

Implementing Effective Instruction for English Language Learners



Implementing Effective Instruction for English Language Learners

12 KEY PRACTICES FOR
ADMINISTRATORS, TEACHERS,
AND LEADERSHIP TEAMS

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FOREWORD

One of my earliest school memories is of my mother getting me ready for kindergarten. I can remember the smell of my mother's hands as she buttoned my blouse and the crisp feel of my cotton uniform against my body. I also remember my mother's voice reminding me about *respeto* for my teacher. "*Los maestros son como segundos padres*" (teachers are like second parents), she would say. It was a phrase I remember my mother repeating throughout the years and a phrase that I have often heard while working with other Mexican students. As an educator, I see no greater responsibility or commitment than the one we accept when parents entrust us with the *educación* and *respeto* of their children.

As educators of culturally and linguistically diverse students, we must remember we are engaged in, and responsible for, the education of other people's children (Delpit, 1995). The education of these children requires not only engaging them in learning but also meeting the increasing accountability requirements, monitoring their academic and linguistic progress, collaborating with other educators, and involving the community and families of the students we serve—all this and more with shrinking resources. Educational leadership is key in supporting educators to achieve these goals and is one of the most powerful factors in the promotion and realization of school success for students of color and students of low socioeconomic status (Delpit, 1988; Macedo, 2000; Ogbu, 1990; Watkin, 2000).

The body of work that Wagner and King offer in this book is invaluable to educators and educational leaders who have committed to this great responsibility of providing students with tools, skills, and resources to achieve in our schools. As I visit and consult with educators across the country, I find outstanding teachers scattered throughout our educational system. Nevertheless, without a coherent and systematic approach to the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students, these teachers do not have the same impact on students' educational success and their positive influence on students is easily lost or overpowered by programs and curriculum based on "deficit thinking" (Valencia, 2010). Wagner and King offer a comprehensive approach to systems ready to bring children back, front and center, to our job as educators. Their key practices focus on creating opportunities for educational equity within and throughout educational systems, from classroom instruction to professional development and program configurations. Through a systematic approach, Wagner and King provide guidance to educators on how to build spaces for participation of all students, specifically culturally and linguistically diverse students.

I see this book as one of the tools educational leaders can use to plan, organize, and transform the teaching and learning at their schools and

districts. Through its use, we can honor the trust parents have gifted us in naming us *los segundos padres* of their children.

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PREFACE

This book is a practical implementation guide for administrators, teachers, and leadership teams charged with improving the instruction and achievement of English language learners (ELLs) in their districts, schools, and classrooms. The driving forces behind this work are our experiences as teachers and administrators, our ongoing review of research in the field, and the knowledge we have gained working with educators in scores of diverse school districts in rural communities and small towns as well as in large suburban and urban school districts.

Implementing Effective Instruction for English Language Learners provides step-by-step guidance for district-wide committees, school leadership teams, and teacher teams committed to ensuring that the ELLs in their classes, schools, and districts are successful and reach high content and language development standards. All of our recommendations are grounded in research-based principles that inform pedagogically sound, well-implemented instructional programs for ELLs. These include programs that provide content-area instruction exclusively in English (e.g., sheltered English immersion, ESL) or in two languages (e.g., dual language, transitional bilingual programs).

Implementing Effective Instruction for English Language Learners identifies twelve key practices that are found in all quality instructional programs for ELLs. These practices are organized into a flexible framework that is based on two fundamental assumptions. First, improving instruction and achievement for ELLs is a systemic challenge that requires strategic planning and action on the district, school, and classroom levels over time. Second, ELLs are everyone's responsibility, including school and district administrators, coaches and professional development providers, mainstream teachers and support staff, and ESL and bilingual specialists. Using the 12 Key Practices Framework, educators can improve the instruction and achievement of ELLs in any K–12 context.

The Power of the Twelve Key Practices Framework

We know that when teachers and administrators collaborate to implement the twelve key practices into carefully planned comprehensive language education programs,¹ ELL students have optimal opportunities to be successful at school. We also know that the challenges of implementation are best addressed through collaborative teams at the district, school, and classroom levels over time.

¹ We use the term *comprehensive language education program* to refer to the carefully-planned content, literacy, and ESL instruction that ELLs receive, including their instruction in mainstream classes.

The 12 Key Practices Framework requires educational leaders to look at instruction for ELLs in relation to the larger school and district vision, mission, and goals for all students with attention to how ELL education fits into the overall district and school organizational culture. The framework is divided into four parts that provide the overarching structure of the book: (1) shared practices at the district, school, and classroom levels, (2) common classroom practices for all ELL teachers, (3) core instructional practices of every program for ELLs, and (4) effective program configurations. The 12 Key Practices Framework and corresponding checklist provide a common language and a common practice for ELL-focused professional learning communities as they plan, implement, monitor, evaluate, and improve as necessary the ELL services and professional development they provide.

1. Shared practices at the district, school, and classroom levels

The first four key practices are big picture practices, and they provide a strong foundation and organizational structure for effective ELL instruction in any K–12 system.

- Key Practice 1 is about **equity** and shows how to create enriching school and classroom environments that affirm linguistic and cultural diversity at every level of implementation.
- Key Practice 2 is about **collaboration** and outlines how teams working at different levels of decision-making can adapt and apply the key practices in locally appropriate ways.
- Key Practice 3 emphasizes the need to implement **balanced student assessment systems** that use multiple measures of formative assessment data to complement state-mandated standardized test scores of ELLs' academic achievement and English language proficiency. This key practice shows educators how to gather and use information about students' strengths and needs to identify and appropriately place ELLs, and to use evidence of their growth and achievement in content, language, and literacy to inform instruction and guide program and professional development.
- Key Practice 4 is about **embracing an additive bilingualism perspective** and emphasizes the difference that a language-as-resource orientation makes in educating ELLs. This key practice shows teachers how to draw on the linguistic and cultural resources that ELLs bring with them to school to make grade-level academic content comprehensible, scaffold literacy, and support academic English language development.

When administrators, teachers, and leadership teams make their district, school, and classroom-level decisions about instruction for ELLs with equity, collaboration, authentic assessment, and a resource orientation toward linguistic and cultural diversity in mind, they create a district and school environment that makes effective instruction for ELLs possible.

2. Common classroom practices for ALL English language learner educators

The next four key practices are common teaching practices that enhance instruction and maximize learning in all classes (not just in ESL or bilingual education classes).

- Key Practice 5 is about **big ideas** and shows teachers how to target the enduring understandings that are aligned with core state content standards in ways that are comprehensible for ELLs at all stages of language and literacy development.
- Key Practice 6 is about **meaningful vocabulary-building instruction** and demonstrates how to pre-teach and reinforce key content vocabulary across the curriculum.
- Key Practice 7 is about **activating prior knowledge** as a means of building a comprehensible context for ELL learning.
- Key Practice 8 is about **structuring student interaction** during content, literacy, and ESL instruction in ways that engage ELLs in academically challenging, language-rich classroom activities all day every day.

When all teachers who have ELLs in their classes target the big ideas, teach key vocabulary, activate and build on students' prior knowledge, and structure engaging learning opportunities, ELLs can and do learn academic content, develop literacy, and acquire the academic English they need for school success.

3. Core instructional practices of every program for ELLs

These three key practices are at the heart of every effective instructional program for ELLs. Regardless of program model, the core instructional goals for ELLs are academic achievement and English language and literacy development. Equitable education for ELLs therefore must include (a) ESL instruction that targets the oral and written academic English needed for school success, (b) meaning-based literacy instruction, and (c) comprehensible content-area instruction in all subject areas. While ESL instruction is an integral component of all comprehensive language education programs, ELLs cannot reach high content and language development standards in isolated ESL or bilingual classes or programs. Content,

language, and literacy teachers and specialists must share responsibility to ensure that every ELL can reach the same high content and language standards as all other students in developmentally appropriate ways.

- Key Practice 9 focuses on the **English as a second language component**, which includes daily content-based second language instruction that targets the oral and written English that ELLs need for school success. All state English language development (ELD) standards divide language into four domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), and many state systems have created separate ELD standards that focus on (1) social and instructional language, (2) the language of language arts, (3) the language of math, (4) the language of science, and (5) the language of social studies.
- Key Practice 10 is about **meaning-based literacy instruction** in English and explains how to teach literacy skills within the context of comprehensible texts. This key practice also highlights the relationship between English literacy and home language literacy and emphasizes the importance of including literacy instruction in an ELLs' home language whenever feasible.
- Key Practice 11 is about **comprehensible academic content instruction** and shows teachers how to make grade-level content-area concepts and skills accessible to ELLs at different stages of oral and written English language development.

There are many different ways that districts and schools can organize their instructional programs for ELLs. However, administrators, teachers, and leadership teams must remember that equitable instruction for ELLs includes content-based ESL instruction, meaning-based literacy instruction, and comprehensible content-area instruction in every subject area. This instruction must be aligned with state content and language standards and configured in ways that are locally appropriate given consideration of the number of ELLs in the school, the languages they speak, the number of ESL teachers, and the languages used for instructional purposes.

One of the distinguishing features of the 12 Key Practices Framework is that we do not ask administrators, teachers, and leadership teams to carefully consider specific program models until they have carefully considered how to implement Key Practices 1–11 in relation to their district and school context. However, we know that when teams understand Key Practices 1–11, they are prepared to consider the most effective ways to configure a comprehensive language education program that improves instruction and achievement for the ELLs in their districts, schools, and classes.

4. Organizing the key practices into effective program configurations

Key Practice 12 is about **program configuration**, and it shows administrators, teachers, and leadership teams how to plan and implement effective comprehensive language education programs in any K–12 system. This key practice explores the strengths and challenges of different options available to districts and schools given consideration of

- the size of the ELL population relative to the overall student population
- the number of languages spoken by ELLs
- the differences in program configurations at the elementary and secondary levels, and
- the languages used for instructional purposes (English-only, bilingual education).

We know that there is no one-size-fits-all program model that is appropriate for ELLs in every educational context. In all districts and schools there are diverse ELL student populations that will change over time. Changes in school personnel, board members, and material resources will also occur. In addition, there will be changes in state content and language development standards, new mandates, and revised accountability requirements. However, when administrators, teachers, and leadership teams use research-based principles, flexible frameworks, and templates and checklists to guide their work, they can improve instruction and achievement of ELLs in their districts and schools.

Using the 12 Key Practices Framework on the Local Level

The opening chapter of this book introduces the 12 Key Practices Framework and Checklist in their entirety. After reading this introductory chapter, administrators, teachers, and leadership teams can use the 12 Key Practices Checklist that is included at the end of the chapter to review their current practices for ELLs at the district, school, and classroom levels. This checklist invites educators to identify the degree to which they implement each key practice, and they can use this information as a form of baseline data. Implementing effective instruction for ELLs is a dynamic, recursive process, and teams are encouraged to revisit the entire checklist again at different points in their planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating cycles in order to gauge improvement and plan professional development.

Each subsequent chapter focuses on one key practice in isolation, but each practice should always be considered in relation to the rest of the key practices. Moreover, each part of the book focuses on a particular level of planning and implementation, and each level should be considered in

relation to the other levels. Teams are encouraged to begin by reading the entire book and then to return to specific key practices as necessary.

We have worked to make each chapter as clear and easy to use as possible. Each chapter begins with the title of the focal key practice, which is followed by a directive statement that tells teams what to do in order to reach this key practice. Each key practice directive is then followed by a bulleted list of implementation guideposts. Next we include a statement of the big ideas of that key practice, which are the enduring understandings that readers should take away from that practice.

Each chapter is organized around the implementation guideposts, and each section suggests specific planning processes, strategic how-to information, tasks, and examples that demonstrate how the key practice may be implemented. Each chapter concludes with Questions for Reflection and Action that are related to the big ideas of the chapter. This section provides questions and activities that ask administrators, teachers, planning teams, and study groups to relate the big ideas of the focal key practice to their context. These questions for reflection and action are intended to stimulate critical thinking and concrete action planning. At the end of each chapter we include a short list of Recommended Readings, additional templates called out in the chapter that can guide planning and implementation, and one section of the Key Practice Checklist that encourages users to assess current practice and note areas in need of improvement. We also include a glossary of terms at the end of the book.

Throughout this book we share “Reflections from the Field” vignettes that exemplify the topics discussed in the text. Many of these vignettes relate “a ha!” moments that we have experienced as teachers and as professional developers. We also include experiences, events, and stories that teachers have shared with us about their learning experience as they work with linguistically and culturally diverse students. Finally, as an important supplement to the book, we have posted Frequently Asked Questions, a Glossary of Teaching Strategies, and downloadable Templates at caslonpublishing.com/pd-resources/twelve-key-practices.

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CONTENTS

The Key Practices Framework 1

- Shared Practices at the District, School, and Classroom Levels (Practices 1–4) **3**
- Common Classroom Practices for All English Language Learner Educators (Practices 5–8) **10**
- Core Instructional Practices of Every Program for English Language Learners (Practices 9–11) **14**
- Organizing the Key Practices into Effective Program Configurations (Practice 12) **18**
- Questions for Reflection and Action **20**
- Recommended Readings **21**

PART I

Shared Practices at the District, School, and Classroom Levels 29

KEY PRACTICE 1 Structuring Equitable School and Classroom Environments 30

- Developing Cultural Competence among Staff Members **32**
- Institutionalizing District Policies and Procedures for English Language Learners **33**
- Providing Substantial Training in Sheltered Instruction **36**
- Creating School and Classroom Environments That Affirm Diversity **37**
- Planning Enriching, Comprehensible Instruction for Diverse Learners **39**
- Ensuring That English Language Learners Are Actively Engaged in Classroom Instruction **41**
- Questions for Reflection and Action **42**
- Recommended Readings **42**

KEY PRACTICE 2 Educating English Language Learners through Collaboration 47

- Establishing an English Language Learner–Focused Professional Learning Community **48**
- Convening Periodic District Language Education Committee Meetings **49**
- Establishing School Leadership Teams **51**
- Structuring Planning Time for General Education and English as a Second Language/Bilingual Teachers **53**

- Connecting Home and School **56**
- Linking School and Community **61**
- Questions for Reflection and Action **62**
- Recommended Readings **63**

KEY PRACTICE 3 Implementing a Balanced Student Assessment System 65

- Designing and Using a Balanced Student Assessment System for English Language Learners **66**
- Institutionalizing Consistent Entry Criteria and Procedures Across the District **67**
- Differentiating Classroom Assessments by English Language Proficiency Levels **75**
- Building Authentic Assessments into Instruction **76**
- Complementing Standardized Measures with Common Assessments and Classroom Assessments **78**
- Institutionalizing Consistent Exit Criteria and Procedures Across the District **79**
- Using Assessment Data to Evaluate Program Effectiveness **81**
- Questions for Reflection and Action **82**
- Recommended Readings **82**

KEY PRACTICE 4 Embracing an Additive Bilingualism Perspective 89

- Valuing Bilingualism **90**
- Providing a Long-Term Sequence of English as a Second Language Instruction **92**
- Planning and Coordinating Instruction in Two Languages **94**
- Using the Primary Language to Support Learning in English-Speaking Classrooms **95**
- Providing Primary Language Instruction in Bilingual Classrooms **97**
- Questions for Reflection and Action **104**
- Recommended Readings **105**

PART II**Common Classroom Practices for All English Language Learner Educators 107****KEY PRACTICE 5 Using Big Ideas to Plan Instruction 108**Using Standards to Identify the Big Ideas of Every Lesson **109**Structuring Comprehensible Learning Activities That Lead to Understanding the Big Ideas **111**Explaining and Exemplifying the Big Ideas **112**Developing Differentiated Assessments to Demonstrate Understanding of Big Ideas **112**Questions for Reflection and Action **113**Recommended Readings **114****KEY PRACTICE 6 Implementing Meaningful Vocabulary-Building Instruction 116**Explicitly Teaching New Vocabulary **117**Building Students' Oral Vocabulary **118**Structuring Oral and Written Activities to Use New Vocabulary **120**Coordinating Vocabulary Instruction in English as a Second Language, Literacy, and Content Classrooms **121**Questions for Reflection and Action **122**Recommended Readings **122****KEY PRACTICE 7 Activating Students' Prior Knowledge 124**Planning Multiple Prior Knowledge Activities **125**Using Instructional Supports to Activate Prior Knowledge **126**Asking Open-Ended Questions So All Students Can Share Prior Knowledge and Experiences **127**Structuring Pre-Reading Activities to Build Vocabulary and Increase Comprehension **128**Questions for Reflection and Action **128**Recommended Readings **129****KEY PRACTICE 8 Structuring Student Interaction 131**Organizing Program Configurations and Classroom Schedules That Promote Integration **132**Promoting Learning-Centered Classroom Talk That Engages All Students **133**Focusing Classroom Talk around Target Vocabulary and Newly Learned Information **133**Structuring Small Group Instructional Tasks **134**Questions for Reflection and Action **136**Recommended Readings **136****PART III****Core Instructional Practices of Every Program for English Language Learners 139****KEY PRACTICE 9 Implementing English as a Second Language Instruction 140**Coordinating Language and Content Instruction with Language and Content Standards **141**Building Receptive Language Skills and Oral Language of Beginning Level English Language Learners **143**Using a Content-Based English as a Second Language Approach with Intermediate and Advanced Level English Language Learners **145**Implementing Common Classroom Practices to Engage English Language Learners at All English Language Proficiency Levels **147**Questions for Reflection and Action **157**Recommended Readings **157****KEY PRACTICE 10 Implementing Meaning-Based Literacy Instruction 161**Identifying Students' Prior Experiences with Literacy **162**Using Oral Language as a Pathway to Reading and Writing **163**Integrating Meaningful and Functional Literacy Tasks **167**Implementing Comprehension Strategies before, during, and after Reading **171**Improving Reading and Writing across the Curriculum **172**Addressing the Needs of Older Struggling English Language Learner Readers **173**Documenting English Language Learners' Literacy Learning Progress over Time **175**Using Bilingual Support Staff and Parents to Support English Language Learners' Literacy Development **176**Questions for Reflection and Action **178**Recommended Readings **179**

KEY PRACTICE 11 Implementing Comprehensible Academic Content Instruction 181

- Aligning Instruction with District Curriculum Guides and Core State Standards **182**
- Including Content and Language Objectives in Sheltered Instruction **182**
- Differentiating Instruction According to English Language Proficiency Level **186**
- Helping Older Struggling English Language Learners Use Their Textbooks **189**
- Using Authentic Assessment Strategies to Evaluate Learning **192**
- Planning Strategic Use of the Primary Language to Support Instruction in English **194**
- Questions for Reflection and Action **196**
- Recommended Readings **196**

- Determining the Role of the Primary Language in District Program Configurations **205**
- Structuring Program Configurations around the Core Instructional Practices **206**
- Preparing Program Recommendations through a Comprehensive, Collaborative Process **224**
- Implementing, Monitoring, and Evaluating the Program **228**
- Questions for Reflection and Action **231**
- Recommended Readings **231**

Glossary 243

References 246

Twelve Key Practices Framework 252

PART IV

Organizing the Key Practices into Effective Program Configurations 199

KEY PRACTICE 12 Structuring the Language Education Program 200

- Establishing a District Language Education Committee **201**

The Twelve Key Practices Framework

Shared Practices at The District, School, and Classroom Levels

1. Structuring Equitable School and Classroom Environments
2. Educating English Language Learners through Collaboration
3. Implementing a Balanced Student Assessment System
4. Embracing an Additive Bilingualism Perspective

Common Classroom Practices for All English Language Learner Educators

5. Using Big Ideas to Plan Instruction
6. Implementing Meaningful Vocabulary Building Instruction
7. Activating Students' Prior Knowledge
8. Structuring Student Interaction

Core Instructional Practices of Every Program for English Language Learners

9. Implementing English as a Second Language Instruction
10. Implementing Meaning-Based Literacy Instruction
11. Implementing Comprehensible Academic Content Instruction

Organizing the Key Practices into Effective Program Configurations

12. Structuring the Language Education Program

THE BIG IDEAS

-
- The twelve key practices can help educators build successful instructional environments that enable English language learners (ELLs) to meet core state standards and English language proficiency standards.
-
- Effective implementation of the twelve key practices is most thoroughly realized when collaborative teams at the district-wide, school-wide, and classroom levels all work toward the common goal of school success for ELLs.
-
- The twelve key practices provide a common focus, a common language, and shared goals for the collaborative teams.
-

An important implication of the increased focus on standards and accountability is that all educators must be prepared to effectively teach diverse learners in their classrooms and caseloads. Traditionally, the English

as a second language (ESL) and bilingual teachers have assumed exclusive responsibility for educating English language learners. Today mainstream educators at all levels must share the responsibility for educating all students, including ELLs.

Researchers, practitioners, and resource centers working in the language education field have developed research-based principles for educating ELLs in K-12 schools. These principles serve as a foundation to guide educators as they plan, implement, monitor, and evaluate instruction and achievement of ELLs in their schools. For example, the George Washington University Center for Equity and Excellence in Education (GWCEE) sponsored the development of the *Promoting Excellence Series: Guiding Principles* to ensure academic success for ELLs. The World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) Consortium, a consortium of 27 states that has developed the WIDA English language development (ELD) standards and the ACCESS for ELLs English language proficiency test, outlined ten guiding principles of language development that serve as the cornerstone of their ELD standards. Miramontes et al. (2011) identify and discuss ten comprehensive organizing principles that structure all educational programs in linguistically diverse settings. DeJong (2011) proposes four core principles that guide local decision-making. DeJong's principles reflect a holistic sociocultural perspective on the education of ELLs. These principles are based on over forty years of research, a commitment to equity and academic achievement, as well as an enrichment orientation toward linguistic and cultural diversity.

In the following pages, we introduce twelve research-based key practices that we have identified as critical components of language education programs, the term we use to describe all types of program configurations that provide instruction and services for ELLs. These key practices are consistent with the preceding guiding principles and are designed to clearly demonstrate what principle-based language education instruction looks like in practice. The twelve key practices, along with the information, templates, strategies, and examples in this book, provide a user-friendly guide toward the implementation of everyday educational practices that are grounded in well-established guiding principles. These essential practices can be implemented by administrators and teachers in small and large school districts with varying ELL populations. The twelve key practices provide strategic processes, how-to information, and useful examples to help educators gain the knowledge they need to ensure that the ELLs in their schools have ample opportunities to develop strong literacy skills, learn standards-based academic content, and meet English language development standards.

Implementation of the twelve key practices is most effective when collaborative teams at the district-wide level, school-wide level, and classroom level embrace the notion that it is everyone's responsibility to provide equitable, successful learning environments for ELLs. These teams

can work and learn together as a professional learning community (PLC), a term that describes a group of teams that work and learn interdependently to achieve a common goal, share the vision that all students can learn, and take on the challenge by meeting regularly to have reflective conversations and solve problems (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour et al., 2006). The ELL-focused PLC can share the common goal to provide instruction and programming that enables ELLs to be active, engaged learners who meet core state standards and English language development standards. This PLC network, consisting of a district-level language education committee, school leadership teams, grade-level teams (or other subgroups) can use the twelve key practices to provide a common focus and a common language for the work of the various committees.

The twelve key practices are presented within four categories: (1) The “big picture” practices that are shared by educators at the district, school, and classroom levels, (2) the common classroom practices for all ELL educators (the teachers who share the responsibility to teach the same ELLs), (3) the core instructional practices (ESL, literacy, and academic content), designed for teachers in every type of program for ELLs, and (4) the final programming practice that organizes all of the practices into effective program configurations. In this introductory chapter, the twelve key practices are written as practical, useful directive statements. In the following chapters, each of the key practice statements is followed by several bulleted directives we call instructional guideposts. These guideposts indicate the tasks, processes, practices, and/or strategies that are realistic, achievable, and measurable ways to successfully implement the research-based practices.

In many ways, the twelve key practices can be characterized as a “systems approach.” In a systems approach, the tasks are generally divided into smaller components that allow for concentrated efforts on particular components by groups with various specializations. As the various PLCs work, it is necessary for them to coordinate their efforts. All of the work is designed to develop a particular product or, in this case, reach the common goal of academic success for ELLs.

Shared Practices at the District, School, and Classroom Levels (Practices 1–4)

In this book, we use the term *English language learners (ELLs)* to describe the linguistically and culturally diverse students who have been identified as having levels of English language proficiency that preclude them from accessing, processing, and acquiring unmodified grade-level content instruction in English (Gottlieb et al. 2007a). In almost all school districts, specific English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction is provided to help these students develop English language skills. In some states,

educators use the term English for Speakers Other than English (ESOL) and English language development (ELD). This component of the instructional program is often called the *ESL (or ESOL or ELD) program*. In many school districts, in addition to teaching ESL, certified bilingual teachers provide academic instruction in the primary language. Regardless of the extent of use of the primary language, these instructional approaches are usually referred to as *bilingual education programs*.

Over the years, many districts with a small number of ELLs have tried to address their ELLs' needs by simply hiring an ESL or bilingual teacher. It was (and is) not uncommon for these teachers to be assigned to provide ESL instruction and/or primary language support to numerous ELLs—often in multiple buildings. Unfortunately, as the number of ELLs grew, the initial program configuration may have remained the same. Such a program's very design is all about organizing instruction around the ESL or bilingual teacher's schedule rather than meeting the specific needs of the diverse ELLs. In many of these school districts, the responsibilities for educating the ELLs seem to be squarely placed on the shoulders of the ESL and bilingual teachers, even though the ELLs spend part (or sometimes most) of their day in general education classrooms. In many cases, there was (or is) little time for collaboration between the ESL and/or bilingual teacher and the mainstream classroom teachers who also teach the ELLs.

In this book, we use the term *language education teachers* to refer collectively to the certified ESL and bilingual teachers who have the primary responsibility for teaching the ELLs. Twenty-first century schools have increasing numbers of linguistically and culturally diverse students at all grade levels. The reality is that the responsibility for educating ELLs does not just fall to the language education teachers, but rather is shared by all educators who have contact with ELLs. When administrators and teachers have ELLs in their schools, classrooms, or on their caseloads, they become *stakeholders*, a term that we use to describe the adults who have specific roles in the ELLs' progress and, therefore, share the responsibility for the students' success. Principals, school leadership teams, and grade-level teacher teams generally have the primary responsibility for planning the implementation of the first four key practices that are designed to be used by all educators.

Key Practice 1. Structuring Equitable School and Classroom Environments

Implement literacy, content, and ESL instruction in language-rich, low-anxiety environments that affirm diversity and value bilingualism.

Everyone thought ESL was the answer to what has generally been framed as a “language problem” for ELLs. However, there is more to equity for ELLs than comprehensible content and English language development. Learning a second language and learning school subjects through a

REFLECTIONS FROM THE FIELD

Getting to Know about the Backgrounds of ELL students*Tammy King*

I was working in a suburban school where nearly 80% of the district's student population spoke a language other than English at home. The district's families spoke over fifty different primary languages. I wasn't familiar with all of my students' native cultures. I read what I could find about each country and culture because I desperately wanted my students to feel safe and welcome in my classroom. The reading helped, but it wasn't enough. By getting to know my students and their families, I learned much more about their home countries and what life is like immigrating to the United States as a child.

Sherif, a fourth grader, often popped into my room before school, during recess or after school to see if I needed help. At the beginning of the school year, he barely spoke to the other students or to me, despite moving to the United States almost a year prior. We didn't have the ELD standards at that time, but if we had, I would have estimated that Sherif was

at a level 2 proficiency. Over the course of the school year, Sherif and I had many conversations, and I learned that his father was an electrical engineer in Egypt and his mother was a chemistry professor. In December, Sherif excitedly told me what his father had taught him over the weekend—the difference between series and parallel electrical circuits! Even though he didn't know the specific vocabulary of electricity in English, he drew a picture for me and made numerous references to strings of Christmas tree lights. Ultimately he successfully taught me about the advantages and disadvantages of each type of circuit. It was obvious that he had a wealth of background knowledge and interest in the topic despite his limited proficiency in English. By creating a safe and welcoming classroom environment and showing an interest in getting to know my students, Sherif opened up about his family's experiences and I learned the benefits of parallel and series circuits.

second language also involves entering a new cultural group. Improving ELL instruction and achievement requires addressing the sociocultural and affective issues that influence ELL engagement in classroom activities and integration into the school community. "All the best strategies will likely be insufficient if they are employed in a setting where students do not feel valued or have confidence that they can succeed. Simply put, second language learners are more likely to succeed when their teachers create safe, caring environments that promote risk-taking" (Commins & Miramontes, 2005, p. 141). Beyond their homeroom classrooms, ELLs need school environments that demonstrate that their home cultures and languages are important and valued. The school leadership team can take on the challenge to make all school settings safe, caring, and language-rich.

Commins and Miramontes also point out that second language learners experience tremendous stress during the difficult and sometimes embarrassing task of learning another language. "Their language learning is enhanced when affective factors are addressed and when they find themselves in settings that allow them to develop a sense of security" (2005, p. 141). Elementary and secondary teachers can learn how to provide curriculum and instruction that includes learning activities that recognize the diversity of their student populations. Grade-level teacher teams can work together to find materials, share ideas, and plan lessons that utilize the students' languages and cultures in classroom lessons and experiences. Implementing these activities means that teachers need to get to know

more about their ELLs' educational and cultural backgrounds. Nothing makes ELLs feel more ready to learn than having teachers who are interested in their languages, countries, cultures, and previous experiences.

Teachers can also make sure that their classrooms are rich in language learning prompts and supports. They can display charts with visuals that explain key concepts and provide useful word walls that assist language development. They can gather multiple trade books about topics the students are currently studying and place them in classrooms in ways that are available for student use. Trade books, which are commercially available content books, are filled with interesting facts, multiple pictures, charts, captions, and graphics. In addition to trade books written in English, curriculum teams can locate trade books in the primary languages of the ELLs.

Key Practice 2. Educating English Language Learners through Collaboration

Address the challenges of educating ELL student populations through collaborative teams who share common goals, common language, and common practices.

Through our work with administrators and teachers in numerous school districts, we have often facilitated collaborative efforts of district-wide language education committees that worked and learned together to design, develop, and/or restructure the language education program. As the committee members completed their tasks and made their decisions, they planned short- and long-term professional development, disseminated information, and communicated the research and rationale for the restructured programs. However, we have learned that the collaborative work of one committee does not always effect change in all classrooms. For example, in a few cases, we have facilitated the work of small committees consisting of the district language education coordinator and a few ESL and/or bilingual teachers within the program. All too often, the effective programs and practices for ELLs developed by the language education teams were not sustained when the administrator or teachers left the district or moved on to other assignments. We have learned that developing successful programs and instruction for ELLs requires a PLC of a wide range of educators dedicated to on-going collaborative efforts at the district, school, and classroom levels.

Organizing instruction and curriculum for ELLs means that administrators, language education teachers, mainstream teachers, and ancillary school staff members must work together. We suggest that the superintendent establish a district-wide language education committee that serves as the hub of this PLC network. Using the twelve key practices framework as a common focus and a common language, the district-level and school-

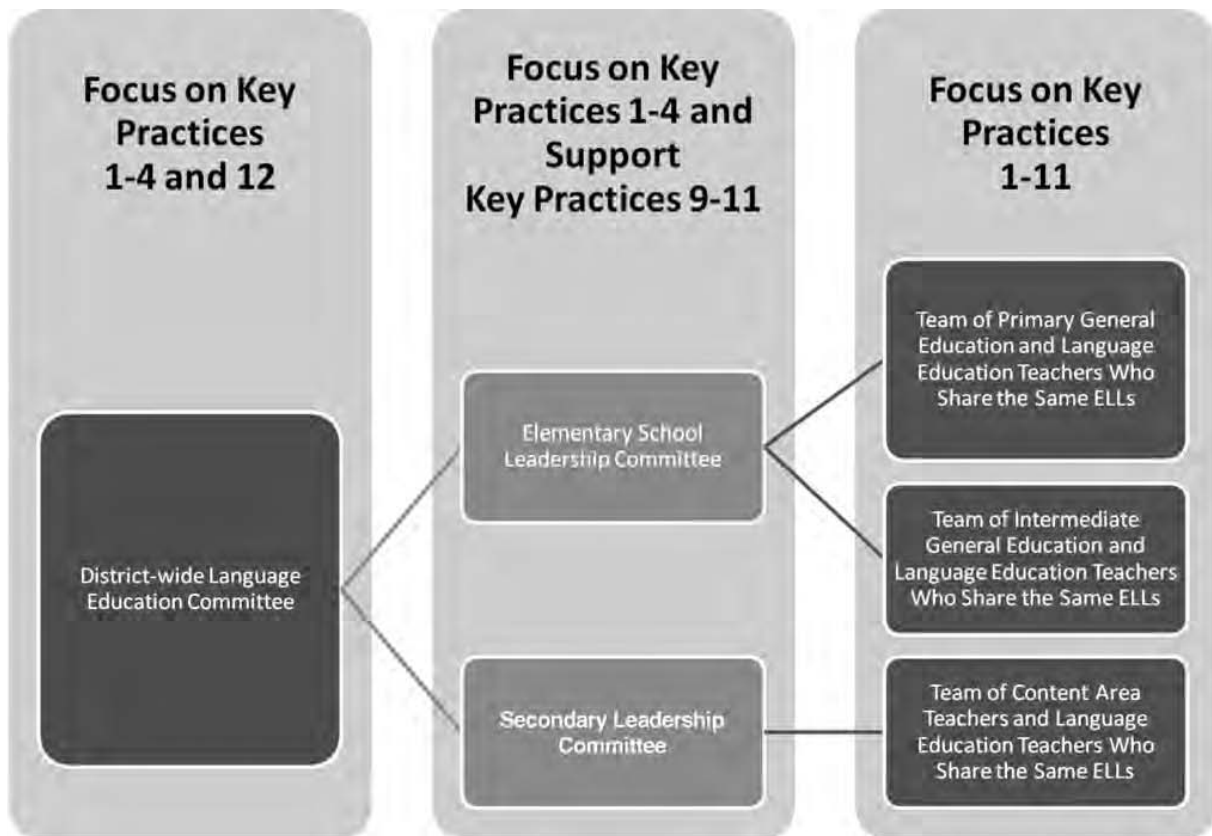


FIGURE 1.1 English Language Learner-focused Professional Learning Community Network

level teams can determine responsibilities and converse with one another. District administrators and principals can find ways to provide professional development and set aside time for school collaborative teams to work and learn together toward their common goal. School-wide teams can focus on ensuring that all school settings are equitable environments for all learners. They can also develop guidelines for implementing common assessment practices and discuss and share effective use of the primary language as a pathway to learning. Mainstream and language education teacher teams can discuss the ELLs' English language development and coordinate ESL, literacy, and content instruction. They can develop common classroom practices and share effective teaching strategies. In addition, they can discuss and share ways to provide meaningful integrated activities with the students in their respective classrooms. These teams can communicate with each other about their progress, share their ideas, and reflect about what works and what doesn't. Figure 1.1 shows how the various PLC teams can use the twelve key practices system to plan and implement ways to improve instruction for ELLs.

Key Practice 3. Implementing a Balanced Student Assessment System

Complement standardized measures with common and classroom assessments that yield evidence of ELL performance in literacy, academic achievement, and language proficiency, and use that assessment data to inform instructional and programmatic decisions.

Keeping track of ELL students' academic performance and analyzing student data over time are tasks that take place at both the district level and the school level. Both of these tasks help measure the effectiveness of the program and highlight instructional areas that need attention. Working with the district's language education coordinator, the language education committee may have the responsibility to facilitate specific district-wide assessment procedures (e.g., report cards, progress reports, and district-wide academic standards-based assessments and English language proficiency testing). At the school level, however, rather than having to rely on mandated standardized testing that may not provide timely and useful information, an assessment team can develop guidelines about how ELLs can be appropriately assessed through common measures at all grade levels. The team can help general education and language education teachers balance a range of meaningful assessment data. For example, using information in this book, the team can develop authentic student-centered measures to find out what newly arrived ELLs already know and can do. These entry procedures will help all general education and language education teachers initiate appropriate instruction and develop meaningful classroom assessments. The team will also want to ensure that ELL students are held accountable for their learning in all classrooms in ways that are appropriate for their English language proficiency levels. At the classroom level, mainstream and language education teacher teams can work together to monitor the progress of the ELLs that they teach in their respective classrooms. They can plan common authentic assessments (e.g., rubrics, checklists), transform classroom activities into classroom-based assessments, and collect evidence of students' learning in portfolios. When the mainstream and language education teachers share and discuss assessment data with one another, they can more effectively design learning activities that support instruction for the ELLs in all classrooms.

Key Practice 4. Embracing an Additive Bilingualism Perspective

Make instructional and linguistic decisions about ELLs based on an understanding of these learners as emerging bilingual students who use two languages for social and academic purposes.

Although all students are unique, the majority of monolingual English-speaking students within the boundaries of a school district are likely to

have similar school and community experiences. ELLs from immigrant families, however, come to school with a variety of cultural backgrounds, have varying school knowledge, and may have many different home, school, and community experiences. Just like their English-speaking peers, they use their experiences, social/cultural values, and linguistic knowledge to understand what they are experiencing and learning in school. However, ELLs use both of their languages at school (their primary language and English, their second language) to understand and process the language and instruction of the classroom in order to participate in learning activities. They use their linguistic skills in both languages even when English is the only language of instruction.

In this handbook, we promote *additive bilingualism*, a term coined by Lambert (1975) to describe the language learning process in which ELLs add a new language as they maintain and improve their existing language. The opposite notion, called *subtractive bilingualism*, suggests that immigrants need to exchange their primary language for English, their new language. We believe that being proficient in English plus other languages makes us stronger individually and as a society. For more than two decades, research has shown that it takes five years or more for ELLs to learn the type of academic language skills needed for successful participation in English-speaking content classrooms (Cummins 1980, 2006; Hakuta et al., 2000; Thomas & Collier, 2002; TESOL, 2006; NCTE, 2008). Therefore, throughout this book, we recommend that administrators and teachers provide a well-articulated sequence of comprehensible academic ESL instruction for several years so that ELLs can achieve high levels of academic English language proficiency. At the same time, educators can value and use the primary language to support or teach school concepts. In this way, they are helping ELLs maintain and improve their first language.¹

Throughout the chapters, we differentiate the use of the ELLs' primary language through two approaches: *primary language instruction* and *primary language support*. School districts with large numbers of ELL students from a single language group (e.g., Spanish, Arabic, Polish) are likely to have the resources to implement primary language *instruction* in bilingual classrooms where certified bilingual teachers strategically teach in both the primary language and in English. In this way, ELLs have immediate and complete access to grade-level academic instruction leading to core state standards. Perhaps the strongest rationale for primary language instruction, however, begins with literacy development in the primary grades. When children learn to read in the language they know best, they can fully utilize their prior knowledge, oral language competence, and linguistic skills. Studies have demonstrated that promoting first language

¹ The terms *primary language*, *first language*, *native language*, and *home language* are mostly synonymous.

literacy development supports language and literacy development in English, two key goals of all programs for ELLs (Escamilla, 2000; Cummins, 1989; Genesee et al., 2006).

School districts with diverse ELL populations, small numbers of ELLs spread out in many grade levels, and/or limited primary language resources often choose to provide primary language *support*. When bilingual adults preview and clarify classroom lessons in the students' primary language, they are providing the scaffolding necessary to students' understanding of important concepts. As the bilingual assistants work with the ELLs using the primary language, the ELLs can learn specific academic skills (e.g., analyzing, retelling, predicting, questioning, clarifying) that are hard to teach using visuals and graphics. When teachers and other adults speak the students' language and show positive regard for the home culture, children are more likely to be engaged learners and acquire a sense of belonging in the school. By using the children's primary language, these adults can model academic language and share complex ideas with children. With the help of the bilingual adult role models, the ELLs can improve their primary language skills and learn interpersonal skills that will stay with them throughout their schooling and in their adult lives (Lucas & Katz, 1993).

Common Classroom Practices for All English Language Learner Educators (Practices 5–8)

Elementary ELLs generally spend part of their day in at least two different classrooms: a grade-level general education classroom and an ESL or bilingual classroom. Middle and high school ELLs generally receive instruction in multiple classrooms. Furthermore, ELLs at all grade levels receive instruction from various teacher specialists (physical education teachers, fine arts teachers, etc.). In essence, we believe that all of the teachers who have ELLs in their classrooms or caseloads are, by default, language education teachers since all teachers help their students develop language skills. However, to clarify, we use the term *general education teachers* to describe classroom teachers who teach children at all grade levels in elementary schools. We use the term *content teachers* to describe specialized elementary content teachers and middle and high school teachers. We use the term *mainstream teachers* to refer collectively to both elementary general education and secondary content teachers.

Grade-level teacher teams often meet to plan and coordinate curriculum, develop objectives, and divide assessment responsibilities. It is important that the language education teachers be part of this collaborative process, even when the ESL and/or bilingual teachers have ELL students at more than one grade level. In this way, the teachers who share the responsibility of teaching the same group of ELLs can work together to co-

ordinate their respective lessons and develop common classroom instructional practices so that their ELLs become more actively engaged in all classrooms.

In our work, we have identified four common classroom practices (key practices 5–8) that maximize ELL students' learning: (key practice 5) using big ideas to plan instruction; (key practice 6) implementing meaningful vocabulary-building instruction; (key practice 7) activating students' prior knowledge; and (key practice 8) structuring student interaction. These practices, while important for all learners, are especially critical for ELLs, who benefit from consistent, comprehensible instruction across content areas and classrooms.

Within these essential teaching practices, mainstream and language education teachers can develop comprehensible lessons by planning to use various instructional supports. Gottlieb et al. (2007a) describe instructional supports more specifically as *sensory*, *graphic*, and *interactive*. *Sensory* supports include visuals, real-life objects, chants, drawings, videos, manipulatives, etc. These hands-on supports provide concrete, comprehensible examples of classroom topics. *Graphic* supports include multiple ways in which information can be organized through graphic representation. Teachers can use charts, timelines, concept webs, cause and effect diagrams, Venn diagrams and other graphic organizers to clarify information found in students' texts and passages. *Interactive* supports include small-group interaction, role play, working with partners, native language support, internet websites, instructional software, etc. Interactive supports encourage language learners to talk about newly learned information. The WIDA Consortium's Resource Guide (2010) provides useful information and examples that clearly demonstrate how these instructional supports help teachers plan comprehensible academic instruction.

Key Practice 5. Using Big Ideas to Plan Instruction

Plan curriculum and instruction that specifically targets the “big ideas” (statements of essential learning) that lead to core state standards.

Big ideas are broad, general statements that describe purposes, functions, patterns, processes, perspectives, and relationships among main ideas and concepts that are grounded in core state standards. Examples of big ideas are: “Conflicts over natural resources are often a cause for war” and “Sound is a kind of energy in the form of waves” (Gordon, 2007). When content and ESL teachers write their lesson plans, listing the big ideas helps them identify essential vocabulary, plan comprehensible instruction, select readings, and develop appropriate assessment strategies. General education and content teachers identify the big ideas so that they can focus on standards-based concepts and essential knowledge that their students must learn. ESL teachers use the big ideas to plan and teach the requisite vocabulary and language skills that the ELL students will need to

know in order to understand and express the concepts that they are learning in the mainstream classrooms. Using multiple strategies with sensory, graphic, and interactive instructional supports helps teach and clarify big ideas so that ELL students understand the key points of the lesson even though they may not understand some of the complex details in the textbook and other classroom presentations. Although the notion of big ideas is generally related to content area instruction in math, science, and social studies, literacy teachers can provide learning activities around the big ideas of the language arts topics (e.g., literary themes, author's intent, reading skills/strategies, language genres).

Key Practice 6. Implementing Meaningful Vocabulary-Building Instruction

Pre-teach vocabulary words necessary to understand lessons and readings, teach new words in context during the lessons and readings, and provide practice for students to use the words in various contexts after the lessons and readings.

Teachers intuitively understand the importance of teaching vocabulary to ELLs. For example, kindergarten teachers prominently display the labels of classroom objects (e.g., clock, desk, book, chair). They teach the ELLs the terms used for classroom tasks (e.g., underline, circle, write, open, find, point to). These fundamental steps help ELLs build the confidence they need to be successful learners. A continual emphasis on vocabulary development is a significant component of academic and ESL instruction. Working with a small number of new academic words at a time, teachers can model, illustrate, and use visuals to explicitly teach grade-level vocabulary. Fortunately, the ELLs' social language helps build the bridge to academic language. When teachers identify and teach the vocabulary needed to understand the big ideas, they immediately focus on age-appropriate knowledge and help reduce the gap between the ELLs' developing English language proficiency and the ever-expanding vocabulary of the ELLs' English-speaking peers. Mainstream and language education teachers can work together to identify essential vocabulary and plan how to reinforce, practice, and revisit vocabulary words before, during, and after lessons.

Key Practice 7. Activating Students' Prior Knowledge

Structure activities that connect ELLs' previous knowledge and cultural experiences to current lessons and build a comprehensible context for learning.

Teachers generally initiate a discussion that activates and connects students' experiences to the current lesson. This classroom talk about known topics and concepts builds a contextual bridge to concepts and themes that students will be studying. The difference for ELLs is that teachers need

to plan and implement more than just one prior knowledge activity. Many ELLs come to English-speaking classrooms with home, school, and cultural experiences that may be quite different than the experiences of their English-speaking mainstream classmates. Other ELLs who have relocated from other districts may have social English fluency but may have missed major concepts while sitting in English-only classroom settings where they were not actively engaged. Both groups of ELLs need several experiential, hands-on oral activities that access and build upon their prior knowledge in order to have a foundation for the reading passage or lesson. Many of the ELLs need vocabulary assists and instructional supports during the prior knowledge activities (e.g., pictures, demonstrations, videos, role play). When teachers plan and implement several prior knowledge activities, including oral activities that require student interaction, the resulting classroom lessons and reading passages become more comprehensible for all learners, not just the ELLs.

Key Practice 8. Structuring Student Interaction

Provide opportunities for academic development and language practice by implementing activities that require students to talk with each other about what they are learning.

A key factor in the second language acquisition process is the opportunity for the learner to negotiate meaning with a language model who has more linguistic resources than the learner and who is adept at speaking comprehensibly to language learners (Ellis, 1984). In other words, ELLs need quality interaction with teachers and students who have higher levels of English proficiency: the teachers model and teach academic English and the English-proficient children are age-appropriate language models. In addition, the students model the cultural norms and expected behaviors of English-speaking classrooms. Vygotsky (1978) suggests that children learn more successfully by participating with other learners in goal-directed activities that provide social interaction and peer support. Planned, structured student interaction allows ELLs to watch, acquire, and practice the behavior and learning styles that are expected in English-speaking classrooms.

Elementary general education and secondary content teachers can plan cooperative learning activities to engage the ELLs in conversations with their peers. They can provide visuals, charts, specific writing prompts, or questions to talk about as they complete their assignment. When working in small groups, students converse socially, talk about their tasks, give each other examples, and share ways of thinking and problem solving. These conversations make instruction comprehensible and provide low-risk opportunities for ELLs to try out classroom discourse. Meaningful small-group interactions allow ELLs to become active participants in classroom activities rather than sitting on the sidelines as onlookers. When the chil-

dren move from their small groups to whole-group discussion, all learners are more likely to raise their hands and participate.

Core Instructional Practices of Every Program for English Language Learners (Practices 9–11)

Effective programming for meeting the needs of ELLs must address how these learners will attain academic language proficiency in English, develop or improve literacy skills, and learn grade-level academic concepts. Depending on the design of the language education program, ELLs receive their literacy, academic, and ESL instruction in general education classrooms, secondary content classrooms, ESL classrooms, and/or bilingual classrooms. Their teachers hold various types of certification. Key practice 2 (Educating English Language Learners through Collaboration) affirms our belief that that it is crucial that all of the teachers who share the same groups of ELLs coordinate the instruction of the core key practices: (key practice 9) implementing ESL instruction, (key practice 10) implementing meaning-based literacy instruction, and (key practice 11) implementing comprehensible academic content instruction.

Key Practice 9. Implementing English as a Second Language Instruction

Plan and implement daily content-based ESL instruction in the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), focusing on the academic language needed to understand and express essential grade-level concepts.

For decades, researchers have studied various approaches to teaching a second language. Second language methods of the 1970's and 1980's emphasized oral language development first, followed by written work (e.g., the direct method, the audio-lingual method, communicative competence, and the silent way (Ovando et al., 2006). Krashen and Terrell (1983) first introduced the notion that children learn a second language in stages, best through a natural, communicative approach, similar to how young children learn their first language. Meanwhile Cummins (1980, 1984, 1989) worked to define the difference between social and academic language proficiency and to clarify how knowledge learned in one's first language transfers to the second language.

When the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 mandated that every state adopt English Language Proficiency (ELP) standards and accompanying assessment measures, states began to implement plans to comply with the new federal mandates. In several instances, states decided to come together and share their areas of expertise as they developed their standards and assessments. The WIDA Consortium is the largest and currently in-

cludes 27 member states. WIDA and another major organization, Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), have developed standards for English language acquisition. The WIDA and TESOL authors, working with task forces of second language experts, have worked to articulate much of what is now understood about second language acquisition theory in a way that helps educators plan instruction and assessment of ELLs. The five language proficiency levels that were created by the WIDA and TESOL authors are reminiscent of Krashen's stages, but they take into account the unique types of language needed to succeed in specific content areas. The WIDA and TESOL English language proficiency levels have slightly different names (e.g. level 1 (starting, entering) and level 2 (emerging, beginning)). Therefore, in this book, when we refer to students' ELP levels, rather than using terms, we state the ELP level by a number only (e.g., levels 1 through 5, with level 6 meaning English-proficient).

Researchers in the language education field today continue to focus their attention on the development of academic language proficiency and literacy skills (reading and writing). Recent research and legislation have broadened the concept of English language proficiency and/or development to include both social and academic contexts tied to schooling, standards, curriculum, and instruction. (Gottlieb et al., 2006) Responses to these initiatives have led to a deeper understanding of the complexities of academic language and the levels students pass through as they learn how to read, write, listen, and speak in English. At this writing, the WIDA Consortium is in the process of renaming their ELP standards to the more universal and useful term English Language Development (ELD) standards. We use the WIDA ELD standards as the focus of academic instruction and assessment procedures.

Children typically progress rapidly through the first few ELP levels in the early grades. It takes longer, however, for students to move up to the upper language proficiency levels as academic language demands become more complex at higher grade levels. As Cook (2007) succinctly states, "lower is faster and higher is slower." In fact, many students typically go through a period in which it appears as if their language skills have reached a plateau. These plateaus are then interspersed with bursts of development in their language skills (Van Lier, 2004). Therefore, it cannot be assumed that a student will progress one level each year. Language proficiency levels are independent of the students' grade levels or the number of years in a language education program.

ELLs with ELP levels 1 and 2 usually understand more than they can say. However, children need to talk well in order to learn well (Shore, 1997); sitting quietly in the back of the room won't work. ESL teachers can work with the mainstream teachers to plan ways to utilize classroom talk to convert receptive language into expressive language. ESL teachers with beginning levels of ELL students get their students talking by implement-

ing oral language activities, teaching vocabulary, and making sure that the language learners have daily opportunities to listen, speak, read, and write in English. As the ELLs become more socially fluent, the ESL and mainstream teachers can use the language that the students know to teach the vocabulary and the concepts that they are learning in the mainstream classroom. This important collaborative process allows the ESL teacher to plan *content-based* ESL lessons to teach the academic English language that the learners need to succeed in general education classrooms.

A content-based ESL instructional component is at the heart of an effective, comprehensive language education program. In this handbook, when we use the term *ESL instruction*, we are describing ESL as comprehensible English instruction in which learning academic language is the goal. Sometimes we place the term “content-based” in front of the term “ESL” to emphasize that ESL instruction is *not* taught through a traditional approach in which conversational English is taught through grammar structures and discrete language skills. In the traditional ESL approach, lessons are designed to produce correct forms of the English language; there is often little focus on learning language for meaningful academic purposes. On the contrary, in comprehensible ESL instruction, the big ideas and requisite terminology of a particular content topic are the focus. Language instruction is designed to reach ELD standards. ESL teachers use multiple instructional supports to teach academic English in meaningful contexts. These supports include visuals, graphics, real-life objects, videos, charts, timelines, small-group interaction, and working with partners.

Key Practice 10. Implementing Meaning-Based Literacy Instruction

Whenever possible, begin literacy instruction in the primary language; when literacy is taught in English, plan and implement meaning-based literacy instruction that builds on students’ oral language and uses comprehensible text at appropriate English language proficiency levels.

Just like their English-speaking peers, when ELLs enter kindergarten and first grade, they have remarkable oral language competence in their primary language. It makes complete sense to offer formal literacy instruction in the language in which they can construct meaning from sight words, phonics work, basic sentences, and text. Unfortunately, in many school districts, primary language literacy instruction in bilingual classrooms is not an option, so the young ELLs must learn to read in English, along with their English-speaking peers.

Whereas their fluent English-speaking peers come to the task of reading with substantial English vocabulary and the ability to use a full repertoire of linguistic skills, the ELLs have various levels of social English flu-

ency and are just beginning the process of acquiring academic English. When teachers must teach ELLs to read in English, they can strategically utilize the ELL children's oral English to provide a pathway to literacy. By reducing the language demands and teaching *meaning-based literacy*, they can ensure that the ELLs are actively engaged in reading and writing. Literacy instruction is meaning based when the text, writing activities, skills, and tasks are meaningful and functional for the emergent reader (Fife, 2006). Teaching ELLs how to read in English is similar to the emergent literacy process that teachers use with fluent English speakers; however, the initial activities, sequence, and the strategies may differ in order for the learning activities to be meaningful and functional. Teachers make vocabulary building, fluency building, phonics tasks, comprehension strategies, and writing tasks meaningful through concrete and engaging contexts that the learners can relate to personally.

Key Practice 11. Implementing Comprehensible Academic Content Instruction

Model and teach academic content using language just above ELLs' current English language proficiency levels, making new information comprehensible using appropriate instructional supports.

Providing comprehensible academic instruction and assessment essentially means that classroom processes, tasks, and assessments are differentiated according to students' varying levels of English language proficiency. When ELLs receive instruction in English, their teachers must adapt or "shelter" their instruction and assessment in order for learning activities to be comprehensible for the learners. In the language education field, the term *sheltered instruction* is used to describe how general education and content teachers teach ELLs (in any subject) using comprehensible language and instructional supports. According to Wright (2010), the word *sheltered* is a metaphor for simplifying the language without watering down the content, thus protecting ELLs from the language demands of mainstream instruction that may be beyond their comprehension.

In this book, we use the term *sheltered instruction* to describe the adapted instruction in content areas where learning academic content is the goal. Some of the methods that teachers use to shelter instruction are adjusting their speech, increasing student interaction, providing multiple background information experiences, and using demonstrations, hands-on examples, and visuals to make new information comprehensible. Teachers also shelter ESL by differentiating instruction according to their students' English language proficiency levels. For example, teachers working with ELP level 1 and level 2 ELLs routinely introduce new lessons with pictures, graphics, and modeling. "The ultimate goal of sheltered instruction is accessibility for ELLs to grade-level content standards and concepts while they continue to improve their English language proficiency" (Wright

2010, p. 223). Although sheltered instruction is designed to be used with ELLs, many of their English-speaking peers also struggle to develop academic language. When general education and content teachers implement sheltered instruction in their classrooms, all students benefit.

Organizing the Key Practices into Effective Program Configurations (Practice 12)

In our work, we have seen that the fine instructional efforts of highly qualified teachers are often thwarted when they are constrained to work with ELLs in poorly developed programs. A well-planned language education program is instrumental in implementing effective instruction for ELLs. We suggest that teachers and administrators who read this book share the twelve key practices with their supervisors. They can suggest that the school district establish a PLC that can be coordinated by a district-wide language education committee. As the language education committee proceeds with their tasks, they can communicate and discuss their progress with the other professional learning community teams at the school and classroom levels. Hord and Sommers (2007) point out that a PLC is not just a set of dedicated groups working together on selected tasks. Rather, PLC members are collaborators who share the same goals and support their work through careful study of and reflection on relevant research and information that relates to the needs of students. All of the teams need to spend some time learning about how the ESL, literacy, and academic content instructional components are implemented effectively. As the team members become familiar with the twelve key practices, the PLC can meet together to discuss what they have learned. Members of the various teams will want to present their ideas and make some general recommendations to the language education committee, which is charged with the task of putting all of the practices in place in program configurations that meet the needs of the district's ELL student populations.

Key Practice 12. Structuring the Language Education Program

Organize the instructional program for ELLs to effectively meet the literacy, academic, and language needs of the district's ELL population.

During the first year, the district language education committee can work as a task force to review, refine, and/or restructure the school district's instructional programs for ELLs. Representatives from various stakeholder groups can participate in this decision-making process that will lead to locally appropriate language education programs that are grounded in research. The committee should be made up of educators with different responsibilities and should be large enough to represent various stake-

holder groups—but small enough for members to have purposeful conversations. Specifically, we suggest a mix of two district administrators, the ESL/bilingual program coordinator, two principals (one elementary, one secondary), two or more ESL/bilingual teachers, two mainstream teachers, a special education teacher, a member of the board of education, a language-minority community member, and a parent representative.

Before the committee members can undertake the task of restructuring the language education program, they must study relevant research in the language education field and become familiar with effective practices. The committee can use this book as a study guide to learn the twelve key practices that can improve instruction for ELLs in any program configuration. They can use the core instructional key practices as a reference tool as they plan and/or restructure the district's ESL, literacy, and academic content instructional components. They can use the reading lists at the end of each chapter to locate research findings and helpful implementation information. In this way, the committee can gain the knowledge and the skills needed to develop comprehensive language education programs.

As the language education committee learns how instruction for ELLs is effectively implemented using the twelve key practices, they must also review various forms of student data (e.g., student demographics, standardized test scores, home language and cultural background surveys). In this way, they are learning information about the specific language, literacy, and academic needs of the district's ELL student population. At this point, the committee members will be keen observers as they review the research and prepare to use the Twelve Key Practices Checklist to evaluate their current program practices. These initial processes will give the team a knowledge base from which to systematically plan research-based and locally appropriate comprehensive language education programs that match the needs of their ELL student population. In this book, we use the term *comprehensive* (as in *comprehensive* ESL or bilingual education programs) to describe instructional program configurations that have been carefully designed by a team of educators that take into consideration the literacy, academic, and English language needs of the district's ELL student populations. After the restructuring tasks are completed and decisions are made, the committee remains as a standing district-wide committee that oversees the implementation of the changes to the language education program, arranges professional development initiatives, and coordinates the collaborative efforts of the PLC network.

Using the twelve key practices handbook as an implementation guide can be initiated by school collaborative teams as well as by the language education committee. For example, language education teachers may be the first educators to read this handbook. As they become familiar with the twelve key practices, the teachers will want to convene a study team

to read and discuss the information and suggestions about content-based ESL, meaning-based literacy, and sheltered instruction. The study teams can use the twelve key practices to increase ways to provide meaningful, comprehensible instruction and assessment in equitable, language-rich classrooms. By working with the teachers with whom they share their ELL students, they can use the twelve key practices to develop common instruction and assessment strategies so that the ELLs can more fully understand directions and complete tasks as they move from classroom to classroom. The teacher teams will want to share what they learn with the school leadership teams and suggest some school-wide common classroom practices.

All of the key practices are incorporated into the Twelve Key Practices Checklist following this chapter. The checklist is written using measurable statements that can be used to evaluate and monitor language education programs and instruction at the district, school, and classroom levels. Each key practice general statement is followed by implementation guidepost statements that represent the tasks, processes, practices, and/or strategies of research-based teaching practices that occur in effective language education programs. The language education committee and school leadership teams can use the checklist as a diagnostic tool to identify the areas that represent the biggest challenges during the restructuring process. The teams can use the results of the checklist as a starting point to determine the professional development that educators need to know in order to successfully implement the practices. For example, the results on the checklist may indicate that mainstream teachers need training in sheltered instruction. Results may indicate that teachers and administrators need professional development to understand how to use the ELLs' primary language to support instruction. Also, when individual teachers use the checklist to evaluate their own teaching practices, they can recognize ways in which they can immediately make instructional improvements.

In this chapter, we have shared twelve key practices that help educators work toward the common goal of school success for ELLs. We have provided brief overviews of all of the practices and have pointed out that the practices are most effective when collaborative teams at the district-wide, school-wide, and classroom levels work and learn together to meet this goal. In the next chapter, we more fully discuss the first key practice, structuring equitable school and classroom learning environments that affirm diversity and value bilingualism.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND ACTION

1. Use the Twelve Key Practices Checklist to take note of the practices that are implemented at your school. These are strengths that can be built

- upon. Make a list of practices that have not been addressed. What steps can be taken to bring attention to these needs?
2. Highlight the practices that were rated as in progress or in place in some classrooms. Then, identify three highlighted practices that you think could be addressed in order to move that practice into the implemented column. Compare your list with others in your study group.

Recommended Readings

- Center for Equity and Excellence in Education. (2005). *Promoting excellence series: Guiding principles*. Arlington: George Washington University.
- DeJong, E. (2011). *Foundations for multilingualism in education: From principles to practice*. Philadelphia: Caslon Publishing.
- WIDA Consortium. (2010). *World-class instructional design and assessment's guiding principles of language development*. Available at <http://www.wida.us/AcademicLanguage/index.aspx>.
- Wright, W. (2010). *Foundations for teaching English language learners: Research, theory, policy, and practice*. Philadelphia: Caslon Publishing.
- Zemelman, S. et al. (2005). *Best practice: Today's standards for teaching and learning in America's schools*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

TWELVE KEY PRACTICES CHECKLIST

The checklist is written using measurable statements that can be used to evaluate and monitor language education programs and instruction at the district, school, and classroom levels. The district language education committee and school leadership teams can use the checklist as a diagnostic tool to identify the areas that represent the biggest challenges during the restructuring process. Various teams can use the results of the checklist as a starting point to determine the professional development that educators need to know in order to successfully implement the practices. Teacher teams can use the checklist to evaluate their own teaching practices to recognize ways in which they can immediately make instructional improvements.

SCORING DIRECTIONS:

1 = This practice IS implemented.

2 = This practice is in progress or is in place in some classrooms.

3 = This practice is NOT currently in place.

Shared Practices at the District, School, and Classroom Levels

PRACTICES 1–4

Key Practice 1.			Structuring Equitable School and Classroom Environments: Literacy, content, and ESL instruction is implemented in language rich, low-anxiety environments that affirm diversity and value bilingualism.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going professional development is planned for all stakeholders that provides information, shares effective strategies, defines roles, and shapes positive attitudes about ELLs.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> District policies and procedures for ELLs are institutionalized and in place in all schools.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All teachers who have ELLs in their classrooms have substantial training in sheltered instruction methods.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School routines, events, and activities are developed to represent ELLs' languages, cultures, and experiences.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers plan enriching and comprehensible lessons that include multicultural examples/perspectives.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers display useful language on walls and provide numerous trade books about current topics around the classroom. (e.g., picture books, content books, ESL supplemental materials in English, and, when possible, in the ELLs' primary language).
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Classroom instruction and schedules are implemented in ways that allow ELLs to be actively engaged in learning throughout their school day.

IMPLICATIONS AND COMMENTS

Key Practice 2.			Educating ELLs through Collaboration: The challenges of educating ELL student populations are addressed through collaborative teams who share common goals, common language, and common practices.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An ELL-focused professional learning community of district-wide, school-wide, and teacher teams is established. These teams work and learn together to improve programs and instruction for ELLs.

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1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periodic district language education committee meetings are convened to establish goals, monitor and refine programs, disseminate information, and provide support for collaborative efforts throughout the district.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School leadership teams address policy issues, curriculum development, instructional practices, and socio-cultural issues that affect learning environments for diverse learners.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher teams who share ELL students (language education teachers and general education teachers) have structured planning time for purposeful and reflective conversations.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators collaborate regularly with parents by implementing effective translation strategies, developing a parent advisory council, and connecting parents to classroom learning activities.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educators expand collaborative efforts by working with community organizations.

IMPLICATIONS AND COMMENTS _____

Key Practice 3. Implementing a Balanced Student Assessment System: Standardized measures, common assessments, and classroom assessments in literacy, academic achievement, and language proficiency are used to inform instructional and programmatic decisions.

1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrators and teachers design and use a balanced assessment system that identifies ELL students’ needs, documents student classroom performance, and evaluates program effectiveness.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entry and exit criteria and procedures are consistently established and implemented across the district.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom assessments are differentiated according to the ELLs’ English language proficiency levels using a variety of reliable assessment strategies that incorporate visual, graphic, and interactive supports.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers build authentic assessments into instruction to measure ELLs’ understanding of academic content and their progress in English language development.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common assessments, classroom assessments, and standardized assessment data are used to document ELLs’ growth over time and monitor students’ progress.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data from standardized assessments and authentic assessments are reviewed and used to evaluate language education program effectiveness.

IMPLICATIONS AND COMMENTS _____

Key Practice 4.			Embracing an Additive Bilingualism Perspective: Instructional and linguistic decisions for ELLs are based on understanding that ELLs are emerging bilingual students who use two languages for social and academic purposes.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bilingualism is valued, and bilingualism and biliteracy development is promoted to the greatest degree possible.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sequence of ESL instruction is provided over a period of several years so that ELLs can reach the high levels of English language proficiency needed for school success.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Language instruction is planned so that what is learned in one language supports and reinforces what is learned in the other language.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary language support is used to preview, explain, and clarify concepts that ELLs encounter in English-speaking classrooms.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary language instruction is provided in bilingual classrooms to develop academic language, to develop literacy, and to teach grade-level subjects (whenever possible).

IMPLICATIONS AND COMMENTS _____

The Common Classroom Practices for All ELL Educators
 (PRACTICES 5–8)

Key Practice 5.			Using Big Ideas to Plan Instruction: Curriculum and instruction are planned that specifically target the “big ideas” (statements of essential learning) that lead to core state standards.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers use standards to identify the big ideas that students will need to understand the key concepts in units and lessons.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers structure comprehensible learning activities that lead to understanding of the big ideas.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers use materials that explain and exemplify the big ideas (charts, visuals, tradebooks, videos).
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers develop differentiated assessment strategies that allow ELLs to demonstrate their understanding of the big ideas and give examples.

IMPLICATIONS AND COMMENTS _____

Key Practice 6.			Implementing Meaningful Vocabulary-Building Instruction: Teachers pre-teach vocabulary words necessary to understand lessons and passages. New words in context are taught during the lessons/passages, and practice is provided for students to use the words in various contexts after the lessons/passages.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers explicitly teach new vocabulary and involve the students in definition-getting.

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1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers plan oral vocabulary-building strategies to move ELLs' receptive vocabulary toward expressive language.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers structure oral and written activities for students to use new vocabulary.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers coordinate vocabulary instruction and practice in ESL, bilingual, and general education classrooms.

IMPLICATIONS AND COMMENTS _____

Key Practice 7. Activating Students' Prior Knowledge: Teachers structure activities that connect ELLs' previous knowledge and cultural experiences to current lessons and build a comprehensible context for learning.

1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers plan multiple prior knowledge activities that connect students' knowledge and cultural experiences with upcoming lessons.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers use instructional supports (e.g., visuals, demonstrations, and experiential activities) while implementing prior knowledge activities.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers ask open-ended questions to encourage English-proficient and ELL students to share their knowledge and experiences.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers structure pre-reading activities that build vocabulary and increase comprehension before all reading assignments.

IMPLICATIONS AND COMMENTS _____

Key Practice 8. Structuring Student Interaction: Opportunities for academic development and language practice are provided by implementing activities that require students to talk with each other about what they are learning.

1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program configurations and classroom schedules are organized in ways that promote meaningful interactions among ELLs and their English-speaking peers.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers promote learning-centered classroom talk that engages all students and requires them to share ways of thinking and problem solving.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers implement interactive learning tasks that ask students to use target vocabulary to talk about newly learned information.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers plan small-group instructional tasks that require students to work interdependently.

IMPLICATIONS AND COMMENTS _____

The Core Instructional Practices of Every Program for ELLs
(PRACTICES 9–11)

Key Practice 9.			Implementing English as a Second Language Instruction: Daily ESL instruction in the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) is planned and implemented. Instruction is focused on the academic language that ELLs need to understand and express essential grade-level concepts.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers coordinate academic content and language instruction with core content and language development standards.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers connect receptive language skills and beginning level ELLs’ oral language to academic English language instruction.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers use a content-based ESL approach when teaching intermediate and advanced ELLs.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers implement common classroom practices with meaningful language learning activities for ELLs at all English language proficiency levels by using sensory, graphic, and interactive supports.

IMPLICATIONS AND COMMENTS _____

Key Practice 10.			Implementing Meaning-Based Literacy Instruction: Whenever possible, initial literacy instruction is taught in the primary language; when literacy is taught in English, teachers plan and implement meaning-based literacy instruction that builds on students’ oral language and uses comprehensible text at appropriate English language proficiency levels.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers begin instruction by finding out what ELL students already know about literacy.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers use ELLs’ oral language as a pathway to reading and writing.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers integrate meaningful and functional literacy tasks within the five essential elements of reading using a balanced literacy approach.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers implement multiple comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers use nonfiction text as well as fictional stories and passages to improve reading and writing across the curriculum.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers use appropriately leveled texts and students’ knowledge of the English language to help struggling older readers improve their reading skills.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers document the ELLs’ progress in literacy learning over time.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teachers use bilingual support staff and ELL parents strategically so they can support the literacy development of ELLs.

IMPLICATIONS AND COMMENTS _____

Key Practice 11.			Implementing Comprehensible Academic Content Instruction: Teachers model and teach academic content using language a little above the ELLs' current English proficiency levels, making new information comprehensible by using appropriate instructional supports.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instructional activities are aligned to district curriculum guides and core state standards.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers include language objectives as well as content objectives in sheltered instruction lesson planning.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers differentiate instruction according to ELLs' language proficiency levels.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers implement specific strategies to help older struggling ELLs learn from their textbooks.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers use authentic assessment strategies to evaluate ELLs' progress and fulfill grading requirements.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers develop strategic ways to use the ELLs' primary language to support academic instruction in English.
IMPLICATIONS AND COMMENTS _____			

Organizing the Key Practices into Effective Program Configurations
(PRACTICE 12)

Key Practice 12.			Structuring the Language Education Program: Instruction is organized to effectively meet the literacy, academic, and language needs of the districts' ELL populations.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A district language education committee is established to develop or restructure the language education program.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent of the use of the ELLs' primary language is determined according to the specific academic needs of the district's ELL populations.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New and restructured program configurations have been constructed by figuring out how ESL, literacy, and academic content instruction can be effectively implemented.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The language education program has been developed through a collaborative process that defines the purpose of the language education program, grounds the program in standards, includes short- and long-term professional development plans, and shares information with parents and other stakeholders.
1	2	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The language education committee monitors the programs for ELLs by annually assessing professional development needs and reviewing student data to evaluate the ELLs' progress.
IMPLICATIONS AND COMMENTS _____			

