: “Which assessment best serves our purpose?” For example, if a teacher wants to know if students learned the material just taught and identify where they may be struggling to adjust the next day’s instruction, the teacher may give a short quiz which asks students a few questions targeting a specific skill. Whereas, if the teacher wanted to know if the students were proficient with the content taught during the first semester, the teacher may ask students to complete a longer test or performance task where students apply their new learning, thus measuring multiple standards/skills.

In addition to considering what purpose an assessment will serve, attention must be paid to the alignment of the assessment with the curriculum being used by the LEA. Curriculum materials embed assessments as part of the package provided to educators. In turn, educators must consider whether the assessments included meet the breadth of purposes and types needed for an assessment system that informs instruction and provides outcome information about student learning. A good starting place is to [review what assessments are available](#) within the high-quality instructional materials, identify gaps and weaknesses, and develop a plan for which additional assessments may need to be purchased or developed. Remember any review of assessments needed involves a close use of the standards and universal design guidelines. Providing options in the way assessments are represented and allowing for students to demonstrate their understanding through multiple means of action and expression benefits all students, especially MLLs and DAS.

Assessments that are not adequately aligned with the LEA’s adopted curriculum and universal design are not accurate indicators of student learning. This is especially important when assessment data are used in high-stakes decision-making, such as student promotion or graduation. Because every assessment has its limitations, it is preferable to use data from multiple assessments and types of assessments. By collecting data from multiple sources, one can feel more confident in inferences drawn from such data. When curriculum, instruction, and assessment are carefully aligned and working together, student learning is maximized.

Finally, when developing or selecting assessments, knowing whether an assessment is a good fit for your needs requires a basic understanding of item types and assessment methods and their respective features, advantages, and disadvantages. Though this is certainly not an exhaustive list, a few of the most common item types and assessment methods include selected response, constructed response, performance tasks, and observations/interviews. See *Comprehensive Assessment System: Rhode Island Criteria and Guidance (2012)* for a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of each method.

Facets of a Comprehensive Assessment System in Reading

A comprehensive system of assessment in reading involves several different types of assessments for determining the effectiveness of the instruction, the progress the student is making, and the need for and direction of additional interventions and supports to ensure that a student is able to maintain grade-level progress. Districts and schools should begin with their high-quality instructional materials and identifying the types of assessments available within the materials. Utilizing the high-quality instructional materials resources is a critical component of a comprehensive assessment system in literacy. The following describes various categories of reading assessments and the kinds of information they provide.

Classroom Instructional Assessments: Reading

Screening Assessments. A type of interim assessment:

- used as a first alert or indication of being at-risk for reading below grade level
- administered to all students before instruction
- quick and easy to administer to a large number of students and correlated with end-of-year achievement tests
- rarely provide the specific information needed to determine the most appropriate intervention or target for instruction
- all essential components of reading may not be included within any given grade level's screening assessment. However, to make informed decisions on a student's proficiency in reading, ample data must be collected. Therefore, a screening assessment should include, at a minimum, two of the components that influence reading proficiency.

Key questions that screening assessments should answer:

- Which student is experiencing reading difficulty?
- Which student is at risk for reading difficulty and in need of further diagnostic assessments and/or additional interventions?

Literacy/Dyslexia Screening Expectation

All students should be screened every year to determine support for students as needed, per the PLP Guidelines and RI High School Regulations. Universal literacy screening should be administered to all students to determine early risk of future reading difficulties. A preventative approach should be used to ensure student risk is revealed early on, when intervention is most effective. If a student scores low on these screeners, additional assessments should be administered to determine a student's potential risk for dyslexia, a neurobiological weakness in phonological and orthographic processing. Screeners should include measures of Rapid Automatic Naming (RAN), phonemic awareness, real and pseudo word reading, as well as vocabulary and syntactic awareness, which have implications on prosody, fluency, and ultimately comprehension.

For additional guidance, including [screening guidance](#) by grade level.

Examples of [Screening Assessments](#) and [Early Literacy Screening Assessments](#).

Benchmark Assessments. A type of interim assessment:

- administered to all students
- used to chart growth in reading
- used to determine if students are making adequate progress in overall performance towards standard(s)
- typically administered at a predetermined time (e.g., at the end of a unit/theme, quarterly)

Key questions that benchmark assessments should answer:

- What is the effectiveness of classroom instruction?
- How should groups be formed for classroom reading instruction?
- Which students need extra support or enrichment to acquire a particular reading skill or standard?
- Which specific reading skills need to be emphasized or re-taught?

Progress Monitoring. A type of formative or interim assessment:

- used to determine next steps
- used during classroom reading instruction (may occur daily or weekly)
- aligned to instructional objectives
- can be used on an ongoing basis and may include teacher-made assessments, book logs, work samples, anecdotal records, and standardized or semi-structured measures of student performance, such as analysis and observational notes of student learning

Key questions that progress monitoring assessments should answer:

- How does the data articulate whether a student “got it?”
- Does the lesson need to be re-taught to the whole class or to just a few students?
- Who needs extra support or enrichment?
- How is the specific, constructive, and timely feedback that is provided to students promoting student learning (or relearning) of reading skills/standards?

Outcome Assessment. A type of summative assessment:

- used as a program or student evaluation in reading
- used to indicate a student’s learning over a period of time and to show how proficient a student is towards meeting the grade-level standards in reading

Key questions that outcome assessments should answer:

- To what degree has the student achieved the reading content standards?
- Is the assessment aligned to the state-adopted reading standards?
- What information/data is provided and may be used to evaluate the effectiveness of the reading curriculum?
- Can decisions about selection and utilization of resources, materials, and personnel be made with data collected from this reading assessment?

Intervention

Diagnostic Assessment. A type of interim assessment:

- used to gain an in-depth view of a student’s reading profile
- administered to students who have already been identified as being at risk of reading below grade level during the screening process
- often are individually administered so observations of behaviors can also be included

Diagnostic assessments are used to determine specific areas of need and may not include all essential components of reading. However, a comprehensive assessment system must include a variety of assessments that address all essential components of reading for educators to use as needed.

Key questions that diagnostic assessments should answer:

- What are a student’s strengths in reading?
- What are a student’s weaknesses in reading?
- Which components of reading (e.g., fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics, text comprehension, and/or vocabulary) are problematic for the student?
- Are other students exhibiting similar reading profiles?
- How should reading intervention groups be formed?

Examples of [Diagnostic Assessments](#)

Progress Monitoring of Intervention. A type of formative or interim assessment:

- used to chart rate of growth towards benchmark/goal/standard
- used for students who have intervention services in reading

Key questions that a progress monitoring assessment used with a method of intervention should answer:

- Has this intervention been proven effective in improving students’ literacy skills?
- Is the individual student progressing at a sufficient rate to achieve the goal?
- Are instructional revisions needed for the student to make sufficient progress toward the student’s goal/standard?

Examples of [Progress Monitoring Assessments](#)

Classroom Instructional Assessments: Writing

Writing requires the coordination of multiple skills and abilities, including the ability to organize, establish purpose/focus, elaborate, choose and maintain a consistent voice, select appropriate words, structure effective sentences, spell, plan, revise, etc. “To address each of these aspects instructionally, educators need an assessment plan that is comprehensive and meets the varied needs of students” (Olinghouse, 2009).

Assessments for writing may be used for a variety of purposes (e.g., providing assistance to students, assigning a grade, determining proficiency, placing students in instructional groups or courses, and evaluating writing curricula/programs). The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) believes that the primary purpose of assessment is to improve teaching and learning (2014). Consequently,

the goal of assessing students' writing should always be just that: refining instruction and improving student learning.

Writing assessments must reflect the social nature of writing and its recursive process, while also considering that each piece of writing has a specific purpose, audience, and task. Due to the variety of genres of writing, the skills associated with each, the diverse audiences, and various purposes for writing (entertain, persuade, inform), the evaluation of a student's overall writing ability should be based on multiple measures.

Students should be able to demonstrate what they do well in writing. Assessment criteria should match the particular kind of writing being created and its purpose. These criteria should be directly linked to standards that are clearly communicated to students in advance so that students can be guided by the criteria while writing.

Educators need to understand the following in order to develop a system for assessing writing:

- how to find out what students can do when they write informally and on an ongoing basis
- how to use that assessment to decide how and what to teach next
- how to assess in order to form judgments about the quality of student writing and learning
- how to assess ability and knowledge across varied writing engagements
- what are the features of good writing
- what are the elements of a constructive writing process
- what growth in writing looks like – the developmental aspects of writing
- how to deliver useful feedback, appropriate for the writer and situation
- how to analyze writing tasks/situations for their most essential elements (so that the assessment is not everything about writing all at once but rather targeted to objectives)
- how to analyze and interpret both qualitative and quantitative writing assessments
- how to use a portfolio to assist writers in their development
- how self-assessment and reflection contribute to a writer's development
- when determining proficiency in writing, multiple student writing samples should be reviewed from various genres and for diverse audiences, tasks, and purposes

(Adapted from Newkirk & Kent, 2007)

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Olinghouse, N.G (2009). Writing assessment for struggling learners. *Perspectives in Language and Literacy*, Summer, 15–18.

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Assessment Considerations for MLLs and DAS

In addition to selecting and designing appropriate assessments, it is critical that educators use sound assessment practices to support MLLs and DAS during core instruction. Assessments offers

valuable insight into MLL and DAS learning, and educators should use this data to plan and implement high-quality instruction. Through formative assessment, educators of ELA/Literacy play a central role in providing feedback to MLLs on content and disciplinary language development and DAS on progress towards IEP goals.

As with academic content, a comprehensive assessment system is essential for monitoring the language development of MLLs. To assess English language proficiency, RIDE has adopted ACCESS for ELs as its statewide summative assessment. However, students cannot acquire a second language in a single block of the school day. Thus, it is imperative that educators and administrators develop systems for conducting ongoing formative assessments content driven language instruction. Formative assessment processes should take place *within* ELA/Literacy and will focus on MLLs' content-based language development. This approach aligns to WIDA ELD Standards Framework as well as the Blueprint for MLL Success, both of which explicitly call for disciplinary language teaching within the core content areas.

The same integration of evidence-based assessment practices for DAS is needed within the general education curriculum. Seventy percent of RI students with IEPs are in general education settings at least 80% of their day. IEP goals are meant to measure and improve student progress *within* the general education curriculum. The specially-designed instruction is typically not happening separately or in a silo but in connection with the classroom instruction and curriculum. The general educator and special educator work in consultation to use classroom data to measure progress on an IEP goal along with any additional measures indicated in the IEP.

DAS may benefit from data-based individualization (DBI) to improve their progress in the general education curriculum. DBI is an iterative, problem-solving process that involves the analysis of progress-monitoring and diagnostic assessment data. Diagnostic data from tools such as standardized measures, error analysis of progress monitoring data and work samples, or functional behavioral assessments (FBA) are collected and analyzed to identify the specific skill deficits that need to be targeted. The results of the diagnostic assessment, in combination with the teacher's analysis of what features of instruction need to be adjusted to better support the student, help staff determine how to individualize the student's instructional program to meet the individual student's unique needs and promote progress in the general education curriculum. The diagnostic process allows teachers to identify a student's specific area(s) of difficulty when lack of progress is evident and can inform decisions about how to adapt the intervention (National Center on Intensive Intervention, 2013).

Assessment to Support MLLs in High-Quality Core Instruction

The 2020 Edition of the WIDA ELD Standards Framework is different from previous iterations in that it contains **proficiency level descriptors** by grade level cluster to support developmentally appropriate, content-driven language learning. In addition to assessing MLLs' content learning in their home languages when possible for added validity, educators of ELA/Literacy should draw on the WIDA proficiency level descriptors to design or amplify formative assessments tracking MLLs' language development in ELA/Literacy.

As with the formative assessment process in academic content, establishing clear learning goals is the first step in improving student understanding of intended content-based language outcomes. To use the proficiency level descriptors, educators must determine **the mode of communication** (i.e., whether they are assessing interpretative or expressive language) and select the corresponding set of descriptors. This determination will likely be made when the educator identifies the language goals. **Expressive language** refers to speaking, writing, and representing, whereas **interpretative language** includes listening, reading, and viewing.

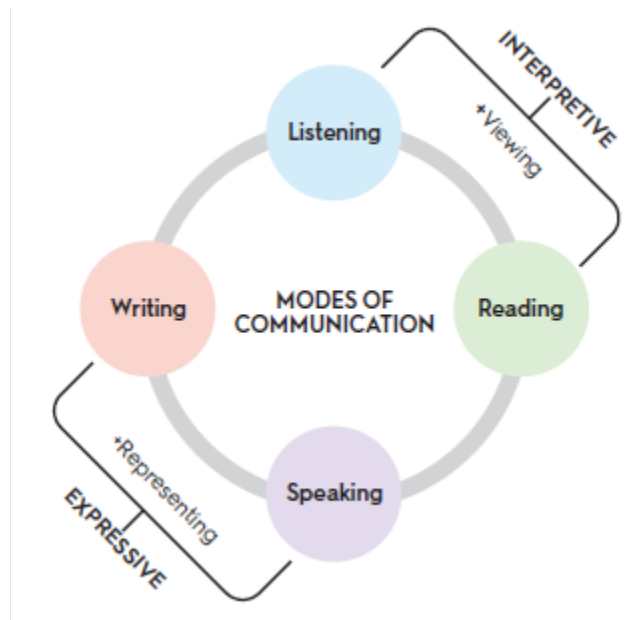


Image Source: [2020 Edition of WIDA ELD Standards Framework](#)

The proficiency level descriptors should serve as a key resource to educators when refining language goals for assessment purposes, as the proficiency level descriptors highlight characteristics of language proficiency at each level. These descriptors are organized according to their discourse, sentence, and word dimensions. At the discourse level, as shown in the following table, the 2020 Edition distinguishes between language features that contribute to organization, cohesion, or density.

Grades 4–5 WIDA Proficiency Level Descriptors for the Expressive Communication Mode (Speaking, Writing, and Representing)
Toward the end of each proficiency level, when scaffolded appropriately, multilingual learners will...

Criteria	End of Level 1	End of Level 2	End of Level 3	End of Level 4	End of Level 5	Level 6
DISCOURSE Organization of language	Create coherent texts (spoken, written, multimodal) using...					
	short sentences linked by topic to convey an emerging sense of purpose (to inform, explain, argue, narrate)	sentences that convey intended purpose with emerging organization (topic sentence, supporting details)	short text that conveys intended purpose using predictable organizational patterns (signaled with some paragraph openers: <i>first, and then, then</i>)	expanding text that conveys intended purpose using generic (not genre-specific) organizational patterns across paragraphs (introduction, body, conclusion) with a variety of paragraph openers	text that conveys intended purpose using genre-specific organizational patterns (statement of position, arguments, call to action)	text that conveys intended purpose using genre-specific organizational patterns with strategic ways of signaling relationships between paragraphs and throughout text (<i>the first reason, the second reason, the evidence is...</i>)
DISCOURSE Cohesion of language	Connect ideas across a whole text through...					
	some frequently used cohesive devices (repetition, demonstratives)	some formulaic cohesive devices (pronoun referencing, etc.)	a growing number of cohesive devices (emerging use of articles to refer to the same word, synonyms, antonyms)	an expanding variety of cohesive devices (given/new, whole/part, class/subclass)	a flexible number of cohesive devices (substitution, ellipsis, given/new)	a wide variety of cohesive devices used in genre- and discipline-specific ways
DISCOURSE Density of language	Elaborate or condense ideas through...					
	a few types of elaboration (adding familiar adjectives to describe nouns: <i>maple syrup</i>)	some types of elaboration (adding newly learned or multiple adjectives to nouns (<i>thick, sweet, sticky maple syrup</i>))	a growing number of types of elaboration (adding articles or demonstratives to nouns: <i>the dark syrup</i>)	a variety of types of elaboration (adding in a variety of adjectives including concrete and abstract nouns: <i>the long, slow process...</i>)	a wide variety of types of elaboration (adding in embedded clauses after the noun: <i>the sap which boiled for six hours...</i>)	flexible range of types of elaboration that includes embedded clauses and condensed noun groups (elaborating: <i>a sweet sap that turned into a delicious syrup after hours of boiling and condensing through nominalization: this tedious process</i>)

Image Source: [2020 Edition of WIDA ELD Standards Framework](#)

During formative assessments, educators will not likely draw on all dimensions of language at once for assessment purposes. For instance, an exit ticket that asks students to produce two to three sentences would not be an appropriate language sample for assessing progress on organization of language. To adequately assess this discourse-level dimension of language, students would need authentic opportunities to demonstrate proficiency. An assessment item that calls for less than one paragraph or extended oral remarks, therefore, may not suffice for this purpose.

Rather than creating separate assessments to monitor progress towards disciplinary language development, educators should aim to augment assessments that are already part of their local core curricula. For example, multiple modalities could be incorporated into existing content assessments, allowing students to orally explain how they arrived at a particular solution or claim. This practice of amplifying existing materials with additional modalities aligns with UDL guidelines by providing multiple means of representation (perception, language, and symbols) and multiple means for students to demonstrate their understanding (physical action, expression, and communication) — a critical design element for MLLs who need daily explicit speaking, listening, reading, and writing instruction.

Assessment to Support Differently-Abled Students in High-Quality Core Instruction

Differently-abled students are best supported when general and special educators use Universal Design for Learning to collaboratively design and plan assessments aligned to clear learning goals to ensure they measure the intended goals of the learning experience. Flexibility in assessment options will support learners in demonstrating their knowledge. All learners can benefit from practice assessments, review guides, flexible timing, assistive technologies, or support resources and help reduce the barriers that do not change the learning goals being measured. In addition to improving access, flexible assessment options may decrease perceived threats or distractions so that learners

can demonstrate their skills and knowledge. For example, a student with specific support needs for fine motor skills may be more able to participate in demonstrating knowledge of how to make a square when given the opportunity to drag and drop line segments in a technology tool rather than use a pencil on paper or a marker on a white board.

Educators can use high-leverage practices (HLPs) to leverage student learning across the content areas, grade levels, and various learner abilities. The HLPs contain specific evidence-based practices in four domains: Instruction, Assessment, Collaboration, and SEL.

High-leverage practice #6, on the use of student assessment data to analyze instructional practices and make necessary adjustments that improve student outcomes, highlights the importance of ongoing collaboration between general education and special education in this practice (McLeskey, J, 2017). Information from functional skills assessments, such as those provided by an occupational therapist or speech language therapist, can provide critical information for general educators to use when designing accessible assessments or discussing necessary accommodations to classroom and district assessments. When differently-abled students are not making the level of progress anticipated, the data-based individualization process is a diagnostic method that can help to improve the instructional experience and promote progress in the general education curriculum through a tiered continuum of interventions.

Resource	Description
High Leverage Practices Assessment Overview	Assessment plays a foundational role in special education. Students with disabilities are complex learners who have unique needs that exist alongside their strengths. This overview includes a summary of each HLP for assessment.
High-Leverage Practice (HLP) Leadership Guides from the Council for Exceptional Children	<p>Leadership Guides for the following HLPs:</p> <p>#4 Use Multiple Sources of Information to Develop a Comprehensive Understanding of a Student’s Strengths and Needs</p> <p>#5 Interpret and Communicate Assessment Information with Stakeholders to Collaboratively Design and Implement Educational Programs</p> <p>#6 Use Student Assessment Data, Analyze Instructional Practices, and Make Necessary Adjustments that Improve Student Outcomes</p> <p>#10 Conduct Functional Behavioral Assessments (FBAs)</p>
Participate in Assessment IEP (promotingprogress.org)	This tip sheet provides information about participation in assessment and accommodations for assessments. It includes a brief summary of federal regulations and tips for implementation.

Resource	Description
Accessibility and Accommodations for General Assessments FAQ NCEO	This online FAQ includes common questions and answers with hyperlinks to various resources on accessibility, accommodations, and modifications.
IRIS Page 3: Instructional Versus Testing Accommodations (vanderbilt.edu)	This online learning resource is a portion of an IRIS module that clarifies different types of accommodations.
DLM Assessments - Assessment - Instruction & Assessment World-Class - Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE)	These documents and professional development modules, along with other relevant general education curriculum materials, may be used to inform instructional planning and goal-setting for students with significant cognitive impairments.
Differently-abled Multilingual Language Learners/ English Learners with Disabilities (ELSWD) The Role of Individualized Education Program (IEP) Teams and Participation in English Language Proficiency (ELP) Assessments	This document elaborates on federal guidance on the role of Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams and ELSWD participation in English Language Proficiency (ELP) assessments.
CAST UDL Tips for Assessment	This resource provides quick tips and reflection questions to promote accessible assessment.
UDL: Increase mastery-oriented feedback (cast.org)	This component of the interactive UDL matrix supports educators in understanding the importance of accessible and meaningful feedback to students during the assessment process.
Universal Design of Assessments FAQ	NCEO online resource
Impact Winter 2018/19 Volume 31, Number 2 Together We Are Better! Collaborative Teaming to Support Authentic Inclusion of Students with Complex Support Needs Cheryl Jorgensen How-To (umn.edu)	In this article, figure 2 gives examples of using student work on a weekly basis to improve instruction and inclusion and monitor progress for a student with complex and intensive needs. Figures 3-4 provide specific support examples for the math case study.

Formative Assessment Resources

Resource	Description
Why Formative Assessments Matter	Introduction to the importance of formative assessments.

Resource	Description
The Impact of Formative Assessment and Learning Intentions on Student Achievement	Summary of findings on formative assessment and student achievement.
CCSSO Revising the Definition of Formative Assessment	This resource provides an overview of the FAST SCASS 's revised definition on formative assessment, originally published in 2006. The revised definition includes an overview of the attributes of effective formative assessment and emphasizes new areas emerging from current research, theory, and practice.
Formative Assessment 10 Key Questions.pdf (wi.gov)	Consider using this document as one of a variety of resources to support educators' assessment literacy to build student-teacher relationships that improves student outcomes.
Focusing Formative Assessment on the Needs of English Language Learners	In this paper, we examine how formative assessment can enhance the teaching and learning of ELL students in particular.
Formative Assessment for Students with Disabilities.pdf (ccsso.org)	This report provides both special education and general education teachers with an introduction to the knowledge and skills they need to confidently and successfully implement formative assessment for students with disabilities in their classrooms through text and video examples. The strategies described in this paper are not limited to use with differently-abled students and work for all students, including those with unfinished learning.

State Summative Assessment Resources

Resource Links
ACCESS for ELLs
Alternate ACCESS for ELLs
DLM Assessments
NAEP Assessments
NGSA Assessments
PSAT and SAT Assessments
RICAS Assessments
Rhode Island State Assessment Program (ri.gov) IEP Team Guidance on Eligibility for Alternate Assessments

Resource Links

[Assessment Accommodations - Assessment - Instruction & Assessment - Rhode Island Department of Education \(ri.gov\)](#)

[DLM Assessments - Assessment - Instruction & Assessment World-Class - Rhode Island Department of Education \(RIDE\)](#)

Additional Resources for a Comprehensive Assessment System

Resource Links

[Determining Appropriateness of Assessment: Appendix B](#)

[EQUIP and Learning Forward Professional Learning Community Modules](#)

[EQUIP Student Work Analysis Tool, SWAT](#)

[EQUIP Annotated Student Work Initiative](#)

[Rhode Island Proficiency Framework](#)

- [Cross-Curricular](#)
- [English Language Arts](#)
- [Mathematics](#)
- [Social Studies](#)
- [Science](#)

Rhode Island Proficiency Framework: Scoring Criteria

- [ELA](#)
- [Mathematics](#)
- [Science](#)
- [Social Studies](#)

[Writing Calibration](#)

[Writing Standards in Action](#)

Screening

Types of Screening Resources	Description and Resource Links
Literacy/Dyslexia Screening	Universal literacy screening should be administered to all students to determine early risk of future reading difficulties. A preventative approach should be used to ensure student risk is revealed early on when intervention is most effective. If a student scores low on these screeners, additional assessments should be administered to determine a student’s potential risk for dyslexia, a neurobiological weakness in phonological and orthographic processing. Screeners should include measures of Rapid Automatic Naming (RAN), phonemic awareness, real and pseudo word

Types of Screening Resources	Description and Resource Links
	<p>reading, as well as vocabulary and syntactic awareness, which have implications on prosody, fluency, and ultimately comprehension.</p> <p>For additional guidance, including screening guidance by grade, please see the Massachusetts Dyslexia Guidelines</p>
Early Childhood Screening	<p>Child Outreach is Rhode Island’s universal developmental screening system designed to screen all children ages 3 to 5 annually, prior to kindergarten entry. Developmental screenings sample developmental tasks in a wide range of areas and have been designed to determine whether a child may experience a challenge that will interfere with the acquisition of knowledge or skills. Screening results are often the first step in identifying children who may need further assessment, intervention, and/or services at an early age to promote positive outcomes in kindergarten and beyond.</p> <p>Child Outreach Screening - Early Childhood Special Education - Early Childhood - Instruction & Assessment - Rhode Island Department of Education (ri.gov)</p>
MLL Screening	<p>Screening for MLL identification involves completion of the state-approved Home Language Survey (HLS) and potential administration of a Language Screening Assessment, based on responses to the HLS. The guidance below outlines the state-adopted procedure for identifying English Learners in accordance with statute R.I.G.L.16-54-3 and regulation 200-RICR-20-30-3. Additional information on federal and state requirements for screening MLLs can be found in the assessment and placement section of the MLL Toolkit.</p> <p>Multilingual Learner (MLL) Identification, Screening, Placement and Reclassification (May 2021)</p>
Universal Academic Screening	<p>Through universal academic screening, school teams systematically and regularly analyze school wide data to determine the health of core instruction. Current academic performance levels from a screener are one type of academic data teams use to identify strengths and areas of need at a grade level as part of a MTSS.</p> <p>Screening within an MTSS Framework</p> <p>Educator Resources for high quality interim assessments</p> <p>Interim Assessments - Assessment - Instruction & Assessment World-Class - Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE)</p> <p>Assessment Practices Within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (ufl.edu)</p> <p>Bailey, T. R., Colpo, A. & Foley, A. (2020). Assessment Practices Within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (Document No. IC-18). Retrieved from University of Florida, Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability, and Reform Center website:</p> <p>http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/tools/innovationconfigurations/</p>

Progress Monitoring

Resource	Description
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General Outcome Measures (GOM)	GOMs measure automaticity of basic skills in reading, math, spelling and written expression as well as monitor readiness skills in literacy and numeracy. While GOMs do not measure all aspects of reading or math, they do serve as a predictive indicator of academic competence in these fundamental content areas and are typically used for setting intervention goals.
Mastery Measures	Mastery measures determine how much a student already knows about and where instruction should begin as well as determining when a student has mastered a particular skill taught. They help determine if the student is learning the specific skills as a result of an intervention and help identify where and how to intervene.
Progress Monitoring Tools Chart	This chart includes measures designed to assess progress towards end-year goal (e.g., oral reading fluency) and measures designed to assess mastery towards short-term skills (e.g., letter naming fluency). The chart reviews the peer-reviewed research on progress monitoring tools submitted by the vendors and reports on reliability, validity, bias analysis, sensitivity for reliability and validity of slope, alternate forms, decision rules, administration format, scoring time, scoring format, ROI and EOY benchmarks for each measure. Click on the tabs and tools names to see additional information including detailed data.
IRIS Center Information Brief	This brief describes and compares two types of progress monitoring, Mastery Measures and General Outcome Measures, providing math and ELA examples and characteristics of each measure.

Diagnostic

Resource	Description
IEP Tip Sheet: Measuring Progress Toward Annual Goals Progress Center (promotingprogress.org)	Suggestions for what to do and what to avoid when designing progress monitoring plans for differently-abled students plus additional resources to learn more.
Student Progress Monitoring Tool for Data Collection and Graphing (Excel) National Center on Intensive Intervention	This Excel tool is designed to help educators collect academic progress monitoring data across multiple measures as a part of the data-based individualization (DBI) process. This tool allows educators to store data for multiple students (across multiple measures), graph student progress, and set individualized goals for a student on specific measures.
Progress Center High-Quality Academic IEP Program Goals	Recorded webinar, resources, and materials on how to set ambitious goals for students by selecting a valid, reliable progress monitoring measure, establishing baseline performance, choosing a strategy, and writing a measurable goal.

Resource	Description
Student-Level Data-Based Individualization Implementation Checklists (intensiveintervention.org)	Teams can use these checklists to monitor implementation of the data-based individualization (DBI) process during initial planning and ongoing review (progress monitoring) meetings.
Tools to Support Intensive Intervention Data Meetings National Center on Intensive Intervention (NCII)	NCII has created a series of tools to help teams establish efficient and effective individual student data meetings . In the DBI process, the team is focused on the needs of individual students who are not making progress in their current intervention or special education program.
Data Collection and Analysis for Continuous Improvement	Collection and analysis of progress monitoring data are necessary for understanding how students are progressing towards their IEP goals. These data, along with other data sources, can support ongoing instructional decision making across the continuum of supports and assist teams in evaluating the effectiveness of IEP implementation. In the Data Collection and Analysis for Continuous Improvement accordion are resources and tools for progress monitoring math and reading, selecting tools, and keeping an implementation log .
Toolkit Student-Progress-Monitoring.pdf (transitionta.org)	The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) toolkit supports data-driven decision-making for middle and high school students to connect their academic progress and transition goals — includes 50-plus pages of sample tools. Note the inventory on reading, writing, presenting, and study habits (pp. 48–49), and the small group direction instruction recording sheet (p. 71).
Learning Modules Library: Progress Center and NCII Course: The 5 Steps of Data-Based Individualization	From the Progress Center, educators can build knowledge of the data-based individualization (DBI) process that is used to support a diagnostic practice and improve instruction for students with intensive learning needs.

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