

# Leading Advanced Literacy Instruction to Promote ELLs' Achievement

Dear Educator,

We are excited to share with you our new Secondary Literacy Guide designed to address the main principles of language and literacy instruction for English language learners (ELL). The advancement of the Common Core positively highlights the need for a more robust instructional approach that considers the many assets that ELLs bring to the classroom. At the same time, it accounts for the unique needs of ELLs, while relying on the latest research in the field of second language and literacy development. As a result, we partnered with Dr. Nonie Lesaux and Emily Phillips Galloway from the Harvard Graduate School of Education to design this guide. Their expertise and collaboration during the course of the production of this resource are greatly appreciated.

Learning language and content at the same time is a formidable task. Preparing to meet the rigorous demands of academic careers in college adds to the challenges that our ELLs in the secondary grades experience. This is equally challenging for us as educators who have a responsibility to maximize instructional time with ELLs and prepare them for post-secondary education and careers.

Our hope is that this guide will help you carry out fruitful conversations with your colleagues, highlight all the great things that you are already doing, and *above all*, facilitate the implementation of the research-based, academically-rigorous instruction for all ELLs in your school communities. To accomplish these goals, we know that teachers will need the support of their administrators, and school-based administrators will need to rely on the expertise of their teachers to succeed in graduating well-prepared youngsters who are able to meet the demands of their future careers. Therefore, the Secondary Literacy Guide offers all educators of ELLs an abundance of easy-to-use tools, which can be referenced frequently.

We thank you for your tireless efforts in helping all ELLs succeed in New York City!

Cordially,

**Milady Baez**

Deputy Chancellor

Division of English Language Learners and Student Support

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# Leading Advanced Literacy Instruction to Promote ELLs' Achievement: A Guide for Leaders

**Nonie K. Lesaux & Emily Phillips Galloway**

*in collaboration with the New York City Division of English Language Learners and Student Support*

## Purpose

- Leading literacy reform is a complex process. This guide was designed in collaboration with the New York City Division of English Language Learners and Student Support, to aid school leaders focused on literacy improvement.

## Knowledge-Building Goals

- To promote an understanding of the characteristics of effective literacy instruction for ELLs, based on the latest research.
- To develop expertise that will facilitate the selection, implementation and/or adaptation of high-quality curriculum and instructional plans to support ELLs.
- To inform the design of professional learning communities that foster a culture of continuous school improvement for ELLs and former ELLs.



Unlike past decades, reading and writing have become prerequisites for participation in nearly every aspect of day-to-day, 21st century life. To be academically and personally successful in today's literacy- and knowledge-based society and economy, all students need to develop what we call 'advanced literacy skills.' These skills and competencies support each student to:

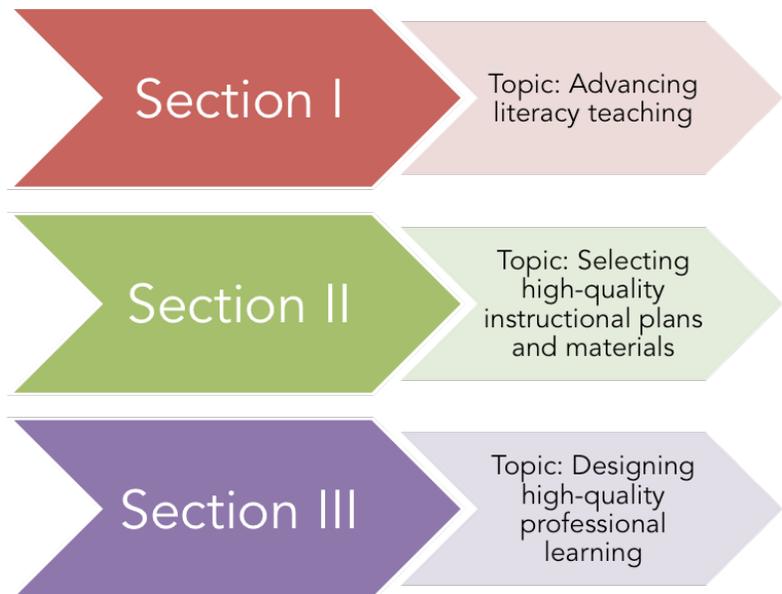
- communicate (orally and in writing) in increasingly diverse ways and with increasingly diverse audiences;
- understand and use print for a variety of purposes;
- access and participate in academic, civic, and professional communities, where knowledge is shared and generated.



## Using this Guide

- Each section of this guide addresses a pressing problem for literacy leaders.
- Each section can be used independently, but a comprehensive literacy reform effort will address the topics discussed in each section.
- Leaders should systematically work through each section because comprehensive literacy reform that supports ELLs demands changes in how we teach, the materials we use, and in our understanding of this population. Each section covers one of these aspects of reform.

## Organization of the Guide



In this guide, we support education leaders to promote advanced literacy instruction at their site(s), taking a three-pronged approach: (1) leading the implementation of hallmark practices that teach advanced literacy skills; (2) selecting and implementing high-quality instructional plans and materials, and (3) designing high-quality professional learning for today's educators.

## Advanced Literacy Skills for 21st Century Success

Advanced literacy skills support reading, writing, listening and speaking throughout the life-course:

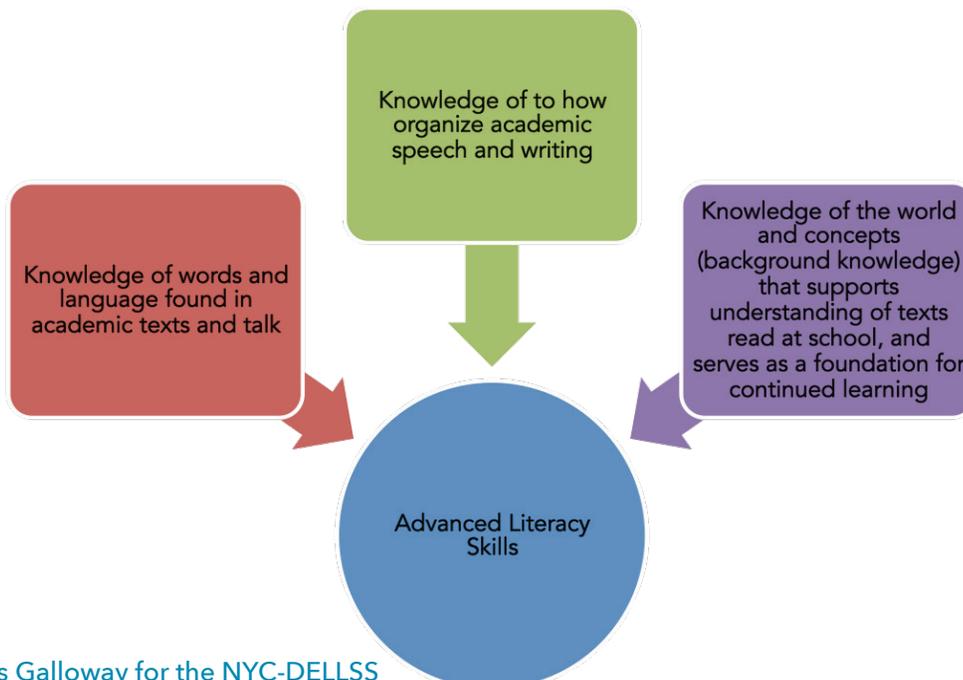
### Advanced literacy in academic contexts (secondary, post-secondary)

- Writing an argumentative/persuasive essay or lab report
- Participating in a class discussion or debate
- Reading a textbook or other content area text
- Reading a text and then responding to it in writing
- Listening and understanding a class lecture or discussion

### Advanced literacy in civic and professional contexts

- Writing a cover letter
- Writing an op-ed piece or article
- Completing insurance forms or taxes
- Making an oral presentation
- Reading pamphlets and literature about personal or child health
- Reading newspaper articles, blogs
- Listening and understanding news media

Therefore, the challenge for today’s instructional leaders is to ensure a shift in daily instruction—one that focuses more on building students’ advanced literacy skills while teaching content. This instruction demands more and deeper interactions with text and talk in order to: foster academic language; ensure an understanding of academic writing and speaking; and deepen knowledge of abstract concepts and ideas. This is especially essential in schools serving ELLs.





## Section I: The Hallmarks of Advanced Literacy

A first step in literacy reform to better support ELLs is to establish a common set of instructional practices in all classrooms—what we refer to as the Hallmarks of Advanced Literacy.

### Section I: Outline

- I. Introduction: Hallmarks of Advanced Literacy
- II. Tools for Site-Based Implementation
  - I. Leader’s Tool: Indicators of the Hallmarks in Instruction

### Why?

- These Hallmarks lead to growth in the language and literacy skills of ELLs (and their peers).
- A common set of expected instructional practices establishes a shared language for discussing instruction.
- A common set of expected instructional practices provides a structure for observing teaching and guiding instructional planning.

1. Work with engaging texts that feature big ideas and rich content

2. Talk/Discuss to build both conversational and academic language and knowledge

Supported by school-wide protocols

3. Write to build language and knowledge

4. Study a small set of high-utility vocabulary words to build breadth and depth of knowledge

**Hallmark 1** Work with engaging texts that feature big ideas and rich content.

## Hallmark 1: Engaging Texts

Designing instruction to support advanced literacy skills begins with selecting texts that are engaging for students and feature big ideas and rich content.

### Why it Matters

For today's students, grasping the content, language and structures of text is a gatekeeper and a gateway to academic success. All students need to build their background- and content knowledge for school success; at the same time, they must be proficient with reading complex text and be motivated to do so. For these reasons, the texts we choose for instruction matter greatly for student success—they must be content rich but also at different levels of readability<sup>1</sup>. To support ELLs, we choose a variety of texts—written at different levels and from different perspectives on the same topic. We often start with informational texts because they are filled with the complex, abstract and sophisticated words (i.e., academic language) and the complex ideas that are part of the curriculum—and they often connect to real-world issues, which supports motivation and engagement<sup>2</sup>. Combined with the appropriate instructional supports, texts are an excellent and crucial platform for building language and knowledge<sup>3</sup>.

### Traditional vs. 21st Century Instructional Practices

**Traditional Practices:** *All* texts used with ELLs are extremely challenging because they are at- or above-grade level OR *all* texts are below-grade level, offering little engaging content and compromising learning opportunities.

**21st Century Practices:** Multiple texts at different levels are read by ELLs in order to support them to develop a rich understanding of a topic and to develop their reading comprehension skills. **Sets** of texts are a key support for ELLs on the path to consistently accessing grade-level texts with ease.

### What it Looks Like

#### *Indicators in Curriculum*

- The unit's texts feature essential knowledge that students need to answer the 'big' question or idea that guides the unit's assignments and learning tasks
- Multiple texts are used throughout the unit
  - e.g., many genres, multiple levels of difficulty, tackling the topic from many perspectives

<sup>1</sup> Valencia, Wixson, & Pearson, 2014

<sup>2</sup> Baker et al., 2014

<sup>3</sup> Kieffer & Lesaux, 2007

- There are questions that guide the reading of each text (i.e., text-focused questions), to help students to identify ideas and information central for comprehension
- The language used in the texts is like that used in the discipline

### *Indicators in Instruction*

- Texts appear to be of high-interest to readers; students are motivated to read them
- Instructor connects the purpose for reading the text to the unit's goals
- Students understand the role that each text plays in building up their understanding of the unit's topic
- Instructor creates space for students to share alternative interpretations of the text
- Instructor requires that students use (text-based) evidence to support any claims made about the text
- Students have opportunities to answer text-dependent questions to build comprehension, then have opportunities to make inferences from text

## Teaching Complex Text: A Few Guidelines

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- ◆ Choose key excerpts or fragments of texts to support deep study of the unit's content and concepts
- ◆ Teach the language that students will need to generate oral and written responses throughout the unit and to understand the text
- ◆ Be sure that students are doing most of the 'heavy lifting'!
  - ◆ students do their best learning when thinking and grappling in heterogeneous groupings
- ◆ Routines and protocols help! As students work towards gaining mastery and deep knowledge, repetition of the "how"—the way we do this task—helps them to focus on the "what" of learning. For example, use a small selection of protocols for talking about text and use routines to support students through the writing process.

**Hallmark 2** Talk/Discuss to build both conversational and academic language and knowledge.

## Hallmark 2: Rich Discussion

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### Why it Matters

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To develop their language skills, all students, but especially ELLs, need a lot of practice with language! But we know that in many classrooms, the typical teaching scenario doesn't give our students much of a chance to talk<sup>4</sup>. What is this typical scenario? A teacher asks a question, calls on a student to respond, the teacher then follows by evaluating the response (i.e., saying whether it's correct or incorrect)—and the interaction is complete. Even though this is a very

<sup>4</sup>Eccles & Roeser, 2011

common scenario, this exchange is not going to get today's students to the levels of language and critical thinking that they are capable of—and that they need for academic and personal success.

How do we get them to those levels? Well, language develops in the classroom if there is an extended back-and-forth process of interactions among students, organized around rich content and topics. Beyond the cognitive and linguistic benefits, we know that extended talk and discussion creates a more engaging learning environment. Recent research shows us that fostering engagement by focusing on building student autonomy and collaboration produces greater gains in achievement<sup>5</sup> and we know that talk-based learning tasks and projects can do exactly this—when there is choice, roles, and collaboration involved, they are a great way to promote students' sense of autonomy as learners. Because discussions that are text-based often center on negotiating the text's meaning, students are able to struggle productively in a supported context<sup>6</sup>.

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## Traditional vs. 21st Century Instructional Practices

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**Traditional Instructional Practices:** In the everyday classroom, the teacher does most of the talking; when students are engaged to talk, it is often considered low-level conversation and interaction, revolving around asking basic questions and calling on individual students for answers.

**21st Century Instructional Practices:** Project-based work that involves planning for extended discussion and talk—debates, speeches, presentations, and theater-based learning activities. These are learning tasks and activities where the central aim is to support students to *produce* academic language, through role play, collaboration, and research.

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## What it Looks Like

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### *Indicators in Curriculum*

- Students are asked to use the target words and other academic language when speaking as part of each lesson in the unit
- Speaking and listening routines (e.g., weekly debates, interviews and other role play) occur consistently and predictably throughout each unit. This provides students with the time and opportunities to develop mastery of these learning processes
- Students are engaged in speaking and listening as part of *each* lesson

### *Indicators in Instruction*

- Instructor communicates the importance of using target words when speaking
- Instructor acknowledges the challenges associated with learning language and conveys an attitude that values experimenting with language by *praising students' attempts* at using target language when speaking

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<sup>5</sup>Guthrie, Wigfield, & You, 2012

<sup>6</sup>Aukerman 2007; McKeown et al., 2009

- i.e., an expectation that students will *not* likely use words correctly or precisely at first
- Instructor builds in talk routines if these are not already an integral part of the curriculum
- Students are aware of talk routines—and demonstrate a level of comfort with them
- Student discussion is part of each lesson
  - e.g., peer-to-peer interaction (brief or extended), debates, interviews
- Students are encouraged to use peers as language resources when speaking
- Students are asked to use previously taught words, language structures, and strategies for academic language learning when speaking

**Hallmark 3** Write to build language and knowledge.

## Hallmark 3: Daily Writing

### Why it Matters

Writing is an under-utilized strategy for supporting students' advanced literacy skills;<sup>7</sup> it is a crucial platform for fostering emerging and developing academic language among ELLs and their peers<sup>8</sup>. When students can accurately use new vocabulary and language structures in their writing, we know they grasp the concept or the linguistic structure their writing represents. Keep in mind that students, especially ELLs, are often first exposed to academic

language when they read written text, so once they start to use academic language in their own writing, we know that their language development is advancing.

### Traditional vs. 21st Century Instructional Practices

**Traditional Instructional Practices:** Many writing assignments in today's schools are actually just brief writing "exercises"—on-demand writing (putting pencil to paper in a hurry), often in response to a prompt, and most often drawing on personal experience and opinion (sometimes referred to as 'journal responses' or 'free writes'). Many times, these exercises don't involve the multiple steps—planning and process—involved in writing and they are not clearly connected to the unit's topic. They are warm-up activities and/or excellent for transitioning between learning tasks, but we can't consider them a part of writing instruction that will build language and knowledge.

**21st Century Instructional Practices:** For writing to promote secondary schoolers' language and cognitive skills, students need a structured, content-based approach to *all* writing assignments and tasks, e.g., writing prompts, text questions, or narratives. Students need to have studied (deeply) the material to be processed and written about. They also need supports and scaffolds to plan, discuss, and organize their ideas and

<sup>7</sup>Graham & Hebert, 2011

<sup>8</sup> Baker et al., 2014

develop an argument; incorporate and connect their words and sentences; and/or move from notes to a flowing paragraph.

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## What it Looks Like

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### *Indicators in Curriculum*

- Each lesson incorporates the need for student writing that is related to the text
- The writing lessons and lesson components require that students use the unit’s vocabulary words and concepts, and other academic language
- Writing routines (e.g., multi-step process, formats for responding to text) and tools (e.g., graphic organizers) are taught and used consistently and predictably throughout each unit, providing students with the time and opportunity to develop mastery of these learning processes.
- Students produce an extended writing piece as part of every unit to demonstrate their grasp of content and language (e.g., op-ed, essay, research report)

### *Indicators in Instruction*

- Instructor communicates the importance of using target words when writing
- Instructor acknowledges the challenges associated with learning new language and conveys an attitude that values experimenting with language by *praising students’ attempts* at using academic language when writing
  - i.e., an expectation that students will *not* likely use words and structures correctly or precisely at first
- Instructor builds in writing routines/supports if these are not already an integral part of the curriculum
- Students are aware of the classroom’s writing routines, and demonstrate comfort with them
- Writing is used as a method for consolidating thinking before and after reading (e.g., summarize or responding by sharing his or her opinion )
- Students are encouraged to use peers and texts as *language resources* when writing
  - e.g., to use language structures and words found in mentor texts or to adopt language that peers have used successfully in their own texts or speech.
- Students are asked to use previously taught words, language structures, and strategies for academic language learning when writing

## Designing and Implementing Writing Tasks: A Few Guidelines

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Four types of writing activities have been linked with improved content knowledge and mastery (Graham & Hebert, 2010, 2011):

- ◆ extended writing

- ◆ summary writing
- ◆ note-taking to produce a research paper or presentation
- ◆ generating and answering questions

**Hallmark 4** Study a small set of high-utility vocabulary words to build breadth and depth of knowledge.

## Hallmark 4: High-Utility Vocabulary Words

### Why it Matters

The specialized and sophisticated words that make up the text on the page are a significant source of reading comprehension difficulty for many ELLs and their peers<sup>9</sup>. But keep in mind that this is not really a “reading” problem—after all, many of our students read the words on the page accurately yet lack deep understanding of *what* they read (they are sometimes referred to as “word callers”)<sup>10</sup>. We need to

support all students to learn the language they need to be successful with text by high school. When we do this teaching, we not only teach students the specific words and concepts, but we also teach them about *how* language and words work<sup>11</sup>.

### Traditional vs. 21st Century Instructional Practices

**Traditional Instructional Practices:** Because of the thousands of words our ELLs and their peers need to learn to be academically successful, it’s tempting to try to teach as many as possible and very quickly! This “coverage” makes sense on its face, but it comes as a great cost: when we go for breadth over depth our students learn just a little about many words but not enough to use them independently in their speech or writing—and they don’t learn *how* words work. This instructional time is not time well spent.

**Exemplary Instructional Practices:** Less is more! We choose a small set of high-utility academic words (See for instance, the Academic Word List<sup>12</sup> available on-line) that students will definitely need and then use those as a platform to teach word learning, increase academic talk, and promote more strategic reading. The deep learning process is key and it takes time.

<sup>9</sup> Uccelli et al., 2015

<sup>10</sup> Valencia & Buly, 2004

<sup>11</sup> Kieffer & Lesaux, 2007

<sup>12</sup> See: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/resources/academicwordlist/>

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## What it Looks Like

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### *Indicators in Curriculum*

- Students are exposed to target words and their features intentionally throughout the instructional cycle or unit. Multiple activities and text exposures that feature these words are intentionally built into the curriculum
- The words and their features (e.g., morphological characteristics) selected for teaching are essential for discussing and writing about the unit topic, and for reading the multiple texts that comprise the unit
- The target words are also related to other content areas and topics under study in secondary school
- Skills that support independent word-learning are in focus and taught explicitly
  - e.g., morphological analysis (prefix, suffix, etc.), working with context clues, parsing sentences

### *Indicators in Instruction*

- Instructor builds in intentional interactions with the target words and their features if these are not already an integral part of the curriculum
- The teacher uses the target words when speaking and writing with the class and encourages students to do the same
- Writing is used as a method for practicing using the target words
  - e.g., before and after reading; end-of unit projects; extended essays; structured summaries

## Selecting Words to Teach: A Few Guidelines

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### ◆ Frequency |

- ◆ Is this word found frequently in the unit's texts?

### ◆ Importance |

- ◆ Does this word refer to an essential piece of knowledge or concept within the unit (e.g., 'environment,' 'mutation')?
- ◆ And/Or Is this word likely to appear frequently in academic texts, generally (e.g., 'result,' 'consequence')?

### ◆ Utility |

- ◆ Will students need to know this word to understand the unit's texts?
- ◆ Will students need to know this word to speak and write about the topic of study?
- ◆ Will this word be useful for academic speaking and writing generally?

## A Spotlight on School-Wide Protocols to Support the Hallmarks of Advanced Literacy Instruction

Educators and school leaders are faced with the task of stepping back and, with the support of curriculum and other tools, designing a coordinated, cohesive approach to building each student’s advanced literacy skills—including those of students who are developing their English skills. In classrooms where the **Hallmarks of Advanced Literacy Instruction** are present, a **set of learning protocols** are also in place to support student learning. When taught and used consistently, protocols that support different aspects of advanced literacy (e.g., reading words, learning unfamiliar vocabulary, comprehending text, discussing text, etc.) can be highly effective for students, especially ELLs.

**Pitfall:** When too many protocols are taught—especially across classrooms and content areas—students don’t have enough opportunity to gain mastery.

**Solution:** A select set of school-wide protocols for learning—only those that are widely applicable **throughout the day and across the year**—should be taught and used to support content-area learning. When they are taught, protocols are introduced systematically and mastery is built gradually.

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### What it Looks Like

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Protocols for reading, speaking, and writing that we have seen successfully implemented in classrooms share these characteristics:

- ◆ **Authentic** | Makes concrete and visible the ways of learning, reading, writing, and thinking that are typically used by skilled learners.
- ◆ **Directed** | Focuses students on the specific goal of knowledge building, i.e., keeps students focused on content
- ◆ **Flexible** | Can be fine-tuned and revised somewhat by students and teachers as learning needs evolve.
- ◆ **Useful** | Can be used recursively throughout the instructional day, across units and throughout the year.

## Leader's Tool: Hallmarks of Advanced Literacy Instruction

### Hallmark 1: Work with engaging texts that feature big ideas and rich content

<i>Indicators in Instruction</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Instructor communicates the purpose for reading the text in light of the unit's goals	
Instructor connects the texts within the unit so that students understand the role that each text plays in building up their understanding of the unit topic	
Instructor creates space for students to share alternative interpretations of the text	
Instructor requires that students use text-based evidence to support any claims made about the text	
Instructor creates opportunities for students to answer text-dependent questions through appropriately paced instruction that builds basic comprehension first, then moves to supporting readers in making inferences	

### Hallmark 2: Talk/discuss to build language and knowledge

<i>Indicators in Instruction</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Instructor communicates the importance of using target words when speaking	
Instructor acknowledges the challenges associated with learning new language and conveys an attitude that values experimenting with language by praising students' attempts at using target language when speaking  i.e., an expectation that students will <i>not</i> likely use words correctly or precisely at first	
Instructor builds in talk routines if these are not already an integral part of the curriculum	
Students are aware of talk routines—and demonstrate a level of comfort with them	
Student discussion is part of each lesson  e.g., short peer-to-peer interaction, debates, interviews	
Students are encouraged to use peers as language resources when speaking  e.g., to build off of others' comments, to use words first introduced by other students	
Students are asked to use previously taught words, language structures, and strategies for academic language learning when speaking	

### Hallmark 3: Writing to build language and knowledge

<i>Indicators in Instruction</i>	☑
Instructor communicates the importance of using target words when writing	
Instructor acknowledges the challenges associated with learning new language and conveys an attitude that values experimenting with language by praising students' attempts at using target language when writing  i.e., an expectation that students will not likely use words correctly or precisely at first	
Instructor builds in writing routines/supports if these are not already an integral part of the curriculum	
Instructor makes students aware of the classroom's writing routines, and students demonstrate comfort with these routines	
Instructor uses writing as a method for consolidating thinking before and after reading  e.g., summarize or responding by sharing his or her opinion	
Instructor encourages students to use peers and texts as language resources when writing  e.g., to use language structures and words found in mentor texts or to adopt language that peers have used successfully in their own writing or speech.	
Instructor asks students to make use of previously taught words, language structures, and strategies for academic language learning when writing	

### Hallmark 4: Study a small set of high-utility vocabulary words to build breadth and depth of knowledge

<i>Indicators in Instruction</i>	☑
Instructor builds in intentional exposures to target words and features if these are not already an integral part of the curriculum	
Instructor uses the target words when speaking and writing with the class and encourages students to do the same	
Writing is used as a method for practicing using the target words  e.g., before and after reading; end-of unit projects; extended essays; structured summaries	



## Section II: Outline

- I. Introduction to the Characteristics of High-Quality Instructional Plans and Materials
- II. Tools for Site-based Implementation
  - I. Leader's Tool: Indicators of the Hallmarks in Curriculum

## Section II: High-Quality Instructional Plans and Materials

Educators, like all professionals, need a strong platform and set of professional structures to support their work. Curriculum is a key mechanism for creating high-quality literacy learning environments; it provides educators with a single, shared platform for meeting readers' needs and for supporting professional dialogue, interactions, and planning.<sup>13</sup>

### Why?

#### *Benefits for Teachers and Students*

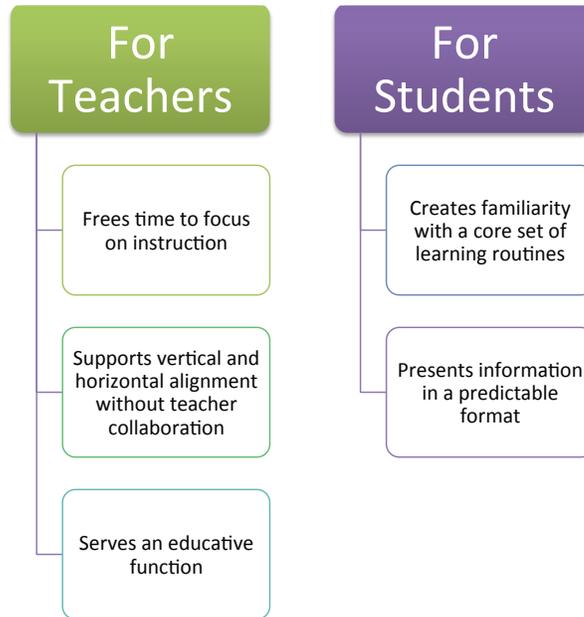
Educators need clear steps and quality materials to create a literacy-enriched learning environment that is structured, interactive, and engaging for students, and provides the type of repetition in order to support students need to focus on content. But teachers cannot design *and* deliver the highest quality literacy instruction day-after-day, and month-after-month, throughout the school year; knowledge- and language-building literacy instruction cannot be achieved at scale if teachers are expected to provide these learning opportunities by drawing across resources and materials. When only provided with documents and plans, and not one clear standards-based curriculum to follow, the teacher experience is often more demanding than supportive, and, the student experience is more disjointed than it is cohesive. Teachers scramble to create and deliver *daily plans* rather than lessons that sit within a *long-term approach to knowledge-building* to support student growth.

#### *Benefits for the School*

When a high-quality reading curriculum is implemented with fidelity, there are benefits to the classroom and school environment: effective classroom management practices (e.g., behavior and time management); developmentally appropriate pacing that promotes student engagement and on-task behaviors; and literacy-rich materials (libraries,

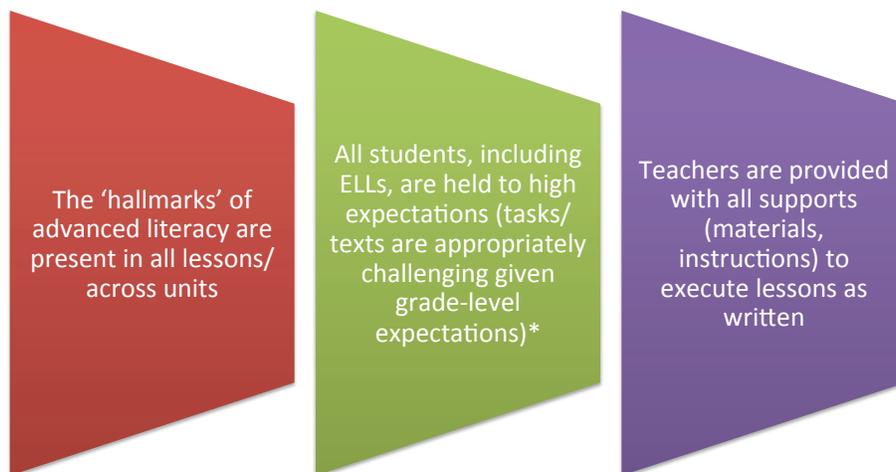
<sup>13</sup> Squires, 2009

posters, props, etc.) that are familiar to all teachers and readers, and that support a cohesive classroom experience. In addition, last but certainly not least, professional development opportunities and structures that use a shared language and revolve around a shared set of practices and knowledge-building goals support and promote teaching excellence.



## What Makes a Curriculum ‘High-Quality’?

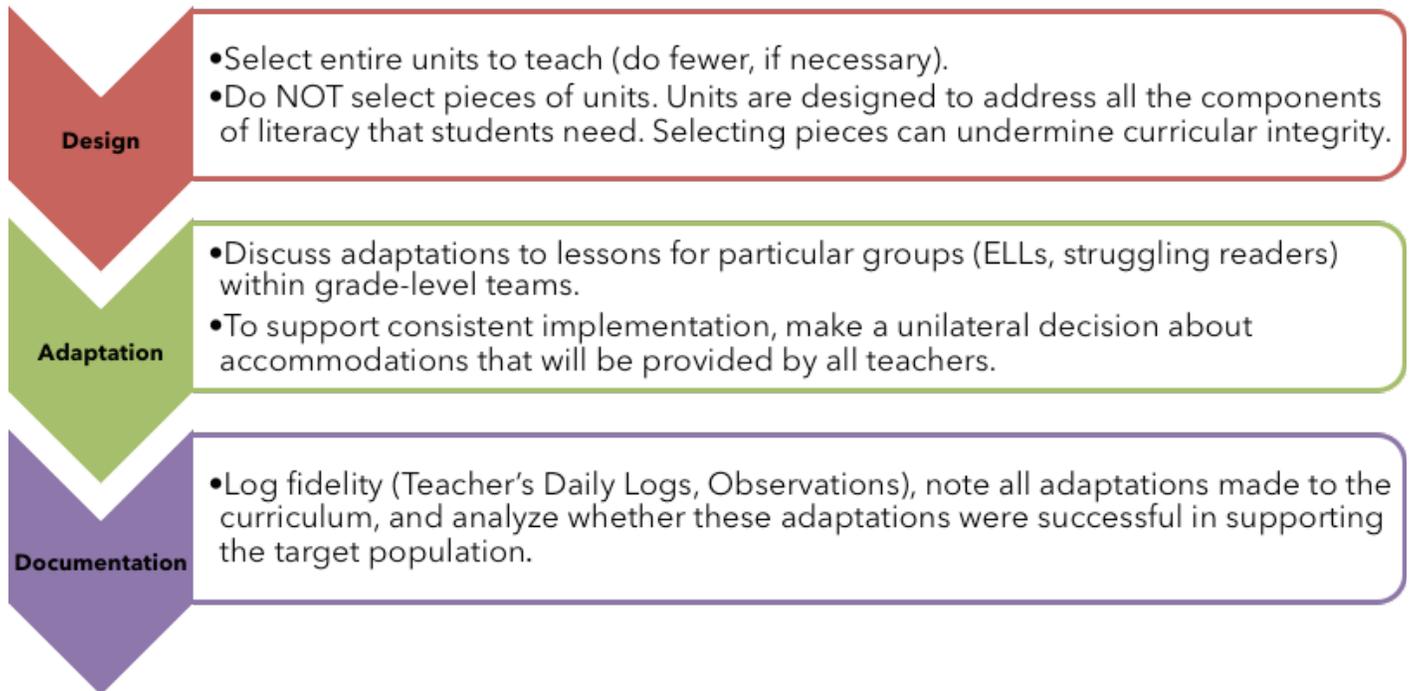
While we cannot confuse curriculum materials with good teaching, we can support good teaching by providing educators with high-quality, comprehensive curricular materials. High-quality literacy curriculum has these characteristics:



*\*Some core curricula will have to be enhanced to meet the needs of students performing below or above grade-level*

## *Adapting Curricula*

In the first few years (pilot phase) of working with a new curriculum, leaders must ensure that curriculum is implemented with fidelity, but this also sometimes includes the necessary adaptations to support ELLs and their peers. During this phase, educators should document the changes made and why. Then, following the pilot phase, leaders and educators should, together, decide whether these changes should also be made in next year's lessons, based on the frequency of such changes, the rationale for each, and student performance. After all, we only know if our instructional adaptations have been effective if we examine the results carefully! If adaptations must be made, we suggest adhering to these guidelines:



## Leader's Tool: Hallmarks of Advanced Literacy in Curriculum and Instructional Materials

### Hallmark 1: Work with engaging texts that feature big ideas and rich content

<i>Indicators in Curriculum</i>	☑
Texts are closely tied to the unit, they include essential knowledge that students need to answer the 'big' questions or idea that guides the unit's assignments and learning tasks	
Multiple texts are used throughout the unit e.g., many genres, multiple levels of difficulty, tackling the topic from many perspectives	
Texts use disciplinary language, the same language students need to produce during their classroom and academic work	
Guiding questions accompany the reading of each text (i.e., text-focused questions)—these help students to identify ideas and information central to comprehend the text	

### Hallmark 2: Talk/ discuss to build language and knowledge

<i>Indicators in Curriculum</i>	☑
Students are asked to use the target words and other academic language when speaking as part of each lesson in the unit	
Speaking and listening routines (e.g., weekly debates, interviews and other role play) occur consistently and predictably throughout each unit. This provides students with the time and opportunity to develop mastery of these learning processes while building knowledge	
Students are engaged in speaking and listening as part of each lesson	

### Hallmark 3: Writing to build language and knowledge

<i>Indicators in Curriculum</i>	☑
Each lesson incorporates the need for student writing that is related to the text	
The writing lessons and lesson components require that students use the unit's vocabulary words and concepts, and other academic language	
Writing routines (e.g., multi-step processes, formats for responding to text) and tools (e.g., graphic organizers) are used consistently and predictably throughout each unit, providing students with the time and opportunity to develop mastery of these learning processes.	
Students produce an extended writing piece as part of every unit to demonstrate their grasp of content and language  e.g., op-ed, essay, research report	

### Hallmark 4: Study a small set of high-utility vocabulary words to build breadth and depth of knowledge

<i>Indicators in Curriculum</i>	☑
Students are exposed to target words and their features intentionally throughout the instructional cycle or unit. Multiple activities and text exposures that feature these words are intentionally built into the curriculum	
The words and their features (e.g., morphological characteristics) selected for teaching are essential for discussing/writing about the unit topic, and for reading the unit's multiple texts. They are also related to other content areas and topics under study.	
Linguistic skills that support independent word-learning are in focus and taught explicitly  e.g., morphological analysis (prefix, suffix, etc.), working with context clues, parsing complex sentences	



## Section III: High-Quality Professional Learning

The adults in our schools have the potential to powerfully influence students’ language and reading development; after all, excellence resides in the individuals that make up the organization.

### Section III: Outline

- I. Introduction to the Characteristics of High-Quality Professional Learning
- II. Tools for Site-based Implementation
  - I. Leader’s Tool: Indicators of High-Quality Professional Learning

### Why?

Educators are the key mechanism through which services, supports, and interventions benefit students. To effectively implement professional learnings in the classroom, however, educators need multiple opportunities to employ new learning over time, and have opportunities to receive productive feedback and engage reflection that is anchored in their own teaching and lessons.

**Supporting Teachers.** Our current professional development (PD) paradigm favors periodic training sessions that are relatively brief, one-size-fits-all, and that often take place outside of the school context. In practice, this traditional model of professional development actually has minimal impact on reforming practice. Research tells us, for example, that regardless of the number of this type of professional development sessions any given teacher attends, we don’t see much change in her instructional approaches nor in her students’ opportunities to learn<sup>14</sup>.

Common Pitfalls	What We’re Learning
<b>PD Design</b>	
1. Choosing PD based on the latest educational fad or general offerings by outside organizations	1. PD is only effective when the professional learning is directly related to students’ needs, based on data
2. Providing brief, isolated PD sessions	2. PD opportunities should be ongoing, connected, and part of a long-term plan
3. Designing a PD plan that does not address the needs of the most at-risk students	3. A complete PD plan addresses all students’ needs
<b>PD Implementation</b>	
1. Educators engage in data-driven PD, but struggle to implement the new ideas learned.	1. Educators need support as they take new ideas from PD and put them into use. Leaders should ensure that structures are in place to link PD and actual practice
2. Educators initially implement new ideas learned during PD, but lose momentum over time; practice doesn’t change	2. PD is only be effective if leaders organize for educators have ongoing opportunities to discuss implementation & encourage others
3. Educators are passive participants during PD	3. PD sessions need to be interactive, incl. time for collaboration and reflection, and with actionable take-aways.

<sup>14</sup> Birman, Desimone, Porter & Garet, 2000

**Supporting Administrators.** We also know that student achievement improves with *instructional leadership*. Increasing the time leaders spend directly supporting instruction, and creating a culture of reflection and professional expertise are key steps toward improved advanced literacy instruction. As instructional leaders, administrators engage in a number of key activities:

- spending significant time reviewing student data with teachers,
- supporting problem-solving, troubleshooting, and mid-course corrections in response to patterns in student data.
- monitoring and supporting curricular implementation;
- discussing and analyzing instructional strategies tailored to the population.

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## What It Looks Like

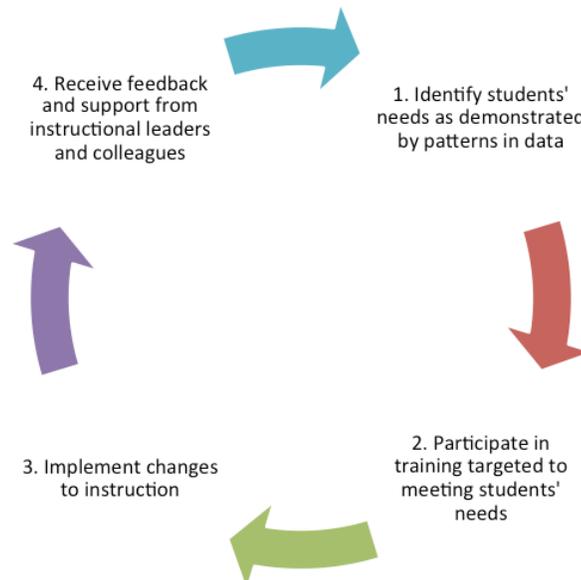
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Any professional development (PD) initiative should be:

- **embedded** in day-to-day practice;
- guided by a study of patterns in **student data**;
- **sustained** over time;
- fueled by **teacher collaboration**.

One-off, external workshops and meetings may be excellent starting places or mid-point opportunities for further discussion and learning, but all PD must be tied to a school-based, data-driven agenda. At the school, it is vital for educators to receive continuous feedback as well as work collaboratively (e.g., team meetings, joint planning), creating the cycle needed for continuous improvement.

**Figure 1: Continuous, site-level professional development**



## Leader’s Tool: Effective PD for Advanced Literacy Skills

### Professional Development Design

<b>Site-Level Needs</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Our PD effort is part of a long-term improvement plan guided by patterns in student data	
Our PD effort is part of a long-term improvement plan guided by staff professional needs	
Our PD effort is part of a long-term improvement plan guided by organizational goals	
Our PD effort is explicitly connected to the curriculum	
<b>Intensive and Continued Support for Educators</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Our PD opportunities build off of each other, to encourage in-depth learning	
Our PD plan includes ongoing training, embedded in daily practice	
Our PD plan integrates high-level theory and rationale (i.e., why, what) with practice-based activities (i.e., how), using case studies, data analyses, demonstrations, lesson designs, etc.	
Post-PD supports (e.g., materials, learning communities) are part of the plan	

### Professional Development Implementation

<b>Educator Participation</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
At each session, educators openly share thoughts, discuss perspectives, and raise questions (even when the question may reflect a lack of understanding)	
At each session, participants acquire new knowledge, reflect on the ideas with colleagues, and give feedback	
Our PD sessions can be characterized as highly interactive and engaging	
<b>Structure to Support Application to Everyday Practice</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Materials necessary for implementing new knowledge are available and accessible	
Formal collaboration time among educators is regular and frequent o designated opportunities for educators to share newly- acquired knowledge	
Non-evaluative observations and feedback are ongoing	
Schedules and classroom locations are organized to best encourage informal discussions about instruction	

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