

# TEACHING LITERACY IN TENNESSEE: ENGLISH LEARNER COMPANION

Practical guidance for teaching English Learners.

K-3





## **VISION STATEMENT**

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Districts and schools in Tennessee will exemplify excellence and equity such that all students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark upon their chosen path in life.

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# INTRODUCTION

The research is clear: reading proficiently prepares students for lifelong success. Unfortunately, Tennessee students have fallen behind their peers across the nation in reading. Over the past several years, our results in reading have remained stagnant and, in some cases, have declined. In 2015, on the TCAP assessment, only 43 percent of third-grade students were proficient in reading, and similarly, on the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP), only one-third of fourth graders were reading on grade level. This means that the majority of Tennessee students are not as prepared as they need to be for the next school year and are not yet on track with the knowledge and skills to embark on their chosen path in life. Addressing this challenge requires a focused, collective effort among state, district, school, and classroom leaders.

The good news is that together, we are making progress. At the state level, supporting high-quality literacy instruction is a central priority. In 2015, the Tennessee Department of Education launched *Tennessee Succeeds*, a five-year strategic plan. A cornerstone of *Tennessee Succeeds* is the Read to be Ready campaign, a statewide initiative launched in 2016 by Governor and First Lady Haslam and Commissioner McQueen, to move at least 75 percent of Tennessee third graders to reading proficiency by 2025.

1

INTRODUCTION

**TIP!**

Click [links](#) to open resources in your Internet browser.

## CONNECTING THE WORK.

What is reading proficiency?

**Read to be Ready:**  
A vision for third grade reading proficiency



Read to be Ready  
A vision for third-grade reading proficiency in Tennessee  
Tennessee Department of Education | September 2016

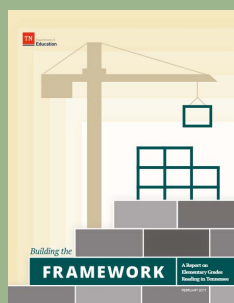
Note: Resources in this graphic are hyperlinked.

What is our current status?

**Setting the Foundation**

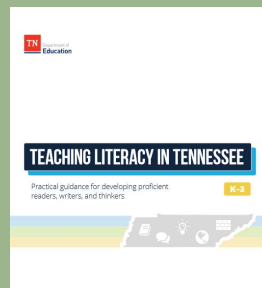


**Building the Framework**

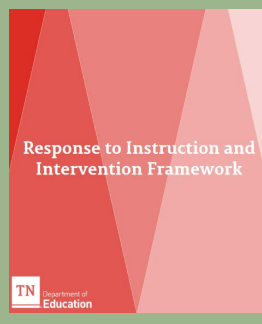


How do we help our range of learners become proficient?

**Teaching Literacy in Tennessee: K-3**

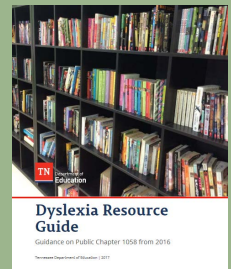


**RTI<sup>2</sup> Manual**

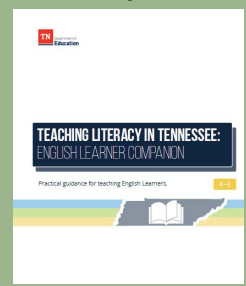


How do we best support certain student groups?

**Dyslexia Resource Guide**



**Teaching Literacy in Tennessee: EL Companion**



## WHY A FOCUS ON SUPPORTING ENGLISH LEARNERS?

The growth of the population of English Learners in the United States has been steadily increasing for the last decade. Tennessee’s English learner (EL) population has more than doubled from 2006 to 2016. Because of this increase, more and more classroom teachers are tasked with providing quality instruction to ELs. Additionally, administrators are called to pay increased attention to the data and performance of English Learners as the state has introduced new accountability measures as part of the state’s ESSA plan. To support both general education and English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers who provide daily instruction to English Learners, as well as school and district administrators, the Tennessee Department of Education has developed guiding documents for early grades literacy outlining how best to serve our range of learners. Developed as a companion document to *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee*, this resource, *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee: English Learner Companion*, is designed to support school and district staff in implementing program models and daily instruction for English Learners. Using research-based strategies highlighted in this document, administrators and teachers will be better-equipped to facilitate a focus on capabilities and growth.

This practical guide for Tennessee educators, outlines a statewide vision for EL instruction—specific to early grades reading—rooted in research and the WIDA Can Do Philosophy that will help teachers develop their students learning English as a second language into proficient readers, writers, and thinkers.

### **Document Overview**

**Core Belief: High-quality literacy instruction with appropriate differentiation will prepare students for success in school and beyond.**

1. The document provides an outline of program models that may be implemented by districts and schools to fit their instructional and programmatic needs based on their EL population and data.
2. The document provides an overview of the classroom-level decisions to be made by teachers for planning and instruction of ELs.
3. A vignette and teacher think-aloud follow the literacy framework, providing insight into the considerations surrounding lesson planning, strategies for differentiation, alignment to assessment, and data analysis.
4. The reflections and resources are available for educators who are looking to learn more information about the topics discussed in the document.

## RESEARCH TAKEAWAYS

### 1 English Learners need the opportunity to engage with a large amount of text.

All learners should spend a large portion of their day engaged in listening to, reading, thinking, talking, and writing about texts. This characteristic of high quality literacy instruction is especially important for English Learners. Research tells us that English Learners' knowledge and vocabulary development and text comprehension are greatly enhanced when they engage with texts that are comprehensible. To support comprehensibility, ELs require multiple opportunities to engage with texts that represent their prior knowledge, family, communities, cultural experiences, and interests. Instruction that is impactful demonstrates that students lived experiences and linguistic capabilities are important to advance concept and content knowledge. Research tells us that instruction with texts should be explicit in setting goals that integrate English language arts standards and language proficiency. Additionally, regular practice reading texts in English is essential to develop students' fluency and word recognition. 28, 31, 32, 33, 35, 2, 8, 9, 18, 24

### 2 English Learners need the opportunity to read complex texts.

Complex texts are texts that provide an appropriate level of rigor aligned with grade level expectations. A wide body of research indicates that English Learners benefit from reading and listening to complex texts, including texts representing a wide range of narrative and informative genres and across disciplines in order to build academic knowledge and vocabulary. Further research indicates that English Learners succeed with complex text when specific instructional modifications are in place. These modifications include explicit linkages between text content and students' prior knowledge, explicit and systematic focus on content and comprehension outcomes, explicit attention to cross language comparisons for clarification and explanation, and multiple pathways to demonstrate knowledge-based and skill-based competencies. English Learners benefit from text previews and end-of-text summaries, as well as extended text discussions that are supported by visual and language-based explanations. Tasks associated with complex texts should support incremental vocabulary development and text comprehension in ways that address the linguistic demands of the complex texts, for example, generating graphic organizers to display relationships among concepts and main ideas. Particularly supportive of text comprehension are opportunities for English Learners to work with peers to generate cross-language comparisons. Such comparisons enable students to analyze similarities and differences with English used in texts for word choice, complex sentence and text composition, and content-specific language. 8, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 25, 26, 29, 30, 39 1, 6, 12

### 3 English Learners need to think deeply about and respond to text through speaking and writing.

Oral and written proficiency in English is critical to English Learner's literacy development. Research tells us that English Learners need ample opportunities to read, reread, respond to texts orally and in writing. This should require students to go back into the text and engage in discussions that are teacher facilitated and with peers. English Learners benefit from increased opportunities to interact with other students to rehearse their newly acquired English language in authentic reading and writing contexts. When students share common languages, they can work with a peer or in small groups to discuss their text interpretations in their home language before translating their thoughts to English for group sharing or in writing. These discussions should require a focus on newly acquired knowledge and academic vocabulary—moving students from informal conversations with less demands on use of newly acquired knowledge to those that require strong academic language skills that are cognitively demanding.

English Learners oral and written language proficiency are enhanced with text discussions that are supported by language scaffolds (e.g., graphic organizers, sentence

stems). Additionally, instruction should provide multiple ways for English Learners to display their newly acquired knowledge (e.g., pictorial and performance tasks, dramatic presentations, videos or digital texts). 4, 7, 13, 15, 18, 19, 22, 25, 26, 34, 12, 13, 15, 21, 22, 32

**4 English Learners need to develop writing skills in connection to what they are reading.** Just as the volume of reading is essential to developing proficiency as a reader, time spent writing is essential to developing English Learners' proficiency as a writer and thinker, and supports their text comprehension. Authentic opportunities to write in response to text provides a vehicle through which teachers can provide rich oral and written language models to support students' developing writing skills. Explicit instruction assists students in developing the skills of writers and includes building English Learners' understanding of vocabulary, complex sentences, and text organization. English Learners benefit from collaborating with writing partners—especially partners that share language histories—to use language for clarification and attend to compositional patterns for generating meaningful texts. Scaffolds that are particularly supportive of English Learners' writing development include pre-writing activities to generate writing goals that are supported with text evidence and organizational frames that guide authentic genre development and that advance progression of ideas across a written text. English Learners' writing proficiency is enhanced with instruction that provides explicit guidance on form and content moving students incrementally from their use of language approximations (e.g., combining home language and English) to written texts representing complex structures and knowledge of text content. 3, 4, 9, 14, 15, 21, 22, 23, 37, 38, 7, 9, 13, 16, 17, 26

**5 English Learners need practice with foundational literacy skills that have been taught explicitly and applied systematically through reading and writing.** Every reading and writing experience should provide English Learners with an opportunity to develop multiple skills-based competencies, including foundational skills, such as print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics, and word recognition, word composition, and fluency. Teachers should provide explicit and systematic instruction on foundational skills within a carefully planned sequence. ELs' progress in learning foundational skills will develop more quickly when provided with opportunities to apply skills in the context of authentic reading and writing as opposed to isolated skill and drill work. Additionally, ELs excel in learning foundational skills when they engage in cross language comparisons, such as when identifying phonemes that may be similar or different as represented in their home language and English or identifying differences in print concepts required for reading right to left or left to right. Such tasks encourage English Learners to use their linguistic resources to enhance their phonemic awareness, phonological and word learning skills, and function of sentence structure and word choice in texts. This instruction builds on what students know about their home language and extends that knowledge to learning about language components in English while signaling to students that their linguistic knowledge is useful for learning a new language and for text comprehension. 1, 2, 5, 11, 12, 24, 25, 26, 27, 36, 3, 5

# VISION FOR ENGLISH LEARNER READING PROFICIENCY

At the state level, supporting high-quality literacy instruction is a central priority. In order to move at least 75 percent of Tennessee third graders to reading proficiency by 2025, all students must be making gains. The realization of this goal is only possible if we believe that all students can be strong readers and writers, including our English Learners. In order to meet our long-term goals, English Learners must be making progress in language proficiency and be able to access content in the general education classrooms.

2

VISION

*Proficient reading is all about making meaning from texts.*

## PROFICIENT READERS...



**Accurately, fluently, and independently read a wide range of content-rich, age-appropriate, and complex texts**



**Construct interpretations and arguments through speaking and writing**



**Strategically employ comprehension strategies to analyze key ideas and information**



**Develop vocabulary**



**Build knowledge about the world**

In addition to the ambitious goal in early literacy, the Tennessee Department of Education has set rigorous goals for the achievement of English Learners. These goals are:

- **Decrease the percentage of students not exiting ESL services within six years**
- **Increase the percentage of ELs with oral language production skills who exit within three years**
- **Increase the percentage of ELs making sufficient growth towards English proficiency**
- **Increase the percentage of former ELs who score on track on content assessments (ELA, math, science, and social studies)**

More information about the state's approach to supporting English Learners and improving outcomes for students will be released in Fall 2017 and aims to provide guidance for districts in achieving these ambitious goals and ensure that all English Learners are on track to embark on their chosen path in life.





## 3

## DECISIONS

## BUILDING- AND CLASSROOM-LEVEL DECISIONS

In planning instruction for English Learners, there are two levels of decision making that work in tandem to create high-quality learning environments: **building-level decisions** and **classroom-level decisions**.

**Building-level decisions** focus on the type of **program model** that best fits the needs of the ELs in a particular school. Districts and schools should use English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA) data to determine the program model that best fits with the needs of the ELs in the district. The section below on building-level decisions describes program models for schools to consider using existing student data and the available resources within their school system.

The second level of decisions that influence EL instruction is that of **classroom-level decisions**. In designing units and planning daily instruction, teachers and administrators should consider first what skills the students can do across the four domains of language: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Then, using the framework for *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee* as a guide, and with special consideration to the areas of specific language needs that each student has, teachers should determine how they can best support them in developing proficiencies in both the targeted standards and in English.

**TIP!**

Words or phrases with yellow highlighting are defined in the Glossary.

## Building-Level Decisions

The needs and quantity of English Learners in each school is unique. Because of this, districts should determine the program model best suited to their individual needs based on the number of EL students, teachers, as well as English Language Proficiency Assessment and state testing data. The chart below outlines five program model options that districts and schools can use to support EL learning, language development, and academic growth.

The models explained in the table in this section feature programs that offer instruction to ELs in English. School districts often offer these programs when ELs come from many different language backgrounds. Selecting the best instructional model to meet the needs of ELs is crucial for the students' language development.

### DEFINITIONS TO NOTE:

**PROGRAM MODEL DESIGN:**  
Specific EL Instructional Models

**PROGRAM DETAILS:**  
A description of the best environment for use of each program design and the evidence supporting its use in each context

**CONSIDERATIONS:**  
What items need to be taken into account when using the program design

**ENGLISH PROFICIENCY LEVEL:**  
The level of ELP that most benefits from the specific program design

Program Model Design	Program Details	Considerations	English Proficiency Level
<b>Sheltered English Instruction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate evidence from well-implemented, quasi-experimental study</li> <li>For general education classes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May not be cost-effective for low incidence schools</li> <li>Must have buy-in from general education teacher</li> <li>Requires ESL training for general and ESL teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Likely more appropriate for intermediate and advanced ELs</li> <li>Often used for general education classes</li> </ul>
<b>Structured English Immersion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate evidence based from a well-implemented, quasi-experimental study</li> <li>Specific focus on English instruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires school wide buy-in from ESL teachers and support from general education teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Successful with all ELs, including beginners and <b>SIFE</b>s</li> </ul>
<b>Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate evidence based from a well-implemented, quasi-experimental study</li> <li>Specific focus on English instruction</li> <li>Very structured</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires teachers to be trained in SDAIE</li> <li>Can complement ESL classes with the <b>SIOP Model</b> being used in content classes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be used with any level of EL.</li> <li>Provides multiple strategies for teachers to choose from for ESL instruction</li> </ul>
<b>Content-based English Instruction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias</li> <li>Simultaneous learning of content and language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May require dually certified teachers or co-teaching,</li> <li>May be cost prohibitive</li> <li>Connects academics and language</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be used at all levels, but may require intense scaffolding for beginners</li> </ul>

Program Model Design	Program Details	Considerations	English Proficiency Level
<b>Pull-out</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias well-implemented, quasi-experimental model</li> <li>Less expensive for low incidence schools</li> <li>Flexibility for grouping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ELs may feel segregated</li> <li>Potential concern that students are missing core classroom instruction</li> <li>Often not enough interaction with English-speaking peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be useful for general instruction at all proficiency levels</li> <li>May be used to target specific intervention needed</li> </ul>
<b>Push-in</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well-implemented correlational study with statistical controls for selection bias</li> <li>Student does not miss core/content instruction</li> <li>General education teachers often prefer this program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires mutual understanding from both teachers involved</li> <li>Requires co-planning and sharing of responsibilities</li> <li>Care must be taken that the ESL teacher maintains ELP standards</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports pre-K and kindergarten students</li> <li>Useful for intermediate and advanced levels for students grades 1–12</li> </ul>

### Examples of Building-Level Decision Making

The following scenarios are examples meant to be a point of reference for districts when developing different types of delivery models.

#### EXAMPLE 1

An elementary school provides multiple methods of instruction based upon the language proficiency level and needs of the individual students. **The EL teacher works collaboratively with classroom teachers to co-teach during the 90 minute reading block, ensuring best practice for providing language development for English Learners exist throughout the lesson delivery.** The teachers work as a collaborative team to pre-plan lessons and activities that will help ensure English Learners have meaningful access to the content throughout the day in accordance with the **Individual Learning Plan (ILP)**. This collaboration and co-teaching ensures that English Learners are academically successful when adequately supported using evidence-based instruction and are regularly evaluated. Additional support staff work collaboratively in order to provide additional small group instruction to facilitate language development beyond the English Learner program and regular education program. For newcomers, an additional period of instruction is provided to the support already taking place in order to further advance the rate in which they acquire language.

#### EXAMPLE 2

A K-8 school schedules an **ESL class for its level 1-3 students with an EL certified teacher in addition to the core ELA class.** The EL teacher differentiates the English language development instruction based upon the students' English proficiency levels and Individual Learning Plans. Because the school also has several level 4 students, the school schedules the students with a core ELA teacher trained in sheltered instruction, such as Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), or utilizes an EL staff member to push in during the ELA class period to provide ESL instruction based on the ILP.

#### EXAMPLE 3

District utilizes a mixed approach of examples 1 and 2 and utilizes its supplemental funding such as Federal Title I, II, or III dollars to employ instructional coaches to support teachers and staff regarding best practices for teaching English learners. Procedures are explained in the LEA plan.

## CLASSROOM-LEVEL DECISIONS

Classroom-level decisions are the instructional decisions that teachers make when providing high-quality Tier I instruction in the classroom. These daily instructional decisions for English Learners must be grounded in two fundamental elements: the WIDA Can Do Philosophy and a consideration of linguistic needs.

### *WIDA Can Do Philosophy*

The Tennessee Department of Education is a member of the **WIDA** Consortium, a non-profit cooperative group promoting educational equity for English Learners.

*The WIDA mission states, “WIDA advances academic language development and academic achievement for children and youth who are culturally and linguistically diverse through high quality standards, assessments, research, and professional learning for educators.”*

Planning for daily instruction should be rooted in the [WIDA Guiding Principles](#). The tenth principle states, “Students’ access to instructional tasks requiring complex thinking is enhanced when linguistic complexity and instructional support match their levels of language proficiency.”

**Effective daily instruction is rooted in an understanding of students’ level of English proficiency and is augmented by using differentiated language supports that match the English Language Proficiency of each English Learner.**

In order for the WIDA mission be achieved in the state of Tennessee, educators must plan, instruct, and assess with a *Can Do Philosophy*. According to WIDA, a Can Do Philosophy “recognizes and builds upon the assets, contributions, and potential of culturally and linguistically diverse children and youth.” Teachers should consider what students can do at each level of language development using the WIDA [Can Do Descriptors](#) for the appropriate grade level as they engage in teaching and learning in academic contexts. Can Do Descriptors provide examples of what language learners can do with language tied to four specific purposes of **academic language** use (recount, explain, argue, and discuss) in listening, speaking, reading, and writing at each of six levels of language proficiency.

What is unique about the Can Do Descriptors is that they apply to all five English language proficiency standards.

1. Social and Instructional Language
2. The Language of Language Arts
3. The Language of Mathematics
4. The Language of Science
5. The Language of Social Studies

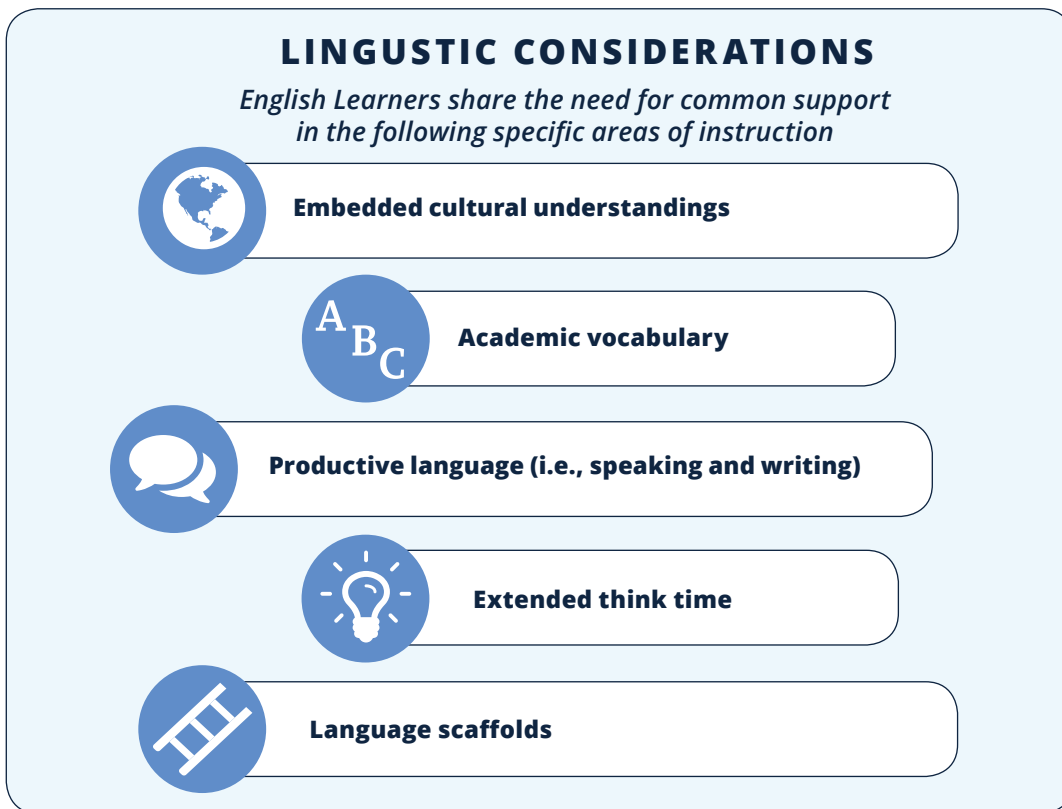
The connection between the Can Do Descriptors and the ELP standards provides an **opportunity to link language development across all academic content areas**. This will aid teachers in creating high-level scaffolds for language support to ensure that instruction for English Learners maintains high levels of rigor.

## Consideration of Linguistic Needs

While consideration of a student’s strengths and abilities should always be a primary focus, **attention must also be paid to the unique learning needs of each student.** In focusing on the linguistic needs of ELs, teachers provide access to the content and thinking skills being taught throughout the unit.

English learners have specific language needs that must be taken into account when designing units and planning for daily instruction. Research in second language acquisition and linguistics show that depending on age of entry and content area, proficiency in academic English develops over several years.

Moreover, this language development progresses through stages in which the **receptive domains of language** (listening and reading) become more fluent more quickly than the **productive domains of language** (speaking and writing). A final consideration for an English Learner stems from the fact that a student’s home culture typically differs from those in which English is primarily spoken. ELs share the need for common support in specific areas of instruction:



## 3 DECISIONS

### TIP!

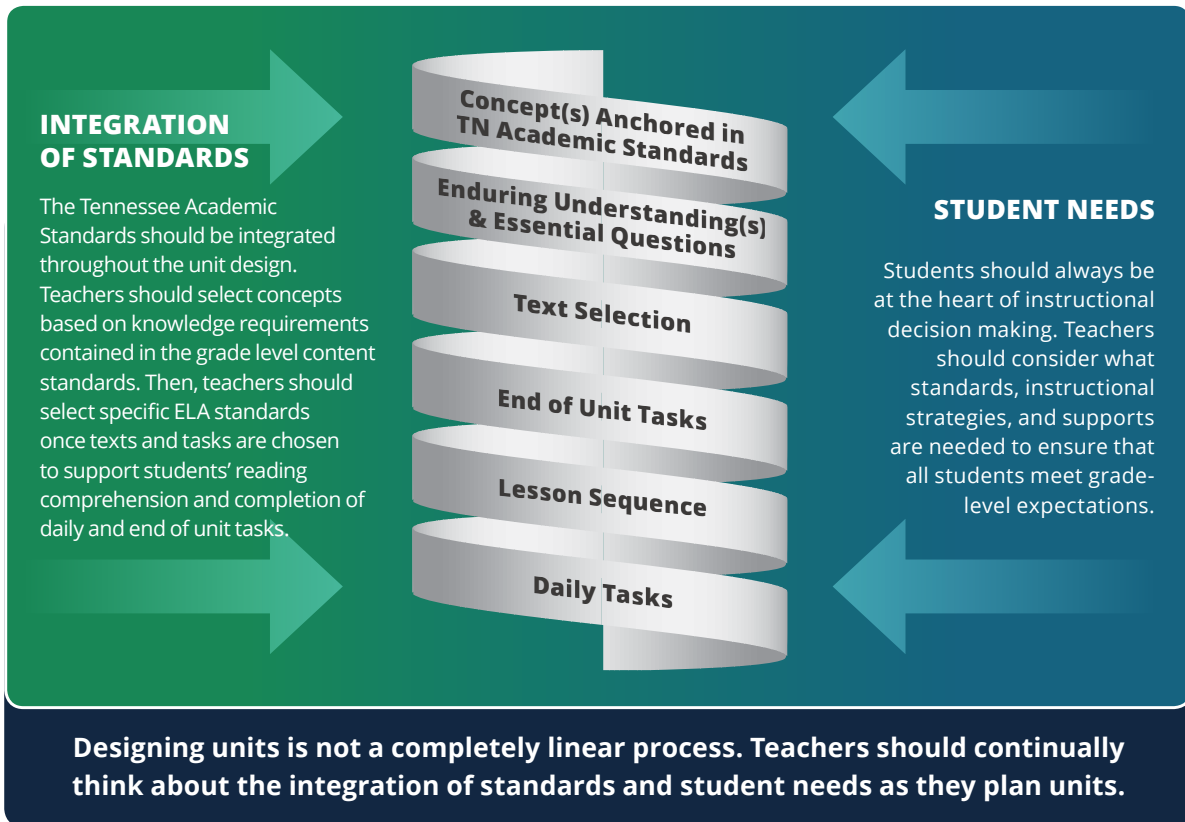
The terms in the graphic are defined in the glossary.

The following section will demonstrate how teachers can use the Framework for Teaching Literacy in conjunction with these considerations to plan high-quality instruction that benefits not only English Learners, but all students.

# A FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

*Teaching Literacy in Tennessee: English Learners Companion* is rooted in a theory of action that builds on what teachers currently do in their literacy instruction. Expanding on the [Teaching Literacy in Tennessee K-3 practical guide](#), the framework below highlights the ways in which teachers create the types of daily opportunities to develop their literacy skills through instructional strategies, use of multiple sources of data, and differentiation to provide effective Tier I instruction to all students.

## FRAMEWORK FOR TEACHING LITERACY IN TENNESSEE



4  
FRAMEWORK

In designing units, teachers should follow the unit design framework for *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee* as a guide to planning literacy instruction for ELs. The basic planning process is identical for ELs and non-EL students. Teachers should develop units that focus on concepts anchored in the Tennessee Academic Standards. They should plan the enduring understandings and essential questions based on their high expectations of student learning. This step in the planning process reinforces the WIDA Can Do Philosophy. All students, regardless of English Language Proficiency, are held to the same rigorous grade-level standards. **The difference comes in attending to the linguistic needs of the student.** Linguistic needs of ELs start to become an additional focus during step 3, Text Selection.

**TIP!**  
Click [here](#) to visit the Tennessee Academic Standards webpage.

**STEP 1****IDENTIFY CONCEPT(S)**

Teachers should first identify a **concept(s)** that will become the foundation of the unit. This step should be guided by an integration of the [Tennessee Academic Standards](#) including ELA, science, social studies, and fine arts. The standards provide a general guide for the types of knowledge students should gain in their respective grade levels, which will help in identifying appropriate concept(s).

**STEP 2****DETERMINE ENDURING UNDERSTANDING(S) AND GENERATE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS**

Teachers should determine **enduring understanding(s)** and generate **essential questions** that prioritize the learning around the concept(s). Enduring understanding(s) are statements reflecting the conclusions students will draw as a result of engaging with the concept, and essential questions are open-ended questions that spark students to draw the conclusions needed to gain the enduring understanding.<sup>23, 34, 35, 36</sup>

*Unit concepts, understandings, and questions in Steps 1 & 2 are anchored in Tennessee Academic Standards and will be the same for all students, including English Learners.*

**STEP 3****SELECT MULTIPLE TEXTS**

Teachers should select multiple texts that reflect the expectations of grade level standards and support the enduring understandings. Texts should be worthy of students' time and attention, be of exceptional craft and quality, and provoke a deep level of thinking.

**EL Considerations:** After selecting the texts, teachers must consider the underlying cultural understandings and vocabulary required for understanding the story or information laid out in the text sets. They must then plan to make connections to ELs prior knowledge while building new knowledge of the underlying concepts and vocabulary to ensure that all students can access the targeted enduring understandings taught through the text.

**Example:** A story about tennis requires knowing how to play tennis, how the score works, and vocabulary knowledge of words like "love," "net," "deuce," and "break point." Students that have not interacted with the sport of tennis in some way would need to be presented with background knowledge for what tennis looks like, how it is played, and make a connection to another sport with partners or opposing players before they can access the targeted **knowledge-based** and **skill-based competencies** during instruction.

**4****FRAMEWORK**

**STEP 4****DEVELOP END-OF-UNIT TASKS**

Teachers should develop end-of-unit tasks that allow students the opportunity to apply what they have read, heard, and seen during the unit in an authentic and meaningful way. End-of-unit tasks should allow students to demonstrate critical thinking and textual analysis skills and convey conceptual knowledge around the enduring understandings of the unit.

**EL Considerations:** Teachers must consider the learner’s abilities in speaking and writing when planning for end-of-unit tasks. Allowing for flexibility in the format of the end of unit task will permit students to demonstrate the full extent of their conceptual knowledge and critical thinking. Additionally, outlining explicit expectations of the academic vocabulary that should be used will give ELs a guideline of the words necessary to use in demonstrating their understandings of a concept or in analyzing a text.

**Example:** In a unit about the rainforest, a teacher wants students to use textual evidence and critical thinking to take a position on deforestation. While some students may write a five-paragraph opinion essay explaining their point of view, ELs choose to make a video in which they explain their position verbally and include pages from the books they have read to use as textual evidence to support their position.

**4**

FRAMEWORK

**STEP 5****DESIGN LESSON SEQUENCES**

Teachers should design lesson sequences that build in complexity over time and support students in gaining the enduring understandings. The lesson sequences should utilize a variety of instructional strategies that ensure students have opportunities to deepen their understanding.

**EL Considerations:** Many concepts have embedded cultural understandings that accompany a topic of study. EL students’ knowledge of the embedded cultural understandings of a topic that is being studied may need to be augmented by building background knowledge. Building background knowledge requires more instruction during the beginning of the unit so that students are able to access and make meaning of related texts later during the unit.

**Example:** A teacher plans a unit on animal adaptations. While a student from a desert region has a strong understanding of the heat and sand that may influence animal adaptations, they may struggle to understand the reasoning behind adaptations of animals living in cold regions. This would require a lesson that builds background knowledge about the types of conditions in cold regions such as snow, ice, glacier water, etc. Building this background will allow students to make connections as to why polar bears need blubber.



**STEP 6****CREATE DAILY TASKS**

Teachers should create standards-aligned daily tasks that allow students to incrementally show their knowledge and skills until they are able to fully demonstrate their learning through the more comprehensive end-of-unit task.

**EL Considerations:** During daily tasks, all students should be able to fully express their developing knowledge and understandings. To ensure that this is happening for ELs, teachers should allow for extended think time and language scaffolds. Extended think time allows ELs the additional time required by translating their thinking between their home language and English. Language scaffolds should leverage students' language abilities to help them produce knowledge about what they have learned during the lesson. Adequate language support will provide students the language they need while maintaining the academic rigor of the lesson. The graphic below provides examples of sensory, graphic, and interactive language supports.

**Example:** During the daily tasks, students are asked to write three sentences about the ways in which two characters in a story are similar and different. All students are allowed to discuss with a partner the similarities and differences they see between the characters. At the students' discretion, they start writing their responses to the task. While some students are using lined paper to guide their thinking, other students, including some ELs, are using a [Venn Diagram](#) as a graphic organizer to respond to the task. This shows that the same scaffolds can be used for students that have differing linguistic challenges.

**CLICK HERE**

to see an example of the Venn Diagram that is referenced in this example paragraph.

**4**

FRAMEWORK

**LANGUAGE SCAFFOLDS****Sensory Subjects**

Real-life objects (realia)  
 Manipulatives  
 Pictures and photographs  
 Illustrations, diagrams, and drawings  
 Magazines and newspapers  
 Physical activities  
 Videos and film  
 Broadcasts  
 Models and figures

**Graphic Supports**

Charts  
 Graphic organizers  
 Tables  
 Graphs  
 Timelines  
 Number lines

**Interactive Supports**

Pairs or partners  
 Triads or small groups  
 Cooperative grouping structures  
 Internet programming  
 Mentors

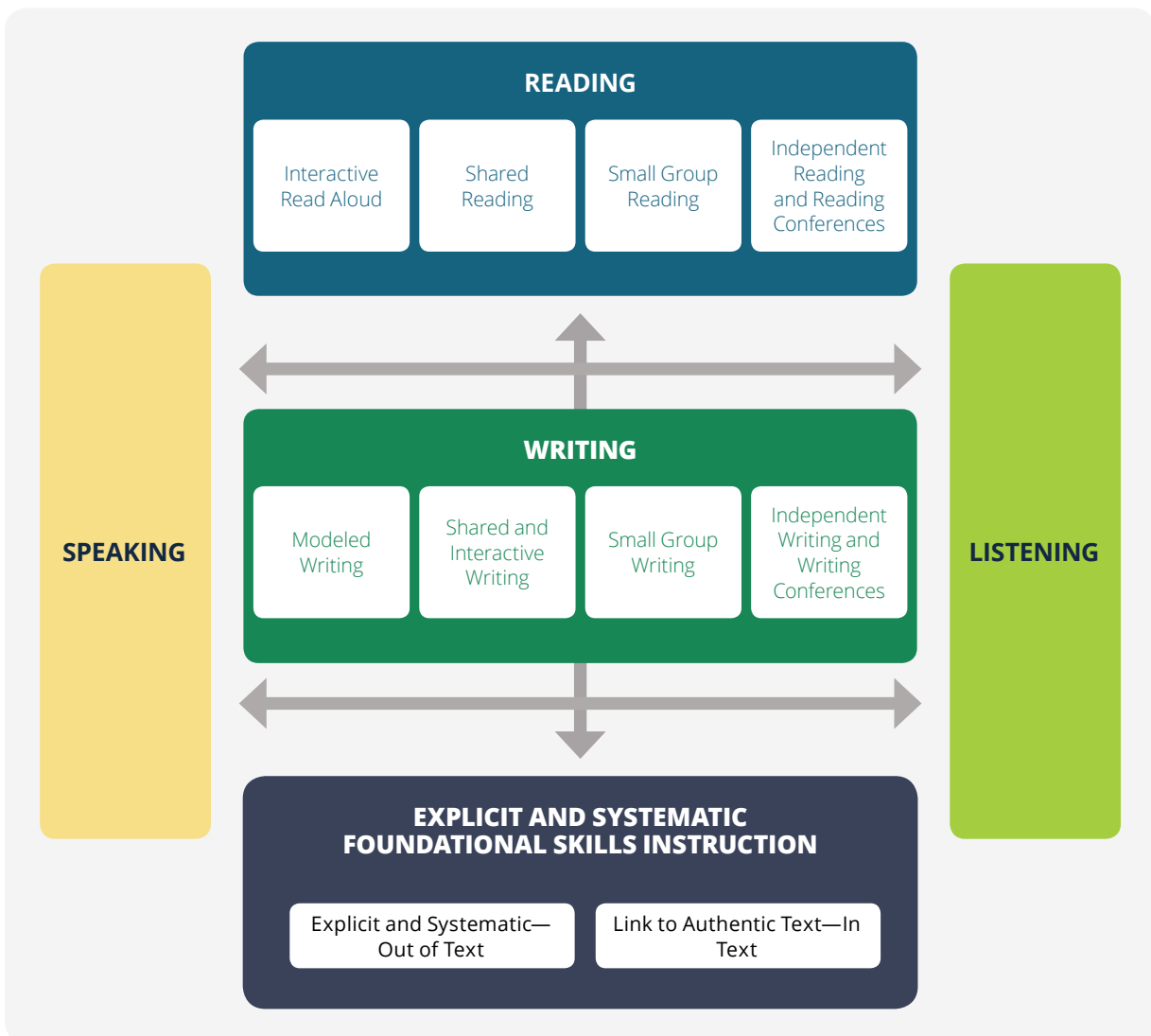
SOURCE: [WIDA \(link to WIDA booklet 2012 Standards Strand Web\)](#)

## Elements of the Literacy Block

As described in *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee K-3*, teachers utilize the framework to design units; they develop literacy blocks that support students in all strands of the Tennessee Academic Standards ELA strands: foundational skills, speaking and listening, reading, and writing.

The graphic that follows integrates the **what** (standards to be addressed), the **how** (instructional strategies), and the **where** (structures) that teachers incorporate as they plan for literacy instruction on any given day. Teachers will not use all of these instructional strategies in a single day, and the timing for each will vary based on needs. **Rather, teachers should flexibly select from multiple instructional strategies (e.g., interactive read aloud, shared reading, interactive writing, etc.) as they design a high-quality Tier I literacy block that reflects the expectations of the grade-level standards.**

### ELEMENTS OF THE LITERACY BLOCK



4

FRAMEWORK

The chart below provides further detail of each instructional strategy, possible purposes for use, and examples of how to differentiate for ELs while using the strategy.

Instructional Strategy & Definition	Possible Purposes	Differentiation for ELs
<p><b>Interactive Read Aloud:</b> Interactive read aloud is an instructional strategy in which students actively listen and respond to above grade level complex text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop knowledge and vocabulary</li> <li>• Promote critical thinking and analysis of text</li> <li>• Support comprehension strategies</li> <li>• Develop understanding of complex syntax and text structure</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for oral language development</li> <li>• Provide access to complex text that is above grade level</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for teacher modeling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of pictures or <b>realia</b> to build background knowledge before reading</li> <li>• Display vocabulary list on pocket chart or white board</li> <li>• Plan intentionally for partner turn and talk discussions</li> <li>• Develop, explain, and display sentence stems for partner discussions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Shared Reading:</b> Shared reading is an interactive experience in which students join in the reading of an on-grade-level complex text with teacher guidance and support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote word analysis, fluency, and comprehension skills and strategies</li> <li>• Use supported reading structures (i.e., choral reading, echo reading, etc.)</li> <li>• Develop knowledge and vocabulary</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for authentic application of skills-based and knowledge-based competencies</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for teacher modeling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use hand motions for vocabulary words and punctuation marks</li> <li>• Use illustrations and picture cues to make connections to text</li> <li>• Use and display graphic organizer to record events or facts from the text</li> </ul>
<p><b>Small Group Reading:</b> Small group reading is an instructional strategy in which a teacher works in small groups to support students as they read appropriately complex text.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide explicit instruction with foundational skills</li> <li>• Integrate practice with word analysis/decoding skills and strategies</li> <li>• Integrate practice reading fluently</li> <li>• Support reading and analyzing appropriately complex text and/or build knowledge of a concept</li> <li>• Provide applied practice of skills and strategies in reading and writing</li> <li>• Differentiate based on student needs</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for teacher modeling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group students based on student academic needs, not first language</li> <li>• Use small groups to front load or pre-teach upcoming content</li> <li>• Utilize small groups to re-teach when needed by students</li> </ul>
<p><b>Literacy Stations/Choice Boards:</b> Literacy Stations and Choice Boards are structures where students work concurrently on standard-aligned tasks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for students to work independently, with partners, or in groups to connect to and extend previous learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide and display posters with visuals of procedures and expectations at each station</li> <li>• Assign student "station captains" to answer questions about each station's procedures and tasks</li> <li>• Explain procedures on asking for teacher help during literacy station (e.g., must ask three experts in the room before seeking the support of the teacher)</li> </ul>

Instructional Strategy & Definition	Possible Purposes	Differentiation for ELs
<p><b>Independent Reading:</b> Independent reading provides dedicated time for students to choose and read texts of personal interest with teacher support in selecting text, as needed.</p> <p><b>Reading Conferences:</b> Reading conferences allow periodic opportunities for students to talk about their reading and for the teacher to monitor and provide feedback to individual students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities to apply knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Increase volume of texts students read</li> <li>• Collect evidence for individual students (e.g., anecdotal notes, running records, reading logs, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize classroom library by genre, topic, or concept</li> <li>• Label classroom library with both pictures and words to provide support in text selection</li> <li>• Provide sentence stems and graphic organizers for students to use during reading conferences</li> <li>• Provide sentence stems or frames as well as graphic organizers that are specific to comprehension strategies such as retelling, author's purpose, main idea/details, etc.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Modeled Writing:</b> Modeled writing is an instructional strategy where the teacher explicitly demonstrates the writing process for different forms and purposes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make visible what proficient writers do (e.g., composition process, mentor texts, etc.)</li> <li>• Model writing for strategic purposes such as print concepts, conventions, and content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build background knowledge on topic through visuals and use of realia</li> <li>• Use colored markers or pens to highlight key teaching points</li> <li>• Use student anchor papers for examples to share with the class</li> </ul>
<p><b>Shared Writing:</b> Shared writing is an instructional strategy where the teacher and students compose a text together with the teacher acting as the scribe.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize ideas and language through collaboration to produce a coherent text</li> <li>• Involve students in creating authentic text</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for teacher modeling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly define the academic language of writing (e.g., revise, paragraph, punctuation, etc.)</li> <li>• Provide and structure writing folders with the scaffolds needed for model writing (e.g., transition words, connectors, sentence structures to begin, add details, or conclude writing, as well as sample anchor papers.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Interactive Writing:</b> Interactive writing is an extension of shared writing in which the teacher and students compose a text together with the teacher strategically sharing the pen during the process.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide students opportunities to practice writing with the support of teacher and peers</li> <li>• Provide a way to connect reading and writing</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for teacher modeling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk in pairs about text before taking pen to paper</li> <li>• Use graphic organizers to help students document thinking as they talk in pairs for pre-writing support</li> <li>• Provide word banks for students to use to fill in the blank. (e.g., vocabulary notebooks that can be content specific, purposeful word walls, and/or vocabulary flip charts.)</li> <li>• Provide picture banks for beginning ELs.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Small Group Writing:</b> Small group writing is an instructional strategy in which the teacher works in small groups to support students' writing development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate interactive and shared writing experiences based on group needs</li> <li>• Differentiate based on students' needs</li> <li>• Target traits or skills in the writing process</li> <li>• Guide writing in response to text</li> <li>• Provide opportunities for teacher modeling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group students based on student academic needs, not first language</li> <li>• Group students based on interests from learner profiles (<i>Note: Keep in mind that beginning EL students may need additional scaffolds to access tasks and produce writing</i>)</li> </ul>

Instructional Strategy & Definition	Possible Purposes	Differentiation for ELs
<p><b>Independent Writing:</b> Independent writing provides dedicated time for students to apply writing skills and strategies as they compose text.</p> <p><b>Writing Conferences:</b> Writing conferences allow periodic opportunities for students to talk about their writing and for the teacher to monitor and provide feedback to individual students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities to apply knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Provide opportunities to write to build and demonstrate text comprehension</li> <li>• Provide opportunities to write to develop the skill of a writer in connection to text</li> <li>• Provide an opportunity for students to select their own topic, form, purpose, audience, and craft</li> <li>• Collect evidence for individual students (e.g., anecdotal notes, student products, checklists, rubrics, etc.)</li> <li>• Share writing with peers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide word banks for different topics that students are interested in</li> <li>• Use story starters to help garner ideas for writing</li> <li>• Pair students to discuss a the writing task prior to the actual writing taking place</li> <li>• Provide graphic organizers for students to organize thinking prior to writing</li> <li>• Allow access to samples of various forms of writing for students to use as models</li> </ul>
<p><b>Explicit Foundational Skills Instruction: Out of Text:</b> Out-of-text, explicit foundational skills instruction provides a systematic and explicit way to teach the Tennessee foundational literacy standards, with an emphasis on phonological awareness, phonics and word recognition, and word composition.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build skills according to a continuum or scope and sequence</li> <li>• Build from the simplest to the most complex skills</li> <li>• Provide practice to master each new skill</li> <li>• Provide close study of word parts (e.g., letters, letter combinations, syllables, affixes)</li> <li>• Ensure students are able to master spelling to sound correspondence so that they can independently decode unknown words and attach meaning to them</li> <li>• Practice decoding (reading) and encoding (spelling/writing) using newly acquired skills (i.e., use controlled text when appropriate as a scaffold to authentic text)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of flashcards for practice with high-frequency words and phrases (<i>Note: The goal here is to develop automaticity in fluency to get students to access grade level reading and beyond</i>)</li> <li>• Use Elkonin boxes, letters, and rubber bands as manipulatives for phonemic segmentation</li> <li>• Use hand motions to represent sounds</li> </ul>
<p><b>Explicit Foundational Skills Instruction: Link to Authentic Text:</b> Explicit foundational skills instruction that is linked to authentic text provides application of foundational skills in connected text to support reading comprehension and written expression.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice decoding in words, phrases, and texts</li> <li>• Apply foundational skills knowledge while writing (e.g., print concepts, phonics, word composition)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of listening phones so students can hear themselves read</li> <li>• Provide students with letter/sound cards or individual student charts to use as a reference while reading and working towards mastery of foundational skills</li> <li>• Use copied texts for students to write on, highlight, and manipulate to develop foundational skills</li> </ul>

# VIGNETTE TEACHING LITERACY IN TENNESSEE: ENGLISH LEARNERS

THE FOLLOWING VIGNETTE PROVIDES AN IN-DEPTH LOOK INTO THE STRONG LITERACY PRACTICES IN MR. HERMANN'S FIRST GRADE CLASSROOM, WHICH INCLUDES A VARIETY OF LEARNERS. Mr. Hermann's general education class includes, English-only students, English learners, students with disabilities, advanced and gifted students, as well as students not on grade level. This vignette brings to life *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee* for English learners. The vignette as first seen in the Teaching Literacy in Tennessee K-3 framework, will take a deeper look into literacy instruction with the instructional lens needed to make core content accessible for students learning English as a second language. One point of emphasis is though the instructional practices being highlighted in the vignette are focused on bettering literacy for English learners, the scaffolding and strategies utilized throughout the classroom are effective for all students. High-quality teaching that is differentiated and scaffolded benefits all students.

Now let's observe how one first grade teacher's Tier I classroom practices integrate content standards and English development standards to develop students' conceptual knowledge of the interdependence between plants and animals. Mr. Hermann and his students will be deeply immersed in a unit on the importance of trees to animals and people.

For this unit, ELA, science, and WIDA ELP standards are integrated in making connections to the unit's essential questions and enduring understandings. The following standards support the lesson development for Mr. Hermann's unit on the interdependence of plants and animals.

## UNIT CONCEPTS

- Conservation
- Interdependence of Living Things
- Importance of Geography & Habitat

## ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Plants depend on their surroundings and other living things to help them grow.
- People, plants, and animals depend on each other to survive.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How do trees add value to our everyday life? How about for animals?
- How do plants depend on their surroundings and other living things to help them live and grow?



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Welcome to Mr. Hermann's first grade classroom. Mr. Hermann and his students will begin to be deeply immersed in a unit on the importance of trees to animals and people. The class is about to start a series of lessons in week 1 of the unit where they will learn about plant growth. They will grow plants in their school garden and learn that plants need light, water, and minerals from the soil to grow. They will explore the characteristics of different trees and plants that grow in the United States of America, even those that grow right in their neighborhood, through rich, complex texts like "From Seed to Plant" by Gail Gibbons and "Be a Friend to Trees" by Patricia Lauber.<sup>47, 50</sup>

For this unit, Mr. Herman will have to build on the background knowledge to continue to reinforce the enduring understandings about how people, plants, and animals depend on each other to live.

## BEGINNING THE UNIT

Mr. Hermann will engage his class in learning about the importance of plants to animals and people. As a result of the lessons, students will be able to communicate and transfer their knowledge about plant growth and functions of plants. Students will also be able to describe, identify parts of plants, as well as explain the importance of plants to animals and people.

Mr. Hermann plans how he will get his students engaged in the lesson. He decides to find illustrations of various trees, plants, and animals to place around the classroom. Some illustrations will be familiar to students while others will be new. Before beginning the unit, Mr. Hermann sent home a letter to parents' informing them about the unit, and he asked for them to send pictures of plants that were native to their country and/or had significant meaning to the family. With the support of the district ESL coach and district translator(s), Mr. Hermann was able to send communication home with students about the unit.

Mr. Hermann thinks about all the students in his class. He has 17 students, and within the makeup of his class there are seven English learners, four students with an Individual Education Plan (IEP). Three students are slightly below grade level in the area of English language arts, while 10 are currently on target for first grade. Within the students on target, he has noticed two students have been exhibiting traits of giftedness in creativity and academics. One of the students that exhibits signs of giftedness is an English learner.

To fully engage his English learners in the lesson, Mr. Hermann has highlighted the current levels of English proficiency for all students for each domain (i.e., speaking, listening, reading, and writing) assessed by the WIDA ACCESS. This information is critical for Mr. Hermann, since it will help guide decisions on how to make content accessible to his English learners. Mr. Hermann uses the WIDA Can Do Descriptors since they help explain what an English learner can do at each level of proficiency for each domain. Mr. Hermann has two ELs at the entering and beginning levels of 1 and 2, three ELs at the developing level 3, one student at the expanding level 4, and one student at bridging level 5. Mr. Hermann meets often with the school ESL coach to discuss lesson planning and seek support for differentiating instruction in the

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### VIGNETTE

general education setting for the ELs enrolled in the class.

As students walk into the classroom, they begin to notice the different illustrations of plants around the classroom. The students sit on the reading rug and are ready to learn about the importance of plants to animals and people. Today they are starting the literacy block with an interactive read-aloud of “From Seed to Plant” by Gail Gibbons.

### Interactive Read-Aloud



Mr. Hermann sits in a chair at the front of the reading rug, holding up the big book edition of the beautifully illustrated text for his students to see. To continue the support for students that will rely on the graphics to make meaning of the key points of the story and vocabulary, Mr. Herman has placed pages of the big book on the white board directly in front of the reading carpet. As students engage in discourse, they will have the tools to recall important details and vocabulary from the illustrations.

As he reads, he pauses at strategic points to ask a carefully constructed sequence of questions that will support his students’ understanding of the text and build critical content knowledge about the many parts of a plant and the process of a seed growing into a plant.

In the opening of the book, the author states, “Most plants make seeds. A seed contains the beginning of a new plant. Seeds are different shapes, sizes, and colors.” After reading these lines, Mr. Hermann asks students to partner share a special feature of a seed. To get student optimal engagement, Mr. Hermann hands out a variety of seeds as he gives instructions for the partner share. Next, he points to the illustration he has posted on the white board that displays a seed in a cycle transforming into a plant. He also makes reference to the seeds in the palm of his hands and points to the palms of students holding seeds in their hands directly in front of him as he continues his instruction.

“Seeds turn into plants, like in that picture,” shares one student with his partner. “I help my dad in the garden, and he told me my job was to put the seeds in the dirt. I get to water them too and when the plants grow really big, we pick them and eat them,” his partner responds.

“My mom plants seeds called aloe vera in her garden and then she uses it for her face,” one student explains to his partner. His partner has a sentence starter to help with sharing her information. “Seeds have many shapes and sizes,” states the student as she points to the graphic on the white-board.

Mr. Hermann brings the class back together and praises the class for the great conversation. “So, we have learned plants make seeds, are different shapes, sizes, and colors. Some of you talked about the beginning of new plants. I heard Adam share, his mom plants aloe vera seeds in her garden,” says Mr. Hermann. The class continues to listen to the read aloud as they anticipate the teacher’s next question.



“So far we have learned from the author that pollination happens in different ways and that seeds can travel in different ways. What are some ways in which pollination can take place?” asks Mr. Hermann as he points to the graphic on the board that shows the flower with the vocabulary pollen and the hummingbird pollinating the flower. “Insects and birds help pollinate just like the wind,” shares a student as she points to the page in the big book and the other illustrations on the white-board. Mr. Hermann invites the student to the front of the class to directly point to the evidence in the text that supports his statement about pollination. The class gives the student a round of applause since he has used evidence in the text to support his response.

Mr. Hermann explains that throughout the story, students will get to learn more about how seeds travel, scatter, and grow into beautiful plants and gardens. He has [picture cards](#) he has handed out to students with images of seeds growing inside a flower, seeds becoming larger and turning into fruits as well as pods, seeds falling to the ground, birds eating and dropping seeds, seeds traveling into bodies of water, wind scattering seeds, and animals transporting seeds as well as burying them. The students have been instructed to place their picture and word cards in front of them until they can make a connection with the story that relates to one of the cards in their assortment. The picture cards are structured differently by students. Some cards have an illustration as well as a single phrase, while others have a graphic and one or two statements. As Mr. Herman reads “The seeds grow inside a flower...” a student picks up the graphic that relates to the statement and adds that seeds still grow even after the plant dies. Mr. Hermann and the class give the student a thumbs up and continue to read the selection.

After a few minutes of reading, Mr. Hermann comes to a stop in the book and emphasizes the statements, “A seed will not sprout until certain things happen. First it must be on or in the soil. Then it needs rain to soak the seed and soften its seed coat.” He uses this opportunity to model the use of context clues to confirm the meaning of unknown words such as “sprout.” He proceeds to share since seeds need to be on or in the soil and need rain to soften their seed coat in order to sprout, the word sprout means the seed begins to grow its shoots. As he explains his thinking, he points to the graphic in which the seed is in the soil, the seed is receiving water, and finally the reader sees the seed sprout and produce a shoot.

Mr. Hermann guides the students through the remaining pages of the text. After the reading, he takes time to complete a bubble map with the class that explains the key points of seeds turning into plants. He records the student responses on the thinking map, and redirects students’ responses to include vocabulary such as pollination, pollen, pistil, shoot, sprout, seed coat, pod, fruit, sepal, stem, tube, and ovules.

Mr. Hermann closes the book and reminds his students that they will now have the chance to write about what they learned about the process of seeds transforming into plants and gardens.

**CLICK HERE**

to see examples of some of the picture cards that Mr. Herman is distributing to his class

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## Independent Writing



Mr. Hermann's students transition back to their desks to respond to the prompt in their reading notebooks, "Explain what happens to seeds before they can grow into a plant. Explain using details from the text." Prior to writing, Mr. Hermann has his class discuss their thinking with their writing partner before adding anything in their notebook for 10 minutes. To brainstorm ideas, students use their own graphic organizer (bubble map) to organize their information. For students that have limited English proficiency, primarily levels 1 and 2, Mr. Hermann has partnered them up with an EL at a level 3 or 4. The higher language levels can support the sentence structure of thoughts, while students at the beginning level use their graphics that were handed out on the reading carpet to share the key information about how seeds transform into plants. The words and phrases in on the picture cards help the students be involved in the conversation. Mr. Hermann has also provided students with limited English background a graphic organizer that is partially completed to help with sentence structure when writing in their notebooks.

As students begin to write in their notebooks, some students begin to freely write while others rely on their graphic organizer, picture cards and phrases, or their sentence frames to develop complete thoughts.

One student with English proficiency at a level 1, has used the sentence frame, "Wind blows \_\_\_\_ from flower to flower." In his picture cards, he has the picture of the seeds traveling by heavy wind with the word "pollen" on it.

One pair of students write about how animals often help seeds travel to become plants. After they complete their writing, they create a graphic in which they display a cycle of a seeds being scattered by animals.

After a few minutes of observing students and supporting partners, Mr. Hermann transitions to the next part of the literacy block.

## Explicit Foundational Skills Instruction



Next, Mr. Hermann transitions to explicit instruction on foundational skills. He directs his students to return to their desks as he writes two words from Seeds to Plants on the white board: "seed" and "leaves." Close to the written words, he has placed the sound spelling pattern sound card for the long /e/ sound.

"What vowel sound do you hear in the words "seed" and "leaves?" he asks. "The long /e/," his class responds in chorus. Some students point to the sound spelling card on the white-board, while some students pick up their own student size sound spelling card representing the long /e/ sound.

Mr. Hermann invites his class to brainstorm other words that have the long /e/ sound. He adds each of these words to the white board, making sure that there are several examples of the long /e/ spellings: -ee and -ea. A few students identify words with other spellings for the long /e/ sound, including "people" and "silently." Mr. Hermann writes these words in a different color and explains that they will focus on those spellings another day.

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Mr. Hermann explains that these words have different vowel teams for the same sound. He models the process of finding the long /e/ spelling inside each word using a marker to underline the -ee or -ea spellings inside each word. He has also underlined the two spellings with the same colored marker on the sound spelling card that will remain on the white-board for student's reference.

Next, he directs his students to the word cards on their tables. The students work with each other to complete a word sort in which they read the words to first determine if it has a long /e/ sound, and if so, sort the words in a two-column chart according to which spelling they contain. During this time, Mr. Hermann will spend time in the classroom by the groups that need extra support with the long /e/ sound. For students in the class who do not have full mastery of English, Mr. Hermann has added illustrations to help with the word sort. These students have also been strategically partnered with students who have are exhibiting mastery with the long /e/ sound.

## Shared Reading

After completing the activity with the long/e/ sound, Mr. Hermann asks his students to pull out their copy of "How a Seed Grows" by Helene J. Jordan from their book bags.<sup>49</sup> Mr. Hermann has selected this text for shared reading because it is connected to his content goals for this unit but it is also tightly controlled to emphasize the different spellings for the long /e/ vowel sound. Together his class choral reads and echo reads the text. Again, Mr. Hermann pauses at strategic points to ask comprehension questions about the important concepts in the text to make sure his students are making sense of what they are reading and deepening their understanding of how seeds grow and develop into plants and trees.

"What can a seed become after it starts to grow? How do you know?"

Mr. Hermann asks. "Turn and talk to your elbow partner and share your idea. Please remember to support your idea with details," adds Mr. Hermann.

"A seed can grow into an apple tree. I know this because the author told us seeds can grow into apples and my aunt Lilia has an apple tree in her backyard," shares Jesse. Her partner responds, "Seeds can grow fast or slow." At the same time the student points to the page telling how slowly oak trees can grow. Mr. Hermann notices that Jesse's partner needs more conversation content to engage in the partner share. He will add more illustrations with short phrases for Jesse's partner to use and practice during small group work.

After they finish reading the book, Mr. Hermann tells his students that they are going to be word detectives. He asks his students to read through the text again but this time on their own. As they do this, they should look for all the words in the text that have the long /e/ sound and write them on their desks with a dry erase marker. For students that are still working on learning long /e/, the individual sound spelling cards will be on their desk with the underlined spelling of long /e/ to help identify the words in the text.



As students complete this activity independently, Mr. Hermann walks around the room noting student’s correct choices or their mistakes in his observation notes about their progress. He will use this information to determine groups for further practice with this phonics skill at a later date.

## Small Group Reading



Mr. Hermann moves into what his students will be doing during small group reading and prompts students to transition to their workstation. Each group will rotate through three different activities during the 60-minute block.

Mr. Hermann has planned his teacher-led activities to maximize support for specific areas of need that he has identified through various sources of data.

## GROUP A

### STATION 1: TEACHER LEAD (20 MINUTE)

Using multiple sources of evidence, Mr. Hermann has determined that the students in Group A need some additional practice with the R-controlled vowel ‘ar.’ He has these students re-read a text that he had used for shared reading in a previous lesson. This text is connected to the content goals for the unit and is tightly controlled to emphasize the targeted phonics skill. The students whisper read the book as Mr. Hermann listens in to provide support and coaching on the R-controlled vowels in words like “sharp,” “dark,” and “sparkle.” He pauses at strategic points to ask comprehension questions, like “Why does the author use the word \_\_\_\_\_ to describe \_\_\_\_\_?” and “How are the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the same? How are they different?”



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### STATION 2: INDEPENDENT (20 MINUTES)

The students in Group A then move to the fluency station where they listen to an audio recording of “The Giving Tree” by Shel Silverstein. The students listen attentively to the fluent reader, follow along in their heads, and several track with their fingers. For students that are having trouble with accuracy of reading, Mr. Hermann has provided PVC phonics phones to help with listening while reading and help monitor voice. Then, they select a reading text from their book bag. They reread the familiar text to a partner—focusing on reading at an appropriate pace, reading words and punctuation accurately, and reading with appropriate expression. The students enjoy practicing and helping each other get better. Tomorrow, they will revisit “How a Seed Grows” and practice it with a partner from another group.



### STATION 3: INDEPENDENT (20 MINUTES)

Finally, the students in Group A transition to the independent reading station. The classroom library is full of texts about plants, trees, animals, and people in a variety of ecosystems. Mr. Hermann does not insist that students read at their “independent” or “instructional”



level. When students have a special interest in a topic he often guides them to read above their “level.” Jamie and Sofia have lower reading levels but have a particularly strong interest in gardening and have a lot of background knowledge, vocabulary, and motivation to read about it. Students record ideas and thoughts from their reading in their literacy journals. He plans to conference with the students later in the week to discuss what they learned from the texts they read during independent reading.

## GROUP B

### STATION 1: INDEPENDENT



The students in Group B begin with independent reading. The students record several questions they have about how seeds grow in other areas such as the forest and jungle as well as how climate affects growth. Mr. Hermann has suggested that they use their independent reading time to read to find the answer to these questions in some of the other texts available in the classroom library. Students select texts that support their understanding of how seeds grow in different locations and climates. They record the answers to the questions they posed in their reading journals. They will share what they learned from these texts when they conference with Mr. Hermann later in the week. Some students will choose to include drawings with their responses. Mr. Hermann encourages students to use illustrations if they feel they can fully explain their thoughts through the drawing. He has learned this skill helps his students who may have difficulties with conveying meaning in their writing.

### STATION 2: TEACHER LED



Using an oral reading fluency assessment which provides quantitative data on rate, Mr. Hermann has identified that the students in Group B need fluency support. He also gathered additional qualitative data on their fluency needs and decided to support students in phrasing and expression. Mr. Hermann set goals for these students to track their progress. Mr. Herman has selected “A Tree Is a Plant” by Clyde Robert Bulla, to support students’ fluency. Students begin by choral reading the text together. Mr. Herman stops at certain points and has students echo read to focus on phrasing. He stops at several spots in the text where the “ee” and “ea” pattern are used. Mr. Herman draws attention to the pattern saying, “What do you notice about this word?” Students are then asked to partner read the text and provide their partner with feedback on their phrasing and expression, such as, “I noticed that you asked that sentence like a question when you saw the question mark. Great job!” or “Try that again. That’s a phrase that could go together.”

### STATION 3: INDEPENDENT



The students in Group B then move to the fluency station where they listen to the audio recording of “From Seed to Plant” by Gale Gibbons. As they listen, they highlight the phrases on a copy of the text, alternating highlighter colors as they go. Then, they practice reading the text to a partner.

## GROUP C

### STATION 1: INDEPENDENT



The students in Group C begin in the fluency station. They record themselves reading into an mp3 player that Mr. Hermann will listen to at the end of the day and provide feedback the next day during small group. After they record themselves reading, they move on to a discussion of the text using question and discussion stems with a partner within their group. Mr. Hermann provides sentence stems using the higher level of Bloom's Taxonomy. He provides question stems such as "What evidence can you provide for \_\_\_\_\_?" and "What solutions would you suggest for \_\_\_\_\_?" Students include reading sections of the text out loud to the group for text based evidence of their opinion in the discussion. For students that read fluently but struggle with engaging in academic conversations, Mr. Hermann has provided discussion stems such as: "The best solution I would suggest for \_\_\_\_\_ is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_" and "In the text, the author tells us \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. I think the author shares this with us because \_\_\_\_\_."

### STATION 2: INDEPENDENT



Then they move to the independent reading station. Mr. Hermann has challenged this group to research plants of interest. Students are free to research the plants they have in their gardens, plants native to their family's country, or a plant that has a significant meaning to them. Students have access to teacher selected texts and websites. Once the students have selected their plant of interest, Mr. Hermann will work with the students to assist with selecting challenging resources. The students' record information they are gathering in their reading journals and work towards completing an informational brochure, graphic chart, or book that will be added to the classroom library.

### STATION 3: TEACHER LED



And finally, they move to the teacher-led small group. The students in this group have strong decoding skills and oral reading fluency but still occasionally struggle with comprehension. On a recent interim assessment, Mr. Hermann noticed that these students seemed to struggle to comprehend complex sentences with multiple clauses. Mr. Hermann writes a complex sentence he has selected from "The Tiny Seed" by Eric Carle on the white board: "After the seeds settle down, they look just as if they are going to sleep in the earth." He chose this sentence because of its complex structure but also because it is critical to understanding the text. He asks different students to read it aloud and only reads it aloud himself if needed for fluency or inflection. Next, he asks students to stop-and-jot in their journals, "I think this sentence means ... because." After a couple of minutes of jotting down their ideas, Mr. Hermann asks some of the students to explain their thinking. In their explanations, the students point back to the specific language in the sentence. Together the group unpacks the complex sentence. Students are then challenged to look back at their resources they used in their research and find complex sentences with multiple clauses.

# INSTRUCTIONAL DECISIONS AND RATIONAL

As outlined in *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee*, teachers make many decisions about their instruction throughout the teaching process. Before instruction teachers must consider standards and concepts to be taught, enduring understandings, text selection, lesson sequence, daily tasks, and means of assessment of student learning through end-of-unit tasks. During instruction teachers must make decisions regarding classroom culture, questioning, giving feedback, engaging student thinking and academic talk, and adjusting instruction to meet students' needs. Finally, after instruction, teachers take time to reflect on strengths of the lesson, as well as areas for improvement, and how to go about growing in their own practice.

Special consideration **before, during, and after** the lesson must be paid to English Learners so as to ensure their success throughout daily instruction and the unit as a whole. Planning, instruction, and reflection in specific regard to ELs must be grounded in the Can Do Philosophy. Below you will find the rationale for Mr. Hermann's decisions in planning and instruction that were made specifically with ELs in mind, but that also benefit all students in his class.

## SECTION

**6** Before Instruction: Planning for the Unit

**7** During Instruction: Key Practices

**8** After Instruction: Reflection

# BEFORE INSTRUCTION: PLANNING FOR THE UNIT

## TEXT SELECTION

Text selection is key to the success of the lesson and the development of language skills for English Learners. Using rich complex texts to teach reading comprehension, model strong writing, and build vocabulary benefits all students, but especially ELs. Mr. Hermann selected an informational text for his interactive read aloud due to its sequential text structure and academic vocabulary. The concepts in the text allowed students to practice critical thinking skills in addition to the language skills of speaking and listening. Through selection of meaningful and rich texts, English Learners can develop content and language knowledge simultaneously.

## BUILDING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE

After determining the main concepts, understandings, and standards of a unit, teachers turn to planning the daily tasks that students will complete. In planning for daily instruction, teachers must consider the background knowledge that students already bring with them to the lesson. Careful consideration of all students' prior experiences will arm teachers with the information they need to ensure that students are able to fully comprehend instructional activities and academic material. This consideration of background knowledge goes hand in hand in using a Can Do Philosophy with ELs. Thinking about what linguistic skills students bring to the table ensure that teachers are taking a Can Do attitude and supporting growth in English language proficiency. The [chart](#) in the appendix provides a detailed description of what Mr. Hermann expects of his ELs at each level of language proficiency based on the grade level standard and WIDA Can Do Descriptors.

In the vignette, Mr. Hermann sends a letter home to parents before the lesson asking for their help in building students' background knowledge of plants and seeds. Using pictures of familiar plants, Mr. Hermann is able to help students connect the content and vocabulary of the lesson to their own cultural understandings and background knowledge. By incorporating students' [schema](#) into the introduction of the lesson provides the foundational understanding for students to use as a launching pad for the rest of the lesson.

6

**BEFORE  
INSTRUCTION**

**CLICK HERE**  
to see the Language  
Expectations for English Learners  
Planning Tool





## PAIRING AND GROUPING OF STUDENTS

Students work in [pairs and groups](#) to construct meaning and clarify understandings throughout daily lessons. Working in pairs allows students to develop an understanding of concepts in tandem with practicing speaking and listening skills. In the vignette, there are many examples of partner work and group work. However, it is important to note that these groups are flexible and change often. Students are paired depending upon the activity at hand. Mr. Hermann has paired some students together because of their reading comprehension skills, but then he changes the pairs based on students' strengths in foundational skills. This continues through to the small group instruction with Mr. Hermann's multiple foci on fluency, reading comprehension, and motivation for reading.

**CLICK HERE**

to see Mr. Hermann's pairs and groups

**6**

**BEFORE  
INSTRUCTION**

# DURING INSTRUCTION: KEY PRACTICES

During the lesson, Mr. Hermann makes many instructional decisions in response to student understandings, questions, and response to texts. The Tennessee Department of Education has presented guidelines for “Key Practices During Instruction” in *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee*. In this supplementary document, we will highlight three important factors that, when implemented, are highly beneficial for all students, but especially English Learners.

## VOCABULARY INSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES

Intentional vocabulary instruction is critical for English Learners in their development of academic language.<sup>52</sup> Attention to the academic vocabulary covered during the lesson will benefit ELs in both language and content knowledge development. Some questions to consider in selecting vocabulary are:

- **Is this word significant to comprehending the meaning of the text?**
- **Is the meaning of this word conveyed through context?**
- **Can students identify with the meaning of this word?**
- **Are students likely to encounter this word in other settings or contexts?**
- **What is the best instructional method for teaching this word (explicit, implicit, embedded)?**

## LANGUAGE SCAFFOLDS

Throughout the lesson, Mr. Hermann provides his ELs a wide range of language scaffolds based on their English Language Proficiency (ELP) levels and the WIDA Can Do Indicators. During the interactive read aloud, partners serve as language supports along with picture cards of each step in the seed to plant cycle. Additionally, Mr. Hermann provides students with picture cards that vary in the complexity of the text on the card. Cards provided for students with lower levels of ELP have one word or a short phrase whereas other cards have a complete sentence for students with higher levels of ELP. During independent writing, partners act as language supports in brainstorming ideas in response to the prompt of the day. Students are also provided with sentence stems and options for graphic representations based on their ELP. During explicit foundational skills instruction, students again use partners and picture cards as language supports based on skill mastery and ELP. Shared reading provides students with the opportunity to use their classmates as supports, with additional scaffolding in the form of sound cards.

7

DURING  
INSTRUCTION

## DISCOURSE THROUGH ACCOUNTABLE TALK

In order for English Learners to be college ready, students must go beyond fluency in everyday English to fluent in academic English as listeners, readers, speakers, and writers. Scholars emphasize that teachers should model academic language functions such as seeking information, comparing, problem solving, and evaluating, but this alone is not enough. Talking with other peers about ideas and work is fundamental to learning. Not all classroom talk sustains learning. In order for classroom talk to promote learning, it must be accountable to the learning community, to accurate and appropriate knowledge, and to rigorous thinking.

It is critical for teachers to plan so that students use academic language daily through classroom opportunities such as **accountable talk**.<sup>53</sup> It should not be assumed that being able to understand academic language as input is equal to being able to produce it, whether orally or in writing. Teachers need to model and engage students in classroom conversations, not in some generic way, but in the context of specific content areas.

Here are some examples that can support accountable talk for English learners.

### ACCOUNTABLE TALK

"I predict..."	"Will you tell me more about..."
"I have a question about..."	"Will you give me a better example so I can better understand..."
"I don't understand..."	"Will you show me the place in the reading that explains your idea?"
"That remind me of,..."	"Will you repeat that, please?"
"I would like to know why..."	"Please read the passage that illustrates your idea."
"I found evidence to support my idea..."	"I liked/ disliked ___ because ..."
"I believe this is true because ..."	"I changed my mind because ..."
"I believe this is false because..."	"As you said/ stated ..."
"I agree with ___ because ___..."	"On page ___ it says ___, so I think ..."
"I disagree with ___ because ___..."	"So what you are saying is ..."
"To support ___'s idea ..."	"I have something to add to what ___ said ..."
"I found evidence to support ___'s idea..."	"The author is stating ...."

7

DURING  
INSTRUCTION

## REFLECT ON THE ROLE OF LANGUAGE AND LITERACY IN THE CLASSROOM

Many students interpret and learn about the world in ways that may differ from those described in rigorous academic standards. Educators must create connections between background experiences and academic standards so that all students have the tools needed to meaningfully participate in learning and classroom lessons.

Academic talk is an experience in which students can bridge background knowledge and academic language based on standards expectation. When planning for academic talk, consider the following questions:

1. What opportunities do students have to use academic language every day?
2. How is language modeled in the classroom?
3. How does the teacher and student use language with each other?
4. Is there an expectation for academic language use in the classroom? How is the message conveyed to students?
5. Are students allowed to communicate in a language other than English to make meaningful connections with peers when appropriate and/or feasible?

During class discussion and partner work, Mr. Hermann provides opportunities for students to share thoughts and build on peer responses. For example, in the interactive read aloud section of the vignette, Mr. Hermann asks students to discuss and share special features of seeds. Students have an opportunity to share their special feature of seeds as well as add other characteristics of seeds to their knowledge based on peer responses. As Mr. Hermann works with students during small group instruction in the vignette, he holds students accountable to their learning by prompting them with comprehension questions that will strike student conversation and allow for the use of academic language to be embedded into student learning.

## CULTURE OF LANGUAGE

During instruction, teachers should develop a culture of language and literacy among teacher and students. As can be seen in the vignette, Mr. Hermann encourages student talk as much as possible, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to practice and express understanding through all four domains of language: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Students are encouraged to read books about topics that are interesting to their particular preferences, like those that read above their “level” in Small Group A. Supplies and major elements of the room are labeled in English and in pictures to build classroom vocabulary for ELs and allow students to navigate the classroom successfully. In Mr. Hermann’s classroom, a rich culture of language is present and encourages the development of student literacy.

7

DURING  
INSTRUCTION

*"Educators must create connections between background experiences and academic standards so that all students have the tools needed to meaningfully participate in learning and classroom lessons."*

# AFTER INSTRUCTION: REFLECTION

## ONGOING CHECKS FOR UNDERSTANDING

In general, ongoing assessment of student knowledge provides teachers with data needed to make instructional decisions for future lessons within a unit. This is especially beneficial for teachers of ELs as ongoing assessment is a key method in ensuring that language scaffolds are successfully aligned with standards and students' English Language Proficiency. Through informal checks for understanding, teachers can ensure that students are meeting both the academic and linguistic demands of the lesson.

In the vignette, Mr. Hermann used many ongoing checks for understanding during the lesson. He listens during partner conversations, circles the room during sound sorting, and records his observations during shared reading. He also plans to listen to student recordings on mp3 players to measure students' fluency in Small Group C, as well as having mini-conferences with students in Group B later in the week. All of these checks for understanding ensure that not just his English Learners were demonstrating understanding, but that all of his students were developing meaningful connections and understandings of key elements of the lesson.

### CLICK [HERE](#)

to see an example Mr. Hermann's notes from his mini conferences with his students

### CLICK [HERE](#)

to see an example of a checklist for understanding that can be made by teachers

## ONGOING CHECKS FOR UNDERSTANDING

**Description:** Formative assessments that teachers use to determine where students are in understanding

Exit tickets	Mini conferences	Checklists	Fist to Five	Informal running records
Short written reflections that allow students to demonstrate their understanding of a topic, answer a question, or communicate about lingering questions or misunderstandings	Informal one-on-one meetings with a student in which the teacher reviews areas of strength and growth for that particular student	With student names running down the side and targeted skills on the top, teachers can quickly mark if they see evidence of understanding of a certain skill	Students close their eyes and hold up a certain number of fingers to demonstrate their perceived comfort and understanding of a topic (0=low, 5=high)	Teachers record the reading behaviors of a student to capture common uses of word meaning, word structure, and visual cues

# 8

**AFTER  
INSTRUCTION**

In the vignette, Mr. Hermann used many ongoing checks for understanding during the lesson. He listens during partner conversations, circles the room during sound sorting, and records his observations during shared reading. He also plans to listen to student recordings on mp3 players to measure students' fluency in Small Group C, as well as having mini-conferences with students in Group B later in the week.

All of these checks for understanding ensure that not just his English Learners were demonstrating understanding, but that all of his students were developing meaningful connections and understandings of key elements of the lesson.

## TEACHER REFLECTION

- R Remember to ground the reflection.**  
*Ground the reflection by analyzing student work and formative assessment data.*
- E Effectively use teacher and student evidence.**  
*Consider where students did well and where they struggled. Compare this to the pedagogical practices you implemented. Sometimes you might find it helpful to have a coach or peer observe your practice to help you record this evidence.*
- F Find connections between the instructional triangle (content, pedagogy, and student learning).**  
*Make connections between the outcomes you saw in the student data and how your pedagogical practices contributed to those outcomes. Focus as specifically as possible on smaller aspects of your practice, like your questioning or grouping structures. A narrow focus can lead to a deeper and more specific reflection.*
- L Label what led to success.**  
*Once you have connected the impact of your instruction on student learning of the content, reflect to consider what you did that led to that success (e.g. How did you plan?, How did you adjust during the lesson?, What decisions did you make?).*
- E Explore possibilities for change.**  
*Explore potential options for ways you could have adjusted the instruction to get a different result.*
- C Commit to refinement or extension.**  
*Commit to either continuing to refine a practice or to continuing to use a practice you found effective. Great reflection ends in an action plan that continues to strengthen professional practice over time.*
- T Take time to reflect on the process.**  
*Ask yourself, "How did this reflection process help me?" Consider how it supported you as a teacher and how it will also help your students. Taking time to think about the reflection process will assist you in continuing to strengthen your own reflective process.*

8

AFTER  
INSTRUCTION

# SUMMARY

The *Teaching Literacy in Tennessee: English Learner Companion* provides teachers and administrators a guide in best practices for EL instruction, specifically for early grades reading. By grounding instruction in the Can Do Philosophy and considering the linguistic needs of each English Learner, teachers will be encouraged to maintain high expectations and academic rigor for all students.

Through this approach, teachers:

1. **Engage English Learners with a large amount of texts.**
2. **Provide English Learners the opportunity to read complex texts.**
3. **Structure opportunities for English Learners to think deeply about and respond to text through speaking and writing.**
4. **Support English Learners in developing writing skills in connection to what they are reading.**
5. **Provide multiple opportunities for English Learners to practice with foundational literacy skills that have been taught explicitly and applied systematically through reading and writing.**

Providing high quality Tier I instruction to English Learners is critical to ensuring that all of Tennessee's students are on the path to success and have choices for the future. While the strategies and tools presented in this document are research-based with proven success in cultivating linguistic and academic growth for ELs, these strategies will prove to benefit all students in the classroom. By creating language-rich environments that set high goals for student achievement and focus on student's abilities, all students will be able to have choice and quality options after graduation. This will ensure that Tennessee succeeds.

*Teaching Literacy in Tennessee* provides the framework for K–3 literacy practices that will anchor professional learning and support for teachers and leaders across the state. Guaranteeing student success means ensuring that the more than 65,000 teachers and almost 5,000 administrators across the state receive the support they need to continuously improve their practice. Through the Read to be Ready and other early learning initiatives, the department will continue to focus on supporting teachers and leaders in literacy instruction and will continue to develop opportunities to come together around our unifying vision for Tennessee: Districts and schools in Tennessee will exemplify excellence and equity such that all students are equipped with the knowledge and skills to successfully embark upon their chosen path in life.

## A

**Academic language:** The language needed by students to do work in schools which includes discipline-specific vocabulary, grammar, and punctuation

**Academic vocabulary:** Discipline-specific vocabulary that students need to be successful in demonstrating understanding during a lesson

**Accountable Talk:** Students ask one another about their thinking and build on the responses of others

## C

**Concepts:** abstract or general ideas that represent universal knowledge that can be applied in various contexts

**Considerations:** what things need to be taken into account when using the program design

**Content-based English Instruction:** Designed to provide second language learners instruction in content and language

## E

**English Language Proficiency (ELP):** A student's level of proficiency in English in the four domains of language: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. A student's English Language Proficiency is determined by the ACCESS assessment.

**English Language Proficiency Assessment (ELPA):** An assessment of a student's ability to speak, read, write, and listen in English. In Tennessee, the WIDA ACCESS assessment is used to determine a student's English Language Proficiency

**Embedded cultural understanding:** the knowledge of customs and traditions of a specific culture

**Enduring understandings:** statements summarizing important ideas and core processes that are central to a discipline and have lasting value beyond the classroom

**English Proficiency Level:** The level of ELP that most benefits from the specific program design

**Extended think time:** time provided after a question or daily task is presented that is longer than what would usually be provided

## I

**Individual Learning Plan (ILP):** A document that describes the academic and language needs of and goals for an English Learner. It is created in collaboration with other teachers, counselors, parents, and or the student. Beginning with the 2018-19 school year, all ELs will have individual learning plans (ILP) and growth trajectories for English proficiency built from their personal data, including TNReady, benchmark, and WIDA ACCESS assessments. More information will be provided based on the new SBE policy 3.207.

**Integration:** incorporating multiple standards with predetermined emphasis within a single lesson or unit

## K

**Knowledge-based competencies:** skills that develop across a lifetime and are not identical for all readers

## L

**Language scaffolds:** differentiated teaching aids and tools that support a student's language development on their appropriate level

## M

**Metacognition:** an awareness and understanding of one's own thinking process

## P

**Productive language:** language that is output by a student: speaking, writing

**Program Design:** specific EL Instructional Models

**Program Details:** a description of the best environment for use of each program design and the evidence supporting its use in each context

**Pull-out:** ESL teacher pulls students out of the general education classroom to work in a small group setting on English language skills with alignment to core instruction

**Push-in:** ESL teacher is in the general education classroom supporting ELs during content area lessons



## R

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**Realia:** real life objects and materials used as teaching aids

**Receptive language:** language that is taken in by a student: listening, reading

## S

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**Schema:** one's own background knowledge and systems of thinking

**Sheltered English Instruction:** an approach to teaching ELs which integrates language and content instruction

**Sheltered Instructional Observational Protocol (SIOP):** research-based instructional model that has been proven effective in address the academic needs of English Learners. The SIOP model consists of eight interrelated components: lesson preparation, interaction, building background, practice/application, comprehensible input, lesson delivery, strategies, and review/assessment.

**Skills-based competencies:** skills that are learned completely and are universally needed to read and write

**Students with Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE):** English Learners that have missed more than two years of formal education and require basic literacy instruction in order to advance into general ESL and academic coursework

**Structured English Immersion:** an approach to teaching academic content to ELs. ELs are in the same classroom as native English speaking students.

## O

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**Ongoing checks for understanding:** informal assessments to measure student's understanding

## W

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**WIDA:** a non-profit cooperative group whose purpose is to develop standards and assessments that meet and exceed the goals of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and promote educational equity for English language learners.

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# APPENDIX A

## EL PROFICIENCY LEVELS

### ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVELS

DESCRIPTION/ LEVEL	LANGUAGE OF LISTENING AND READING (RECEPTIVE SKILLS)	LANGUAGE OF SPEAKING AND WRITING (PRODUCTIVE SKILLS)
<b>Entering (Level 1)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single statements or questions</li> <li>• An idea within words, phrases, or chunks of language</li> <li>• Simple grammatical constructions</li> <li>• Common social and instructional forms and patterns</li> <li>• General content-related words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Words, phrases or chunks of language</li> <li>• Single words to represent ideas</li> <li>• Simple grammatical constructions</li> <li>• Phrasal patterns associated with social and instructional situations</li> <li>• General content-related words</li> <li>• Everyday social and instructional words and expressions</li> </ul>
<b>Emerging (Level 2)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple related simple sentences</li> <li>• An idea with details</li> <li>• Compound grammatical constructions</li> <li>• Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas</li> <li>• Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas</li> <li>• Cognates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Phrases, or short sentences</li> <li>• Emerging expression of ideas</li> <li>• Formulaic grammatical structures and variable use of conventions</li> <li>• Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas</li> <li>• General content words and expressions</li> <li>• Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas</li> </ul>
<b>Developing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discourse with a series of extended sentences</li> <li>• Related ideas</li> <li>• Compound and complex grammatical constructions</li> <li>• Sentence patterns across content areas</li> <li>• Specific content language</li> <li>• Words and expressions with common collocations and idioms across content areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short and some expanded sentences with emerging complexity</li> <li>• Expanded expression of one idea or emerging expression or multiple related ideas</li> <li>• Repetitive grammatical structures with occasional variation and emerging use of conventions</li> <li>• Sentence patterns across content areas</li> <li>• Specific content languages including cognates and expressions</li> <li>• Words or expressions with multiple meanings used across content areas</li> </ul>
<b>Expanding</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connected discourse with a variety of sentences</li> <li>• Complex grammatical constructions</li> <li>• Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas</li> <li>• Specific and some technical content area language</li> <li>• Words or expressions with multiple meaning across content areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short, expanded and some complex sentences</li> <li>• Organized expression of ideas with emerging cohesion</li> <li>• Various grammatical structures and generally consistent use of conventions</li> <li>• Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas</li> <li>• Specific and some technical content area language</li> <li>• Words and expressions with expressive meaning across content area</li> </ul>

# APPENDIX A

## EL PROFICIENCY LEVELS

DESCRIPTION/ LEVEL	LANGUAGE OF LISTENING AND READING (RECEPTIVE SKILLS)	LANGUAGE OF SPEAKING AND WRITING (PRODUCTIVE SKILLS)
<b>Bridging</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Descriptive discourse with complex sentences</li> <li>• Cohesive and organized related ideas</li> <li>• Compound and complex grammatical constructions with phrases and clauses</li> <li>• Broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas</li> <li>• Technical and abstract content area language, including content specific collocations</li> <li>• Connotations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple, complex sentences</li> <li>• Organized, cohesive, and coherent expression of ideas</li> <li>• Various grammatical structures matched to purpose and nearly consistent use of conventions, including for effect</li> <li>• A broad range of sentence patterns characteristics of particular content areas</li> <li>• Technical and abstract content-area language</li> <li>• Words and expressions with shades of meaning across content areas</li> </ul>
<b>Reaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the definitions listed in Levels 1-5</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All of the definitions listed in Levels 1-5</li> </ul>

# APPENDIX B

## WIDA LANGUAGE EXPECTATIONS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS PLANNING TOOL

### Drafting Strands of MPIs

ELD STANDARD: Standard 2: The Language of Language Arts  
EXAMPLE TOPIC: Analyzing Informational Text



#### CONNECTION:

Tennessee Academic Standards for Science:

1.LS1: From Molecules to Organisms: Structures and Processes 1) Recognize the structure of plants (roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruits) and describe the function of the parts (taking in water and air, producing food, making new plants).

Tennessee English Language Arts Standards:

1.RI.KID.2 Identify the main topic and retell key details of a text.

1.RI.CS.5 Know and use various text features to locate key facts or information in a text.

**EXAMPLE CONTEXT FOR LANGUAGE USE:** Students listen to classroom discussion about plant structures and function, as well as retelling key details while using text features to make connections and gather additional information.

ELD STANDARD: Standard 2: The Language of Language Arts  
EXAMPLE TOPIC: Analyzing Informational Text



# APPENDIX B

## WIDA LANGUAGE EXPECTATIONS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS PLANNING TOOL

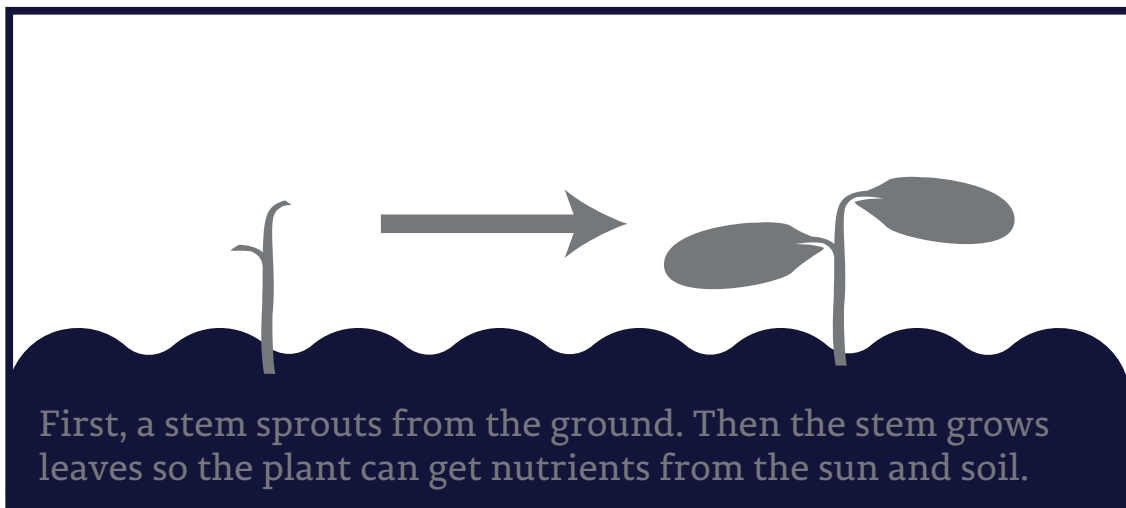
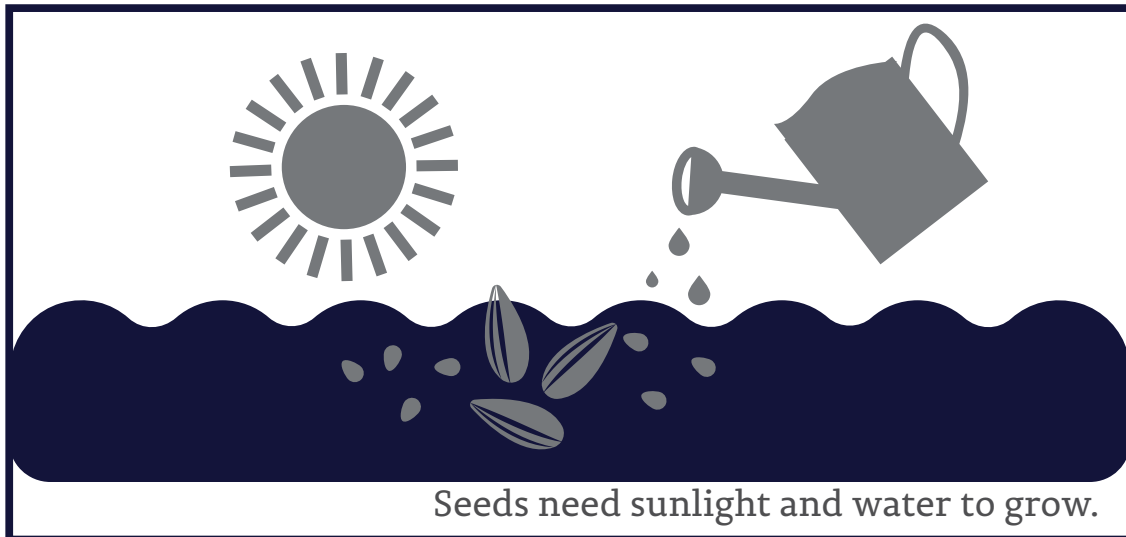
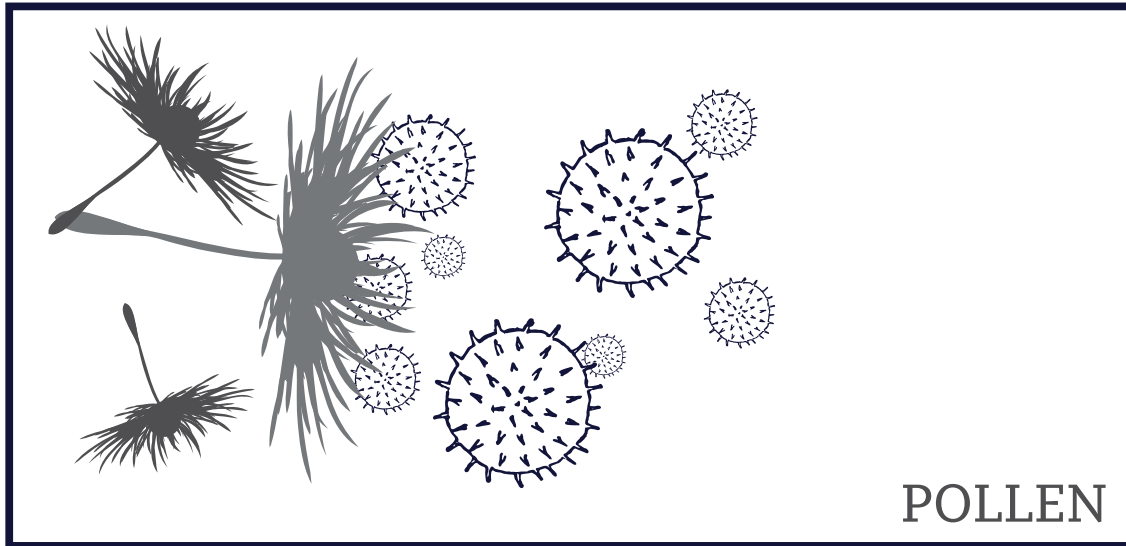
**COGNITIVE FUNCTION:** Students at all levels of English language proficiency examine structures and processes to recognize and transfer the knowledge of functions of the various parts of plants.

		COGNITIVE FUNCTION: Students at all levels of English language proficiency examine structures and processes to recognize and transfer the knowledge of functions of the various parts of plants.				
		LEVEL 1 Entering	LEVEL 2 Emerging	LEVEL 3 Developing	LEVEL 4 Expanding	LEVEL 5 Bridging
<b>DOMAIN: READING</b>		Match pictures with information about the structures of plants (roots, stems, leaves, flowers, fruit, pollination, etc.) with a partner or small group.	Identify important information about the structures of plants as well as begin to describe the functions of the parts using key illustrations and details in text given sentence stems with a partner or small group.	Locate information in the text to identify key facts about plant structures and their functions and use a graphic organizer to sort key information in a small group.	Sequence information located in text and supplementary resources to explain the functions of plant parts such as taking in water, producing food, and making new plants using a diagram or graphic organizer in small group.	Connect information about various plants illustrated in class text or supplementary resources such as internet research to examine the commonalities and differences between the students selected plants using a diagram, graphic organizer, or short small group presentation.
		<b>LEVEL 6 - Reaching</b>				

**TOPIC-RELATED LANGUAGE:** Students at all levels of English language proficiency interact with grade-level text and vocabulary such as: pollination, sprout, pods, stems, leaves, flower, observe, structure, process

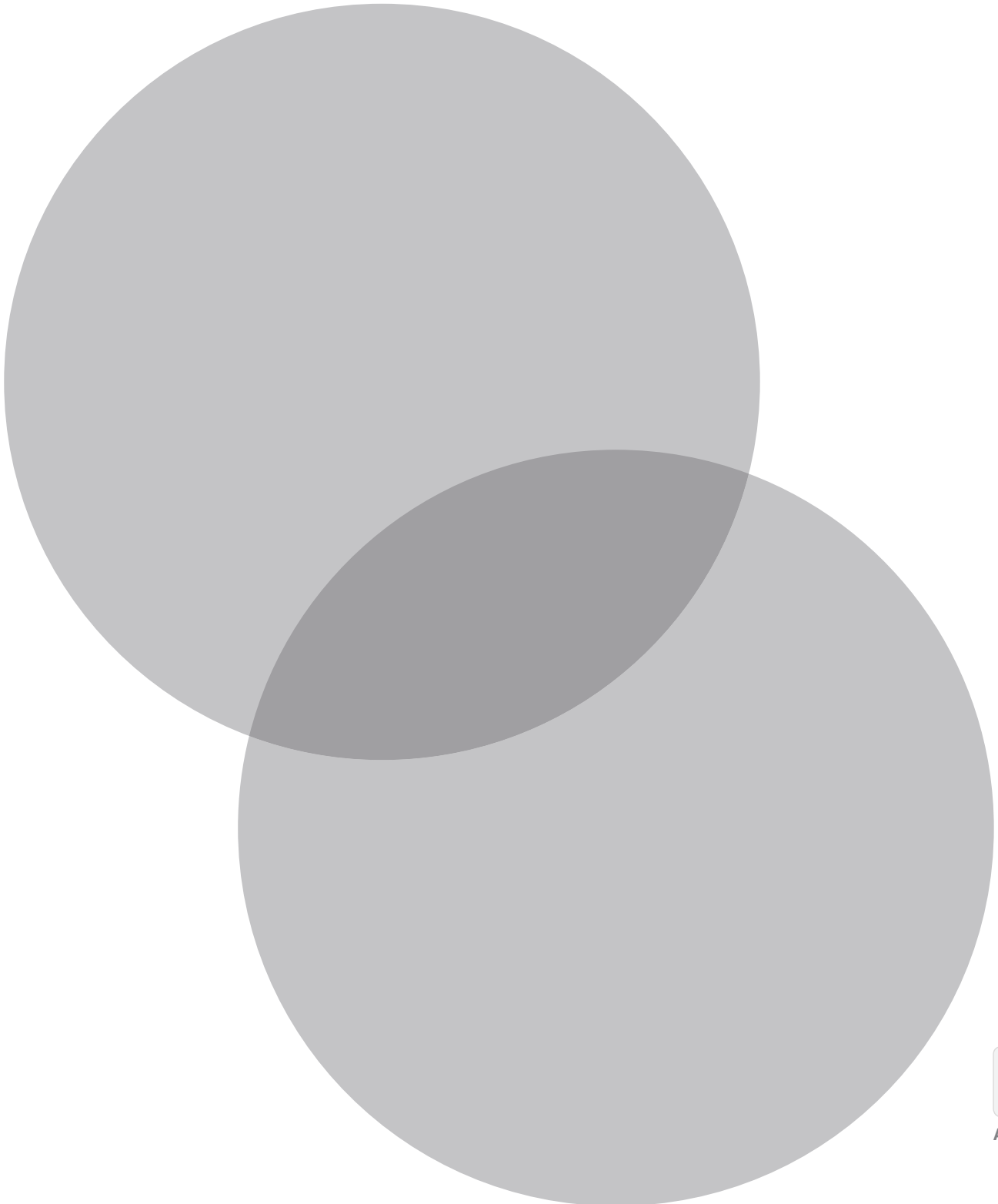
# APPENDIX C

## ADDITIONAL MATERIALS 1: IMAGE CARDS



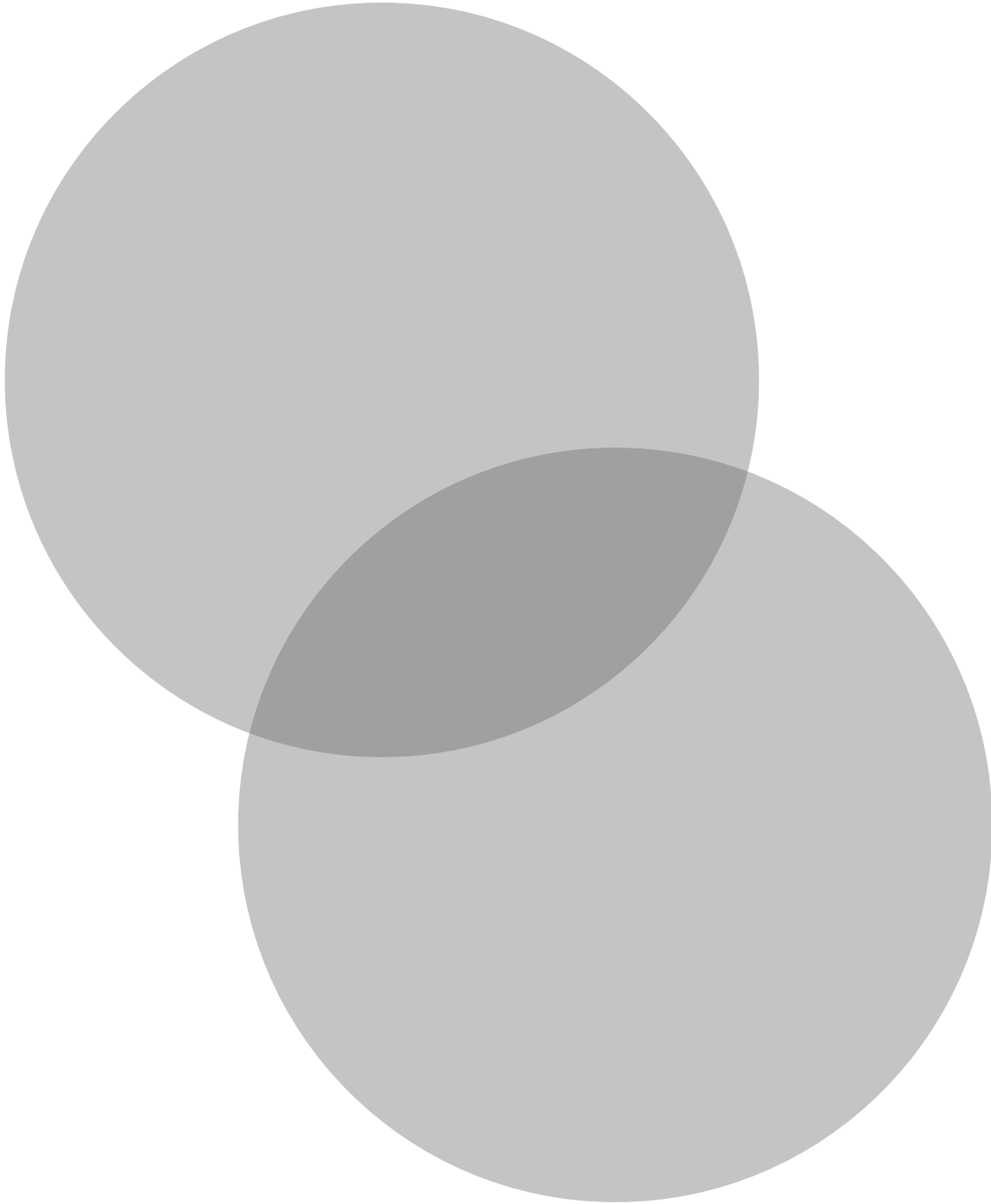
# APPENDIX D

## ADDITIONAL MATERIALS 2 - VENN DIAGRAM



# APPENDIX D

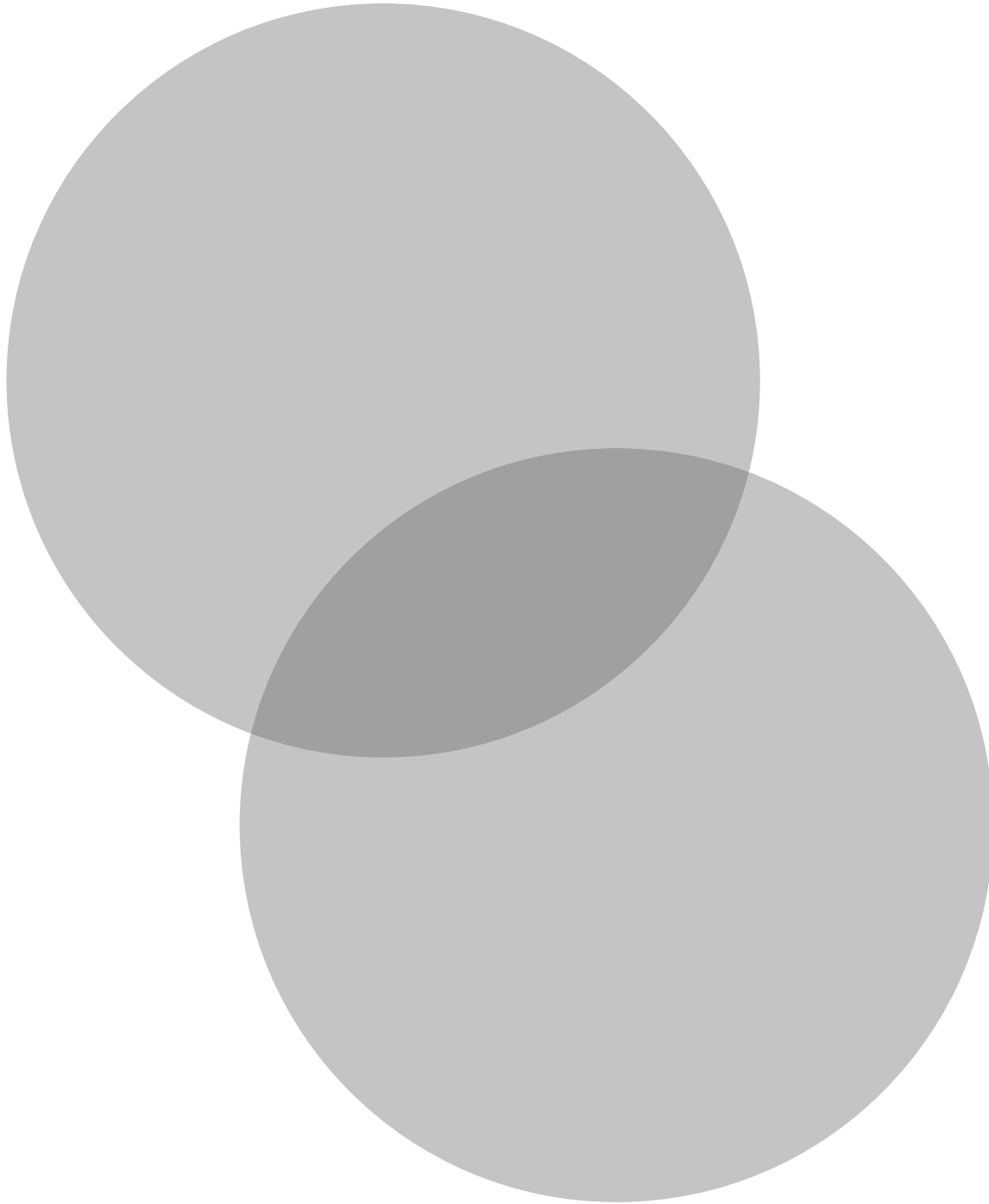
## ADDITIONAL MATERIALS 2 - VENN DIAGRAM



**WORD BANK**

# APPENDIX D

## ADDITIONAL MATERIALS 2 - VENN DIAGRAM



**WORD/PICTURE BANK**

# APPENDIX E

## ADDITIONAL MATERIALS 3: MINI CONFERENCE NOTES

Juliet has strong **fluency, but limited** comprehension. Start checks for understanding at the end of each page.

Lily has strong comprehension. Need to do an informal running record to see if she's leveled up.

Leland successfully **identifies the 'ea' and 'ee'** sound patterns in words in isolation, but still struggles to read them when they appear in text.

Ashley needs more support with vocabulary. Include this in her independent work station.

# APPENDIX F

## ADDITIONAL MATERIALS 4: CHECKLIST

Using student talk as a check for understanding is an efficient and effective way to assess students' proficiency in a particular skill. Prepared checklists in a dry erase sleeve allow teachers to quickly mark if evidence of understanding is present.

Consider the checklist below. Mr. Hermann circled the room during students brainstorm to listen to their conversations. In doing so, he was able to create a quick graphic to see overall trends in students' understanding, as well as where gaps still exist. While most students have grasped the process of how a seed becomes a plant, only half of his students are citing evidence in their conversations to support their understandings.

	Seed to Plant Process	Citing Evidence
June	X	
Mason	X	X
Emile	X	
Kani	X	X
Oscar		
Emily	X	X
Ashley	X	X
Juliet	ABSENT	ABSENT
Lily	X	
Leland	X	
Daniel	X	X
Ronald	X	X
Miguel	X	X
Jack	X	X
Damiyah	X	
Ethan	X	
Laine	X	

# APPENDIX G

## ADDITIONAL MATERIALS 5: PAIRINGS AND GROUPS

Pairing students of varied linguistic and comprehension abilities sets up all students for success. Because of the varied levels of proficiency, each student in the pair takes on different roles. The student with more developed proficiency in language and comprehension steps into more of a teacher role, asking questions of their partner and demonstrating proficient ways of thinking about text. The student with lower proficiency is able to make meaning of the text with the support of a peer and practice academic and social language in a low-stakes setting.

Considerations:

- ELP of each student
- Strengths and challenges in reading comprehension abilities
- Strengths and challenges in social language
- Student behavior

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5	IEPs	GEN ED
June	Emile	Mason Kani Oscar	Ashley	Miguel	Laine Emily Ethan Leland	Lily Juliet Ronald Damiyah Daniel Jack

### PAIRS

June and Mason  
 Emile and Kani  
 Oscar and Emily  
 Ashley and Juliet  
 Lily, Leland, and Daniel\*  
 Ethan and Laine  
 Miguel and Ronald  
 Damiyah and Jack

*\*Daniel was put into a group of three because he has strong comprehension skills and gets along well with all of his classmates. If there is a student that is absent, he will be able to leave his trio to substitute for an absent partner. He will be a good model for all students to engage with, as he can articulate his thinking clearly, citing evidence from the text and making connections to previously studied content.*



