Research Based
Recommendations for ELL Students

Center on Instruction English Language Strand,
Texas Institute for Measurement Evaluation and
Statistics, University of Houston &
Harvard School of Education
A growing population

- 9.9 million students nationally
- 24,000+ in Idaho
- 10% of all students
- Population has increased by 100% in Idaho in the past ten years
- By 2015 ELL students will make up 30% of the student population in the U.S.
“The largest and fastest growing population of ELLs consists of students who immigrated before kindergarten and U.S. born children of immigrants”
How is the new state assessment impacting your district’s identification of ELL students?
“The greatest risk for academic failure is not a learning disability, nor second language learning. The highest risk factor for reading failure is socio-economic status.”

G. Reid Lyon, Director
National Institute for Health
Conceptual Framework

Developmental perspective of reading

- Many components skills that contribute to successful reading comprehension
- Many factors – individual, instructional, and contextual influence outcomes

In other words... bringing ELL students to proficiency in reading is complicated!
Guiding Principles of Framework

“The crucial application for reading skills is to learn new concepts and develop new knowledge across a range of content areas.”
Guiding Principles of Framework

“In order to plan for effective instruction, educators must have a clear understanding of the specific sources of difficulty or weakness for individual students or groups of students.”
Guiding Principles of Framework

“Whether designated as LEP or not, ELL students often lack the academic language necessary for comprehending and analyzing text.”
Academic Language Gap

- Score lower on national assessments
- Lower scores persist even after language support is discontinued
- Vocabulary levels are well below average – less than 20%
- Vocabulary is insufficient to support reading comprehension or written expression
Concerns

Many ELL students have well-developed English conversational skills but lack academic language.
Academic language

- Words like... whereas, factor, determine
- Complex sentence structure
  (compound, complex sentences)
- Text styles – argumentation, narrative, exposition
Guiding Principles of Framework

- For the majority of ELL students experiencing reading difficulties the issues are fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
- Difficulties are usually not identified in early grades.
Guiding Principles

- Instructional focus needs to be articulated
  - Preventative
  - Augmented
  - Remedial

Remind you of any other model you’re already using?
Recommendation 1

ELL students need early, explicit, and intensive instruction in phonological awareness and phonics in order to build decoding skills.
Recommendation

- Supporting instruction
  - Class-wide instruction for all learners and their classmates
  - Supplemental instruction for a subgroup of children whether ELLs or native speakers
Recommendation 2

- K-12 classrooms across the nation must increase opportunities for ELLs to develop sophisticated vocabulary knowledge.
- Only 5-10% of instructional time in classrooms across America is dedicated to vocabulary instruction.
Most students enter school with large receptive vocabularies. The materials used by 3rd to 9th graders contain about 90,000 words.

Adapted by Reading Success Network from Graves, Juel, and Graves, 1997
Recommendation

- All students need 12-14 exposures to a word.
- Label but not concept.
- Selection of words – bootlegging, dandelion, burrowed vs. analyze, frequent, although, therefore.
Vocabulary instruction must be based on an understanding of:

- Difference between conversational and academic language
- Word families (how words relate to each other) suffixes, prefixes, roots
- Inter-relationship of content area words and academic language
Various levels of word knowledge (multiple meanings of words)

Vocabulary instruction through oral, reading, and writing activities

Need for students to be equipped with strategies to learn words independently
well

Noun

Verb

Adjective

Adverb

Interjection
Recommendation 3

Reading instruction in K-12 classrooms must equip ELLs with strategies and knowledge to comprehend and analyze challenging narrative and expository texts.
Current Instruction

- Most comprehension instruction is passive
- Struggling students cannot answer the questions
- Correct answers do not necessarily mean that students understand the metacognitive process employed
Increasing Comprehension

- Students actively engaged
- Prediction activities
- Activities during reading
- Summarization skills

“Telling is not the same as teaching”
Story Retelling
Retelling

- Before reading a story, the teacher reviews one to three words that are in the passage.
- As the teacher reads the story, he or she displays simple pictures that mark the actions, events, or key points.
Retelling

- After reading, the teacher retells the story, pointing to the pictures in sequence. He or she incorporates the previously discussed vocabulary words into the retelling.
- Students retell the story after the teacher has modeled.
- The teacher asks questions about the story.
Today as I read the story, “The Ants and the Grasshopper,” you will hear the word *damp*.

- How many sounds are in the word? What are the sounds? What letters do you think are in the word?

- *Damp* means *wet*. If you get caught in the rain, your clothes may become *damp*. 
The Ants and the Grasshopper

One fine day in the winter, some ants were busy drying their corn. The corn had gotten damp in the rain. [Point to picture of ants.]

A grasshopper came up and begged for a few kernels of corn. “I am very, very hungry,” said the grasshopper. “Could you give me some corn?” [Point to picture of grasshopper.]

The ants stopped their work for a moment. Then one ant said, “What did you do all last summer? Why didn’t you pick corn for yourself?”
One fine day in the winter, some ants were busy drying their corn. The corn had gotten damp in the rain.
A grasshopper came up and begged for a few kernels of corn. “I am very, very hungry,” said the grasshopper. “Could you give me some corn?”

The ants stopped their work for a moment. Then one ant said, “What did you do all last summer? Why didn’t you pick corn for yourself?”
“I was busy singing last summer,” said the grasshopper. “I could not be bothered to pick corn for myself.” [Point to musical notes.]

“If you spent your summer singing,” said the ant, “You can spend your winter dancing. We cannot help you for we have much work to do.” The ants laughed and went back to their work.
Alice in Wonderland
Narrative Text

Who?
What?
When?
Where?
Why?
The Lion and the Mouse

The tall savanna grass fluttered in the slight breeze as a great lion slept. While he slept, something ran across his paw. The lion awoke to see a small mouse nibbling on a seed of grass.

The lion scooped up the mouse in his paw and opened his fierce-looking mouth. Before the lion could eat it, the mouse cried, “Please, let me go. I will be glad to return the favor someday.”

The lion roared with laughter at this thought. But because he was still sleepy and not very hungry, the lion let the mouse go.
Later that afternoon, the lion awoke and felt hungry. He went to look for food. Soon, he was caught in a net. He tried to get free, but the lion could not break the ropes. The lion roared. The mouse heard him and ran to see what was the matter.

Seeing the great lion caught helplessly in the net, the small mouse said, “I am glad that I can now return the favor.” Then the mouse gnawed the ropes and the lion was soon free.

“I may be meek, but even I can be of help to the mighty,” said the mouse. And the lion and the mouse were forever friends.
Who?
What?
When?
Where?
Why?
Summary for *The Lion and the Mouse*:
The story is about a lion and a mouse.
The story takes place one afternoon on the savanna.
The mouse sets the lion free because he is returning a favor.
Expository Text

Subject
Main Idea
Supporting Ideas
Details
Is It Money?

Did you know that six billion quarters were minted by the US Treasury in 2000? Did you know that about 800 million Sacagawea golden dollars have been put into circulation since 2000? There are many interesting facts about money. One fact is that not everything can be money.

Pull out all the money in your pocket or purse. What you will notice is that it does not all look the same. Some of it is rectangular and green, and some of it may be round and silver in color. Your money is not all the same size. Even though your coins and dollar bills look different, they do share common characteristics that make them money.
Look at one of your dollar bills. Probably it is wrinkled and a little dirty, with the corners folded over. This tells you that many different people have used it. Someday, the bill will be worn out, but it will last for many months or even years. Look at one of your coins. It may be several years or decades old. Something we use for money must have *durability.*

The money that came from your pocket or purse is small and light. It has *portability,* a necessary trait for money. Think how burdensome it would be if dollar bills were as big as blankets and weighted five pounds or your coins were the size of donuts and weighed ten pounds each.
Not everything you buy has the same price. One item may cost half a dollar. Another item may cost fifteen dollars. Because money has divisibility, you can pay for either item with a twenty-dollar bill. If you pay for a half-dollar item with a twenty-dollar bill, you may be given a ten, a five, four ones, and a fifty-cent piece in change. Divisibility lets you pay exact amounts for anything you buy.

While paper clips are durable, portable, and divisible, they cannot be used as money. Money has to have value in relation to other things and have acceptability as legal tender.
When you earn money, you can spend it or save it. When you save money, you feel safe about saving it because you know it has a certain value. You know it will keep its value over time. The dollar you earned last summer will be worth a dollar when next summer rolls around. What we use for money must have *stability*. 
Expository Text

Subject
Main Idea
Supporting Ideas
Details
Subject

Is what the passage is mostly about.
Main Idea

Is the subject +
what the passage says about the subject =
the main idea
Supporting Ideas

Are support for the main idea.
Details

Give information about the supporting ideas.
Characteristics of Money

Durability
- Lasts a long time
- Bills last months or years
- Coins last decades

Portability
- Small and light
- Easy to carry

Divisibility
- Pay exact amounts

Acceptability
- Agreement that it is legal tender

Stability
- Maintains value
- Billiards last months or years
- Coins last decades
Characteristics of Money

Durability 2
- Lasts a long time
- Bills last months or years
- Coins last decades

Portability 4
- Small and light
- Easy to carry

Divisibility 6
- Pay exact amounts

Acceptability 8
- Agreement that it is legal tender

Stability 10
- Maintains value

1- Lasts a long time
2- Bills last months or years
3- Coins last decades
4- Small and light
5- Easy to carry
6- Pay exact amounts
7- Agreement that it is legal tender
8- Maintains value
9- Not defined
10- Not defined
11- Not defined
Recommendation 4

Instruction and intervention for ELLs fluency must focus on vocabulary and exposure to print
Fluency recommendations

- Caution – rate of reading is not an issue for most ELL students
- Phrasing
- Prosody
- Inflection
Fluency instruction

- Oral reading
- Corrective feedback from an adult
- Discussion and questioning about the text
- Exposure to print
- Small group format insures engagement and motivation
Recommendation 5

In all classrooms ELL students need significant opportunities to engage in structured, academic talk.
Structured talk

- Oral language development is cumulative
- Primary means of development is oral but can be supported by reading and writing activities
- Reading aloud and shared readings
- Supported by teachers but not necessarily led by teachers
Describing

- Chose two or three objects or pictures of objects that are related to the topic.
- Students describe.
  - Name the object.
  - Name categories the object belongs in.
  - Name the functions of the object.
  - Name its color, size, shape. Compare it to another object. Use a simile or a metaphor.
Recommendation 6

Independent reading is only beneficial when it is structured and purposeful, and there is a good reader-text match.
Practical Guidelines for the Education of ELLs

- Three books:
  - Research-based Recommendations for Instruction and Academic Interventions
  - Research-based Recommendations for Serving Adolescent Newcomers
  - Research-based Recommendations for the Use of Accommodations in Large-scale Assessments
Resources

- Math information included in your book
- References at the end of the document
- 2006-2007 Reading Academy materials
- Rose, Rosie or Marybeth
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