

Specific Considerations for Teachers of English Language Learners

About This Resource

Danielson’s 2013 *Framework for Teaching (FfT)* provides teachers and school leaders with a common language to describe and discuss effective teaching in order to achieve continuous growth in teacher practice and student learning. The *FfT* was created as an overarching framework that describes the commonalities in every classroom—those aspects of teaching that are common across grades, disciplines, and students’ backgrounds. Thus, the *FfT* is appropriate for use with and by teachers of English Language Learners (ELLs).

New York State’s Education Law 3012-c requires that lead evaluators have appropriate guidance regarding specific considerations in evaluating teachers of ELLs. Also, many school leaders and teachers have requested additional support in using the *FfT* in classrooms in which student characteristics, subject content, or program models may differ significantly from other courses or subjects. In response, this document offers specific considerations for school leaders and teachers of ELLs through component-aligned questions. These questions may be discussed when providing feedback, engaging in pre- and post-observations, and planning next steps; they are not to be used for evaluating teacher practice. In addition, these questions can be used by teachers voluntarily as a resource to guide their thinking as they plan and reflect on their instructional practice in how they are meeting the needs of ELLs. Additionally, while these questions may be useful for informing teachers’ usual planning, preparation, and professional learning processes, teachers may not be required to provide written answers to these questions as an additional professional assignment.

This document is not a separate rubric for teachers of ELLs or to be used as a checklist in classroom observations. Each *FfT* component’s “Rationale,” “Performance Levels,” “Critical Attributes,” and many of the “Possible Examples”¹ are relevant to teachers of ELLs and should be used by school leaders when considering evidence of each component. This document only seeks to present additional context to consider, keeping in mind that not every question will be applicable depending upon the students’ needs and context. For the component (2e: Organizing Physical Space) where it was agreed that there were no significant specific considerations for teachers of ELLs, the component is not included in this document.

Embedded in these questions are good instructional practices for ELLs; this document is not an exhaustive guide of those good instructional practices. Also, it should be noted that while some questions might indicate a specific level of ELLs, the distinctions between Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced are often fluid and can vary for each student (i.e., at times a strategy used with a Beginner student might be appropriate to use with an Advanced student, depending on the student needs and the learning goal). For teachers of ELLs with disabilities, also refer to the Specific Considerations for Teachers of Students with Disabilities to use alongside this document.

¹ Every “Possible Example” in the *FfT* is not meant to be relevant to all teachers, including teachers of students with disabilities. Examples are included to assist teachers and observers in understanding concrete classroom practices that might serve as evidence for each component. The relevance depends upon the discipline and the students’ developmental levels.

The Office of English Language Learners contributed significantly to the creation of this document.² These specific considerations align with the work of the Office of ELLs (OELL) to support ELLs by helping to create rigorous learning environments that focus on academic achievement, language development, and cross-cultural support.

Additional Resources and Support

Additional resources for teachers of ELLs and supervisors of teachers of ELLs include:

- [NYCDOE Office of English Language Learner's webpage](#)
- [Supporting ELLs Literacy Instruction](#): OELL partnered with renowned researchers in the field of language development and literacy to create briefs on how teachers can support the growth of ELLs.
- [ELL Considerations for Common Core-Aligned Tasks in English Language Arts](#): This document offers educators insights and practical suggestions for accelerating the academic achievement of ELLs in literacy classrooms.
- [ELL Considerations for Common Core-Aligned Tasks in Mathematics](#): This offers educators insights and practical suggestions for accelerating the academic achievement of ELLs in math classrooms.
- [Educator Resources to Support ELLs](#): These resources (videos, webinars) address a variety of topics to support educators of ELLs and develop their understanding of high quality instruction for ELLs.
- [Language Allocation Policy \(LAP\) Tool Kit](#): These tools and resources help educators create coherent and consistent programs for ELLs throughout the school system. The kit also contains tools and resources to support educators to refine and evaluate ELL programs in compliance with federal, state, and local regulations as well as language allocation guidelines.
- [Response to Intervention \(RtI\) Guide](#): This set of guidance documents assists teachers, instructional leaders, and ELL support services with Response to Intervention (RtI) implementation as the model is adapted in each context. The documents outline a rationale for using the RtI model with a school's ELL population and describe the road map for implementation.
- [SIFE: Meeting the Challenge](#): The Office of English Language Learners created a video entitled *SIFE: Meeting the Challenge* to illustrate how three schools set up their communities to meet both the academic and socio-emotional needs of their Students with Interrupted Education (SIFE).

Questions and suggestions about this document are welcome and valued. Please send feedback and queries to teachereffectiveness@schools.nyc.gov, and a member of the Office of Teacher Effectiveness will respond shortly.

² Design of this resource was also informed by similar guidance on best practices provided by the Houston Independent School District to its teachers and evaluators.

Domain 1: Planning & Preparation

1a: Demonstrating Knowledge of Content and Pedagogy

- How do the lesson and unit plans reflect knowledge of ESL pedagogy, including native language support?

1b: Demonstrating Knowledge of Students

- How do you use your knowledge of the students' English proficiency levels, home languages, and ESL pedagogy to plan?
- How do you make connections between ELLs' home languages and their English language development?
- How do you use data from NYSITELL³ and NYSESLAT to inform planning?

1c: Setting Instructional Outcomes

- How do you plan the learning outcomes to include both language objectives and content objectives?
- How do the planned activities build students' reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills?
- How are the language objectives differentiated for the range of students' language proficiency levels?
- How are the learning outcomes designed to accelerate ELL students to grade level and beyond?

1d: Demonstrating Knowledge of Resources

- How do you plan to use realia, manipulatives, pictures, or video clips to aid in language and content development?
- How do you use instructional and reference tools (e.g., native language curriculum, native language content aligned materials, bilingual libraries, bilingual dictionaries, thesauri, glossaries)?
- How are you using professional development sessions or courses you have attended to help you identify additional strategies for supporting ELLs?
- How have you selected from a range of grade appropriate texts to support individual students' linguistic and content needs?

1e: Designing Coherent Instruction

- How have you planned activities that incorporate literacy strategies to support ELLs such as:
 - Building on prior knowledge and experiences?
 - Using a variety of interactive reading approaches?
 - Planning purposefully explicit and implicit⁴ vocabulary and language instruction to build students' academic language?
 - Allowing students to interact with texts in a variety of ways?
 - Planning activities that are tactile, visual, or involve kinesthetic movement?
- How do you design multiple entry points based upon ELLs' content and language proficiency in planned activities?
- How do you plan for ELLs to experience texts through multiple modalities (e.g., illustrated books, audio books)?
- How do you plan flexible instructional groupings to develop ELLs' language proficiency? For example,
 - When will ELLs have opportunities to practice speaking and listening with English proficient peers?
 - When will students with different English proficiency levels be paired with students who share the same native language to support content and language acquisition?
 - When will ELLs be grouped heterogeneously so they have opportunities to demonstrate content mastery and assist one another?
- How do your lessons and units increase in linguistic and cognitive demand?

³ In February 2014, the NYSITELL replaced the LAB-R as the approved means of initially identifying ELLs in New York State.

⁴ Implicit vocabulary instruction is when a student uses rich contextual clues from the text to determine the meaning. Explicit vocabulary instruction is when a student learns new words through various teacher-led instructional strategies. To learn more, visit http://schools.nyc.gov/NR/rdonlyres/2F4507D0-7C83-4229-BF6A-4860E6F1677A/0/GeneralELAStrategiesforELLs_082811.pdf.

1f: Designing Student Assessments

- How will the language objectives be assessed?
- How have you planned to differentiate assessments by language proficiency, allowing ELLs to communicate their understanding according to their language proficiency, which may include communication:
 - In their native language?
 - Through performance or non-verbal cues (initially)?
 - In English, but with grammatical errors⁵?
- How have you designed assessments to measure ELLs' language development?
- How do you use student performance on language development assessments when designing instruction?
- How do you plan for your students to be actively involved in assessing their understanding and determining when they need more support?
- When needed, how do you plan to assist ELLs to develop their ability to self-assess and verbalize the need for support with learning?

Domain 2: The Classroom Environment

2a: Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport

- How are ELLs integrated into the classroom, working with other ELLs and English Proficient students?
- How do you welcome ELLs to use their native language within the classroom and the school community?
- How do you and your students use a variety of methods to invite ELLs to share their ideas?
- How do you incorporate activities where the students' cultures are recognized and celebrated?

2b: Establishing a Culture for Learning

- How do you encourage risk-taking in language production and indicate that errors are part of a natural progression of language learning?
- How do you demonstrate high expectations for all ELLs and recognize their effort and persistence?
- How do you support ELLs' independent participation through prompts, restatements, clear and deliberate enunciation, providing wait time, native language assistance, and/or encouragement?
- How are students expected to demonstrate increasingly precise language, including Tier 1, 2, and 3 words?
- How do students support one another with their language learning?

2c: Managing Classroom Procedures

- How do you model and provide appropriate visuals, when necessary, to establish and manage classroom routines (e.g., demonstrating how and where to return the materials)?

2d: Managing Student Behavior

- How are rules and routines made available in the students' native languages, when appropriate?
- When speaking privately with a student about his or her behavior, how do you demonstrate sensitivity to cultural differences in how the student responds (e.g., in some cultures, not making eye contact when being corrected)?

⁵ The CCLS describes it as: "without manifesting native-like control of conventions and vocabulary." To learn more, visit <http://www.corestandards.org/assets/application-for-english-learners.pdf>.

Domain 3: Instruction

3a: Communicating with Students

- How do you clearly communicate the explanation of content based on students' needs (e.g., speaking clearly, at times repeating or rephrasing)?
- How do you use grade level-appropriate language, which is also tailored to students' language proficiency levels?
- When using idioms and figurative language, how do you ensure understanding (e.g., rephrase when necessary)?
- How do you use visual and physical cues to support verbal explanation?
- How do you connect the content to ELLs' cultural and linguistic knowledge?

3b: Using Questioning and Discussion Techniques

- How do your questions allow students to respond in a variety of ways depending upon their language proficiency?
- How do you invite Beginner ELLs to respond in a variety of ways at first, including kinesthetically or through visual representations?
- How do your prompts support students to respond to questions that can include:
 - Repeating or rephrasing the question before students respond, if needed?
 - Modeling responses for less proficient students, by you and your more proficient students?
- How do you match ELLs with other students including:
 - With those who share their native language so they can discuss the content more in depth?
 - With more proficient students who can support content acquisition?
- How do you aid students in their responses (e.g., providing sentence stems, sentence frames, and word banks)?

3c: Engaging Students in Learning

- How do the learning task and activities allow students at all language acquisition levels to be cognitively challenged in content and language development (e.g., reading, writing, listening, and speaking)?
- How do the activities invite students' prior knowledge, and how is the content made relevant to students' lives?
- How do you group students to offer ELLs linguistic support that can include:
 - ELLs having opportunities to practice speaking and listening with more proficient peers?
 - ELLs being grouped heterogeneously (e.g., by home languages, content skills) so they have the opportunity to support and to further develop their linguistics skills?
- How do you provide materials and resources that will facilitate scaffolding for content and language?
- How do you include a variety of materials that support learning goals (e.g., visual, physical, auditory and multi-media resources)?
- How do you make reference tools available for ELLs (e.g., native language content aligned materials, bilingual libraries, bilingual dictionaries, thesauri, glossaries)?
- How are the learning tasks appropriately differentiated for ELLs (e.g., allow more time)?

3d: Using Assessment in Instruction

- How do you use modeling and visual exemplars to make the expectation of high-quality work clear to students?
- How do you elicit evidence of learning in a manner appropriate to students' English language proficiency? For instance, when do you invite students to:
 - Use non-verbal cues (at the initial stages of language development)?
 - Create and deliver multi-media presentations?
 - Interact with written text in a variety of ways (e.g., graphic organizer, chunking, jigsaw)?

- Formulate English responses with additional support (e.g., sentence stems, sentence frames)?
- Formulate English responses appropriate to their language proficiency (e.g., one or two word answers, using native language responses, accepting some grammatical errors as students approach linguistic accuracy)?
- How do assessment criteria include outcomes and take into consideration students' language development?
- How do you share feedback in a variety of ways to individuals and groups?
- How do you share the strengths in the students' work while providing accurate and specific guidance for improvement?

3e: Demonstrating Flexibility and Responsiveness

- How do you adjust instruction to ensure that ELLs understand the instruction (e.g., incorporating additional modeling)?

Domain 4: Professional Responsibilities

4a: Reflecting on Teaching

- How do you articulate areas in need of improvement in your lesson delivery for ELLs and plan for action?
- How do you make use of current research-based strategies for ELLs to aid in your reflection and next steps?

4b: Maintaining Accurate Records

- How do you record student progress toward language objectives as well as content objectives?

4c: Communicating with Families

- How do you ensure frequent communication to families in English and in parents' preferred languages?
- How do you make use of [translation resources](#) to share updates with the families of ELLs?

4d: Participating in the Professional Community

- How do you engage in ongoing collaboration with ESL, native language, and content area teachers?
- How do you partner with colleagues to discuss ELLs' progress and plan for multiple opportunities to reinforce new learning?

4e: Growing and Developing Professionally

- How do you ensure participation in professional development of best practices for teaching ELLs?
- How do you gain knowledge of the history, culture, and language of your students?

4f: Showing Professionalism

- How do you and your colleagues discuss ELLs' performance and instruction in other classes?
- How do you advocate for ELL students to receive standards-based, rigorous instruction in all classes?
- How do you advocate for ELLs to be included in school-wide activities?