Chapter 9

Access and Equity

Chapter at a Glance

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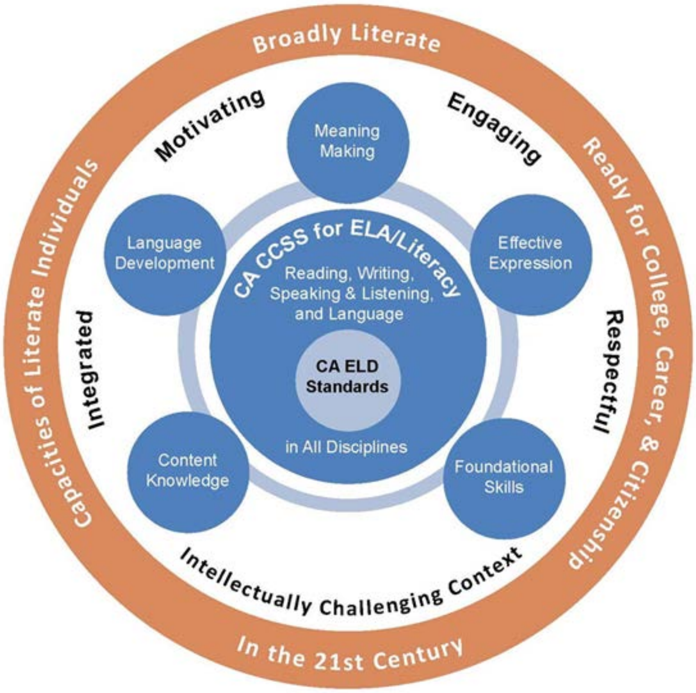
Introduction

Among the core principles that guided the development of this framework is that ***schooling must help all students achieve their highest potential.*** (See Chapter 1.) To accomplish this, students must be provided equitable access to all areas of the curriculum, appropriate high-quality instruction that addresses their needs and maximally advances their skills and knowledge, and settings that are physically and psychologically safe, respectful, and intellectually stimulating. All students must be supported to achieve the goals indicated in the outer ring in Figure 9.1 below. (See Chapters 1-3.)

Figure 9.1. Goals, Themes, and Contexts for Implementation of the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and the CA ELD Standards


Broadly Literate
Ready for College, Career, & Citizenship
In the 21st Century
Capacities of Literate Individuals
Motivating
Engaging
Respectful
Intellectually Challenging Context
Integrated
Meaning Making
Effective Expression
Foundational Skills
Content Knowledge
Language Development
CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy
Reading, Writing, Speaking & Listening, and Language
CA ELD Standards
in All Disciplines

[The United States Department of Education's Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years 2011-2014]() highlights the need to strive for equity in U.S. schools:

> All students—regardless of circumstance—deserve a world-class education. To ensure that America regains its status as the best-educated, most competitive workforce in the world with the highest proportion of college graduates of any country, we must close the pervasive achievement and attainment gaps that exist throughout the nation. Yet, far too often, the quality of a child's education and learning environment, and opportunities to succeed are determined by his or her race, ethnicity, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, language, socioeconomic status, and/or ZIP code…Moreover, too many students feel unsafe or unwelcome at school because they are (or are perceived as) different from other students. All students should have an equal opportunity to learn and excel in a safe and supportive environment. Because inequities at all levels of education still exist, educational equity is the ***civil rights issue of our generation.*** (39-40).

The state of California recognizes its deep responsibility to ensure that each and every child and adolescent receives a world-class 21st century education, one that supports their achievement of their highest potential. In order to accomplish this goal, it is important to acknowledge that inequities exist in current educational systems. Some students have limited access to well prepared teachers and other educational resources, there are persistent academic achievement gaps between minorities and white students and between rich and poor children, and some groups of students experience a low level of safety and acceptance in school depending on their cultural, ethnic, and linguistic background; sexual orientation; poverty level; disability; and other factors. Recognizing the specific inequities that exist helps educators and communities to purposefully and strategically take action and strive for true educational equity for all learners.

This chapter is divided into three major sections. The first section provides information about California's diverse population and includes recommendations for attending to specific educational needs. The second major section discusses planning for meeting the needs of diverse learners at the classroom and school/district level. The final section offers research-based instructional practices for supporting students who are experiencing difficulty reading.

California's Diversity

California's students demonstrate a wide variety of skills, abilities, and interests as well as varying proficiency in English and other languages. They come from diverse cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, have different experiences, and live in different familial and socioeconomic circumstances. The greater the variation of the student population, the richer the learning experiences for all and the more assets upon which teachers may draw. At the same time, the more complex becomes the teacher's role in providing high-quality curriculum and instruction that is sensitive to the needs of individuals. In such complex settings, the notion of ***shared responsibility is particularly crucial***. Teachers must have the support of one another, administrators, specialists, and the community in order to best serve all students.

Several populations of learners are discussed in this section. With over sixty languages other than English spoken by California's students, the rich tapestry of cultural, ethnic, and religious heritages students enjoy, and the range of skill acquisition, physical abilities and circumstances that impact students' lives and learning, it is beyond the scope of this framework to discuss all aspects of California's diverse student population. Highlighted are some groups of students for whom it is especially important to acknowledge and value the resources they bring to school. These groups are also addressed to recognize the need for schools to make necessary shifts to ensure achievement by providing educational access and equity for all students. Though presented separately, ***these populations are not mutually exclusive***; some students are members of multiple groups. Furthermore, it is important that, while teachers inform themselves about particular aspects of their students' backgrounds, ***each population is a heterogeneous group***. Therefore, teachers must know their students as ***individuals***.

Standard English Learners

Standard English learners (SELs) are native speakers of English who are ethnic minority students (e.g., African-American, Native American, Southeast Asian-American, Mexican-American, Native Pacific Islander) *and* whose mastery of the "standard English language" that is privileged in schools is limited because they use an ethnic-specific dialect of English in their homes and communities and use standard English (SE) in limited ways in those communities (LeMoine 1999; Okoye-Johnson 2011). From a linguistic perspective, the ethnic-specific dialects of English that SELs from different communities use is equally legitimate as—and not subordinate to—standard English. Therefore, the dialects of English that SELs use should not be viewed as "improper" or "incorrect" English, and teachers should acknowledge them as valid and valuable varieties of English useful for interacting with home communities, as well as in the classroom.

Multiple studies have demonstrated that not all ways of using English are equally valued in school (Heath 1986; Michaels 1986; Williams 1999; Zentella 1997). Learning to use a language involves acquiring the social and cultural norms, procedures for interpretation, and forms of reasoning particular to discourse communities (Watson-Gegeo 1988). Because there are differences between the varieties of English that SELs use in their home communities and SE, SELs may experience difficulties in successfully participating in school if their teachers do not actively support them to develop SE, and more specifically, academic English.

Teachers have particular and often unconscious expectations about how children should structure their oral language and these expectations are not always transparent to students (Michaels 1986). As Schleppegrell (2012, 412) notes:

> This is a complex problem, because teachers are often not aware of their implicit expectations for the ways children will use language in a particular context; they may judge a child as disorganized or unable to engage in a task effectively when instead the issue is a difference in what the child and teacher recognize the task to be or in how the child and teacher expect the task to be accomplished through language.

The expectations for language use in school are often subtle. In a study focusing on language use by different socio-economic groups, Williams (1999) found that, although both working class and middle class parents in the study read to their children in highly interactive ways in an effort to prepare them for schooling, the nuanced ways in which these two groups interacted through language around the texts favored middle class families because those nuances, such as prompting for elaboration, matched school interactions around texts. Williams argues that teachers should both value the language students bring with them to school and also make the linguistic features of school language, or SE, explicit to students in order to provide them with extended linguistic resources they can draw upon, depending upon the social context in which they find themselves (Spycher 2007).

The next section focuses specifically on one of many dialects of English used by SELs, African American English (AAE). Although AAE speakers are highlighted here, recommendations for how teachers should perceive language diversity and approach the learning of SE apply to all groups of SELs.

African American English (AAE) Speakers

Some African Americans speak African American English (AAE), also termed African-American Vernacular English (AAVE), African American language, Black English Vernacular, Black Language, Black Dialect, or U.S. Ebonics (Chisholm and Godley 2011; Perry and Delpit 1998). Like all other natural linguistic systems, AAE is governed by consistent linguistic rules and has evolved in particular ways based on historical and cultural factors. AAE is fully capable of serving all of the intellectual and social needs of its speakers (Trumbull and Pacheco 2005). In their review of the research on AAE, Trumbull and Pacheco (2005, 38) report:

> Black Language has multiple forms—oral and written, formal and informal, vernacular and literary (Perry, 1998). Its forms and uses derive from its heritage of West African and Niger-Congo languages (Nichols, 1981; O'Neil, 1998). Black Language has been influenced not only by African languages but also by the social circumstances surrounding the histories of African-Americans in the United States. Words and phrases have been coined in order to keep some things private from the dominant white culture (particularly during the time of slavery). For example, railroad terms were used in reference to the Underground Railroad, the system that helped runaway slaves to freedom: Conductor referred to a person who helped the slave and station to a safe hiding place (World Book Online, 2003). The oratorical devices (e.g., rhythm, rhyme, metaphor, repetition) used by African American preachers are distinctive elements of Black Language (Perry, 1998). Many discourse conventions distinguish Black Language, including particular structures for storytelling or narrative writing (Ball, 1997; Heath, 1983; Michaels & Cazden, 1986) or argumentation (Kochman, 1989).

AAE has erroneously been considered by some teachers as ungrammatical or illogical, which has perhaps led some of these teachers to view their students who use AAE as less capable than SE speakers (Chisholm and Godley 2011). These assumptions, often unconscious, are unfounded since linguists have shown that all languages have different dialects that are logical and grammatical (Labov 1972; Wolfram, Adger, and Christian 2007). While these assumptions are clearly unfounded, they are no less damaging to students (Flemister-White 2009).

Delpit (Goldstein, 2012) has questioned research that fails to recognize cultural and dialect differences and that positions low-income African-American children as having a "language deficit." Some literacy research, for example, has suggested that low-income African-American children have smaller vocabularies than children from higher socio-economic backgrounds. However, these differences in the ways different cultural and ethnic groups use language may be unfamiliar and invisible to teachers. Delpit points out that many preschool low-income African-American children may know terms that are different from those SE terms valued in school and therefore may be unfamiliar to many teachers and language researchers. Delpit contends that, "(g)ranted, they may not be words that would be validated in school, but it may be the case that children's vocabularies are greater than we anticipate … The problem is that it is not viewed as intelligent but as evidence of deprivation. It should be looked at as the intelligence of a child learning from his or her environment in the same way a child from a college-educated family would" (ibid).

Delpit also signals to teachers that overcorrecting AAE speakers' dialect-influenced pronunciation and grammar while students are reading aloud (e.g., "Yesterday, I wash my bruvver close") inhibits reading development in multiple ways, not least of which is that it "blocks children's understanding that reading is essentially a meaning-making process" and leads children to think that reading is about pronunciation and not comprehension (Delpit 2006, p 59). Instead of viewing AAE as subordinate or inferior to SE, a more accurate perspective and productive approach would be to view AAE as a cultural and linguistic resource, and like all cultural and linguistic resources, AAE is intimately linked to group identity, empowerment, and positive self-image. This is not to say that teachers should never correct pronunciation or teach students about SE, rather correction should be used judiciously, purposefully, and respectfully.

Research has shown that pedagogical approaches that support students to become "bidialectal," or proficient users of both SE and AAE, are those practices that both explicitly acknowledge the value and linguistic features of AAE, build on students' knowledge of AAE to improve their learning opportunities, and also ensure students have the linguistic resources necessary to meet the expectations of school contexts (Chisholm and Godley 2011; Delpit 1995; Hill 2009; Thompson 2000). These approaches to raising dialect awareness include attention to positive and negative stereotypes associated with the use of SE and AAE, identity, and power. As Chisholm and Godley (2011, 434) explain, three combined approaches enhance students' knowledge about language variation:

1. Teaching explicitly about widespread dialects in the United States or within students' communities;
2. Holding student-centered discussions about the relationship among language, power, and language ideologies; and
3. Asking students to research language use in their own lives.

In their review of the research on these approaches, Chisholm and Godley (2011) demonstrate that instructional approaches that problematize widespread beliefs about language variation and that encourage students to critique these beliefs, as well as research their own language use, promotes substantial student learning about dialects, identity, and power. They suggest that "teachers and students often do not question linguistically erroneous yet publicly taken-for-granted beliefs about language and dialects unless language instruction explicitly guides them to do so" (435).

English Learners

Students who are learning English as an additional language come to California schools from all over the world, and many were born in California. English learners (ELs) come to school with a range of cultural and linguistic backgrounds, experiences with formal schooling, proficiency with native language and English literacy, migrant statuses, and socioeconomic statuses, as well as their interactions in the home, school, and community. All of these factors inform how educators support ELs to achieve school success through the implementation of the CA ELD Standards in tandem with the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy and other content standards. Some of the key factors teachers should consider include:

- **Age:** It is important to note how ELs learn the English language at different stages of their cognitive development. Most notably, it is important to distinguish between students in the primary grades, who are learning how print works for the first time while also engaging in challenging content learning, and students in the intermediate and secondary grades, for whom the focus is on increasingly rigorous disciplinary content and complex literary and informational texts. ELs entering U.S. schools in kindergarten, for example, will benefit from participating in the same instructional activities in literacy as their non-EL peers, along with additional differentiated support based on student needs. ELs who enter U.S.

schools for the first time in high school, depending upon the level and extent of previous schooling they have received, may need additional support mastering certain linguistic and cognitive skills in order to fully engage in intellectually challenging academic tasks. Regardless of their schooling background and exposure to English, all ELs should have full access to the same high quality, intellectually challenging, and content rich instruction and instructional materials as their non-EL peers, along with appropriate levels of scaffolding to ensure success.

- **Primary language and literacy background:** ELs have varying levels of knowledge, skills, and abilities in primary language and literacy. Older ELs may also have considerable content knowledge in core disciplines, such as science or math. Many ELs continue to develop primary language and literacy in both formal bilingual programs or less formally at home. ELs can draw upon their primary language and literacy skills and knowledge and also the content knowledge they've developed in their primary language to inform their English language learning and content knowledge development. Rather than leaving this cross-linguistic "transfer" up to chance, teachers should approach transfer intentionally and strategically. Other ELs may have very limited schooling backgrounds and may have gaps in literacy skills (e.g., decoding, comprehension) and so will require substantial support in particular aspects of literacy instruction. Even with strong primary language foundations, however, some EL adolescents may struggle to master disciplinary literacy, given the accelerated time frame in which they are expected to meet grade-level content-area expectations.
- **Time in the U.S.:** Many ELs were born in the U.S. or began their US schooling in kindergarten. ELs who were born in the U.S. or who have been in U.S. schools for a number of years are fluent in conversational, or "everyday" English (although there may be gaps in some ELs' knowledge of more everyday English), and need to develop academic English in an accelerated manner. Other ELs enter U.S. schools with limited exposure to American culture or to English. Newcomer EL students, students who have been in U.S. schools for less than one year, should be provided with specialized support to ensure their accelerated

development of English, as well as their social integration into their schools. For older students who are newcomers to English, primary language assessments should be used, when available, in order to determine an appropriate instructional program. Especially important to note is that students with strong backgrounds in formal schooling, those who may be performing at grade level in their primary language but who are new to English, will require different specialized instruction than students with less formal schooling.

- **Progress in ELD:** Regardless of their age, primary language and literacy backgrounds, and time in U.S. schools, all ELs should make steady progress in developing English, particularly the types of academic English needed for school success. However, many ELs may have not received the educational support from schooling that they need to continually progress in developing English and for succeeding in academic subjects. These students have been identified as “long-term English learners” (LTELs) because they have been schooled in the U.S. for six or more years but have not made sufficient linguistic and academic progress to meet reclassification criteria and exit EL status. (See Figure 9.1 for the California Education Code definition of *long-term English learner.*) Fluent in social/conversational English but challenged by academic literacy tasks, and particularly disciplinary literacy tasks, LTELs find it difficult to engage meaningfully in increasingly rigorous coursework. California recognizes that LTELs face considerable challenges succeeding in school as the amount and complexity of the academic texts they encounter rapidly increase. Special care should be taken when designing instruction for LTELs, and instruction should focus on accelerating the simultaneous development of academic English and content knowledge in motivating and engaging ways in order to ensure that LTELs are college and career ready.

Figure 9.2. California Education Code Definition of Long-term English Learner

2013 California Education Code 313.1. a & b defines a long-term English learner as "an English learner who is enrolled in any of grades 6 to 12, inclusive, has been enrolled in schools in the United States for more than six years, has remained at the same English language proficiency level for two or more consecutive years" as determined by the state's annual English language development test. In addition, the same California Education Code identifies English learners at risk of becoming long-term English learners as those EL students enrolled in any of grades 5 to 11, in schools in the United States for four years, and who score at the intermediate level or below on the state's annual English language development test the fourth year at the below basic or far below basic level on the English language arts standards-based achievement test.

A comprehensive internal accountability system, which includes both robust formative assessment approaches and summative yearly assessments, is necessary for ensuring that ELs and Reclassified English Proficient Students (see next section) maintain a steady trajectory toward linguistic and academic proficiency and do not fall behind as they progress into and through secondary schooling. It is critical that all educators have detailed and current information on their students’ yearly progress toward English language proficiency and proficiency with the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy. This can only happen with clearly established benchmarks of expected progress in English language proficiency and academic progress that are a function of both the time in U.S. schools and students’ English language proficiency (Hopkins, Thompson, Linquanti, Hakuta, and August 2013). Monitoring the yearly progress of ELs in this manner while also keeping a close eye on the type of ELD and content instruction EL and RFEP students receive, makes it possible for educators to know who their EL students are, determine how well their students are progressing linguistically and academically, and make instructional adjustments in time to improve educational outcomes. Specific guidance on responding to the intimately entwined academic and linguistic needs of English learners is provided throughout this framework. For more information on the stages of English language development as indicated by the CA ELD Standards, see the discussion of Proficiency Level Descriptors in Chapters 2 and 3 of this framework and the CDE publication of the CA ELD Standards.

Reclassified English Proficient Students

Students who have reached “proficiency” in the English language benefit from occasional linguistic support as they continue to build increasing breadth, depth, and complexity in comprehending and communicating in English in a wide variety of contexts. Districts are required to monitor students who are within their first two years of reclassification from “English learner” status to “Reclassified Fluent English Proficient” (RFEP) status two years after reclassification in order to ensure they are maintaining a steady academic trajectory. When RFEP students experience difficulty engaging with academic tasks and texts, schools should rapidly provide them with appropriate support, which may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Student/teacher/parent conference
- Specialized instruction during the school-day, based on multiple formative assessment measures
- Extended learning opportunities (e.g., after school tutoring, zero-period classes).

Instructional Programs and Services for English Learners

As indicated in Figure 9.3, California’s ELs are enrolled in a variety of different school and instructional settings that influence the application of the CA ELD Standards. An EL student could be enrolled in a newcomer or intensive ELD program for most or all of the day, a mainstream program where the student receives specialized ELD instruction for part of the day (e.g., designated ELD time in elementary or an ELD class in secondary), or a bilingual/dual-language program where instruction is provided in both the primary language and English. The CA ELD Standards apply to all of these settings and are designed to be used by all teachers of academic content and of ELD in ways that are appropriate to the setting and identified student needs. For example, they are the focal standards in settings specifically designed for English language development—such as an ELD class where ELs are grouped by English language proficiency level. Additionally, the CA ELD Standards are designed and intended to be used *in tandem with* other academic content standards to support ELs in mainstream academic content classrooms. These could include, for example, a third-grade self-contained classroom during ELA, social studies, math, and science instruction; a middle school math class; or high school science class, among others. When the CA ELD

Standards are used during content instruction in tandem with content standards, this is termed Integrated ELD. When the CA ELD Standards are used as the focal standards during a protected time during the instructional day, this is termed Designated ELD (see Chapters 2 and 3 and the grade span chapters for additional information on Integrated and Designated ELD instruction).

Whether EL students are enrolled in alternative bilingual or mainstream English programs, all California educators have the dual obligation to provide EL students with meaningful access to grade-level academic content via appropriate instruction and to develop students' academic English language proficiency.

Figure 9.3. Instructional Characteristics in Programs for English Learners

Instructional Characteristics	**Type of Program**			
	Two-Way Immersion	**Developmental Bilingual**	**Transitional Bilingual**	**Mainstream English-only**
Language and Literacy Goals	Biliteracy in home language and English		Literacy in English and validation of home languages	
Typical Models	*Elementary:* Proportion of home language to English in instruction starts at 90/10 or 50/50 in Kindergarten to approximately 20/80 by fifth grade *Secondary:* Some content and home language (e.g., Spanish for Spanish speakers) coursework in home language	*Elementary and Secondary:* Proportion of home language to English varies with full transition to English varying depending on availability of the program at later grades	*Elementary:* Proportion of home language to English varies with full transition to English typically by the third or fourth grade	Mainstream English Structured English Immersion (SEI)

Instructional Characteristics		Type of Program			
		Two-Way Immersion	Developmental Bilingual	Transitional Bilingual	Mainstream English-only
Language of Instruction	Home Language	Literacy in the home language taught across the disciplines		Strategic use of home language	
	English	Literacy in English introduced sequentially or simultaneously			All content instruction in English
	English Language Development Instruction	Occurs daily Careful scope and sequence designed to ensure students can fluently decode and comprehend grade-level texts in English by the late elementary grades Includes Parts I and II of the ELD Standards May include instruction in foundational literacy skills (ELD Standards, Part III), where appropriate			Occurs daily Includes Parts I and II of the ELD Standards Part III of the ELD Standards is addressed during ELA (some students may need specialized attention during ELD)

Biliterate Students

In California, biliteracy is valued and the primary languages that ELs bring to school are considered important resources, valuable in their own right and as a base from which to develop English as an additional language. Also valued are the benefits to native speakers of English in becoming bilingual and biliterate. While developmental bilingual programs provide means for ELs to become biliterate in their native language and English, two-way, or dual, immersion programs allow both ELs and native English speakers to become biliterate in each other's languages.

ELs who are developing language and literacy in two languages simultaneously in the elementary grades and all students in two-way immersion programs require a carefully-designed scope and sequence that ensures steady progress in both languages. This scope and sequence includes on-going formative assessment in both languages and careful analysis of assessment feedback in order to inform instructional decisions. Like all students, students in biliteracy programs must be well-prepared for engaging with complex grade-level texts in English in the upper elementary grades and through secondary schooling.

Deaf Students Bilingual in ASL and Printed English

All students have the right to instruction and assessment that is both linguistically and culturally appropriate. Deaf community members who use American Sign Language (ASL) view themselves as a cultural and linguistic minority, rather than individuals with a disability (Ladd 2003). Although deaf and hard-of-hearing students constitute a small percentage of California's school population, teachers must consider their unique visual linguistic and learning needs when designing and providing instruction and assessment. For example, the acquisition of written English cannot rely on letter-sound correspondences for these students. Deaf and hard-of-hearing students whose primary language is American Sign Language learn English as a second language. In this sense they are similar in many ways to English learners who have a spoken primary language. The linguistic outcome for Deaf and hard-of-hearing students in bilingual language programs is to become proficient in both ASL and printed English.[1]

ASL is the signed language of deaf people in the United States. ASL is a natural language, operating in the visual-gestural modalities rather than the audio-oral modalities of spoken languages such as English, and has grammatical and expressive properties equivalent to those in spoken natural languages. ASL developed through interaction among deaf people in deaf communities across the United States. (Distinct signed languages develop throughout the world anywhere communities of deaf people communicate with each other using sign.) ASL literature and performance is recorded in video. Fingerspelling is a key component of American Sign Language and provides a linguistic link between ASL and English in that the handshapes are based on letters of the English alphabet and can be used to spell out English words. However, fingerspelling is also integrated into ASL vocabulary and grammar in more complex and systematic ways (Baker 2010).

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[1] Some deaf or hard-of-hearing students may be able to learn to understand and/or use some spoken English, depending on the level or type of residual hearing they have and at what age they lost their hearing. Deaf students can most easily learn spoken English after acquiring written English skills.

Deaf children of Deaf parents who use ASL acquire ASL as a native (primary) language from birth. Research has shown that native users of American Sign Language demonstrate higher proficiency levels in English than non-native users (Strong and Prinz 1997). Children who are born to hearing parents may start learning ASL at a later age. Many deaf students do not learn ASL until they enter school; because they are learning what is in effect their primary language at a late age, they may also be delayed in learning their second language, the written English language system. Schools with bilingual language programs in ASL and English for Deaf students can facilitate the development of both languages by building on ASL as the primary language, using it to teach a broad range of subjects and to develop primary language knowledge and skills, and using ASL to support the development of written English.

Deaf and hard of hearing students are educated throughout California in a variety of settings. The type of primary language support provided varies with the setting. In schools where students are placed in the mainstream classroom, primary language support for Deaf and hard-of-hearing students who use ASL typically consists of translating oral (speaking and listening[2]) classroom activities via an interpreter from English into ASL and vice versa.

In bilingual programs for Deaf students, the language of instruction is ASL. Students' primary language, along with printed English, is used throughout the day to provide instructional content. Students view speeches and performances directly in their primary language. When instructional materials are not available in ASL, captioning or printed English is used. Students also give presentations and have discussions in their primary language. Interpreters are not used in the classroom as all teachers are fluent in American Sign Language, enabling direct instruction in the students' primary language.

Students Living in Poverty

More than one in five of California's children and adolescents live in poverty (U.S. Census Bureau 2012). Some students living in poverty are from families where parents are working one or more jobs yet they are having difficulty surviving economically.

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[2] As noted throughout this framework, speaking and listening should be broadly interpreted to include signing and viewing for Deaf and hard-of-hearing students whose primary language is American Sign Language (ASL).

Some have moved often with their families, changing schools every year or multiple times each year, because of economic circumstances, including job loss. Some are unaccompanied minors, some are living on the street or in shelters with their families, some have stable housing but often go hungry. They are a heterogeneous group made up of all ethnicities, but students of color are overrepresented in the population of students in kindergarten through grade twelve living below the poverty line (U.S. Department of Education 2013).

The challenges individuals living in poverty face are complex. The resources of many agencies working in collaboration are required to mitigate the negative effects of poverty. A broad interpretation of “shared responsibility,” that is, one that includes agencies beyond the public education system, is crucial in order to serve these students.

Poverty is a risk factor for poor academic outcomes. In other words, children and youth living in poverty are more likely than their peers to experience academic difficulty. However, the effects poverty has on individuals vary based on “the individual’s characteristics (such as personality traits), specific life experience (such as loss of housing), and contextual factors (such as neighborhood crime), as well as the stressor’s timing...” and the presence of protective factors, which includes affirming, positive, and supportive relationships with teachers and schools (Moore 2013, 4). Thus, the respectful, positive, and supportive schools called for throughout this chapter and the entire framework—important for all students—are especially crucial for students living in the psychologically and physically stressful circumstances that come with poverty.

Children and youth living in poverty often miss many days of school; some stop attending altogether. Many transfer from one school to another as their living circumstances dictate. As a result, there are often gaps in their education. Research indicates that high residential mobility during the early years is related to poor initial reading achievement and subsequent trajectories (Voight, Shinn, and Nation 2012). It is essential that teachers and districts identify these students early and work with them to determine and address their needs. Those children in this population who do experience academic success in the early years are more likely to succeed in subsequent years; early success in reading has been demonstrated to have particular significance for this population (Herber, and others 2012).

Students living in poverty are more likely to struggle with engagement in school. Jensen (2008) discussed seven areas of concern for low-income students and recommended actions that teachers can take to mitigate their effects (summarized and adapted in Figure 9.4). The issues cannot be addressed solely in the classroom. Other resources must be harnessed to more fully address the needs of these students. (See also Kaiser, Roberts and McLeod 2011 for a discussion of poverty and language delays.)

Figure 9.4. Poverty and Classroom Engagement: Issues and Classroom Actions (summarized and adapted from Jensen, 2008)

Issue	Action
Health and Nutrition Students living in poverty generally are in poorer health and have poorer nutrition than their middle-class peers. Poor health and nutrition affects attention, cognition, and behavior.	Ensure students have daily opportunities for physical activity and that they and their families are aware of free and reduced lunch programs and medical, including mental health, services offered in the community.
Academic Language Students living in poverty generally have limited experience with the kind of language highly valued in school—academic language—than their middle-class peers. Academic language includes general academic and domain-specific vocabulary, discourse practices, and understandings about how different text types are structured.	Attend to academic language development in all areas of the curriculum and in classroom routines. As noted throughout this framework, academic language, which includes vocabulary, is a crucial component of ELA/literacy programs and disciplinary learning (as well as all aspects of life and learning). Provide rich language models, prompt and extend responses, engage the student in discussions.
Effort Some students living in poverty may appear to lack effort at school. This might be due to lack of hope or optimism, depression, or learned helplessness.	Recognize the critical role that teachers and schools play in students' willingness to exert themselves academically. Strengthen relationships between the school and students.
Hope and the Growth Mind-Set Low socioeconomic status is related to low expectations and a vision of a negative future.	Ensure that students know that their futures and their abilities are not fixed. Provide high-quality feedback that is task-specific and actionable.

Issue	Action
	Support students' beliefs in their potential (not their limitations) and the rewards of effort.
Cognition Students living in poverty often demonstrate lower academic achievement than their middle-class peers. They may have lower attention spans and other cognitive difficulties. This may result in problem behavior or giving up.	Break content into smaller, manageable components. Ensure that all students receive a rich, engaging, and intellectually stimulating curriculum. Encourage students and provide positive feedback.
Relationships Students living in poverty face considerable adversity, often in the form of disruptive or stressful home relationships. They may become mistrustful or disrespectful; they may be impulsive and respond inappropriately at school.	Ensure that adults at school are positive, caring and respectful. Make expectations clear. Above all, treat students living in poverty, as well as their families, with dignity, and convey the attitude that all students are welcome and capable of achieving to the highest levels.
Distress Students living in poverty often live in acute chronic distress, which impacts brain development, academic success, and social competence. They may demonstrate aggressive and inappropriate behavior or exhibit passivity.	Recognize the cause of the behavior. Build positive and respectful relationships. Teach coping skills. Seek advice from other school or district professionals, when appropriate.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Students

All California's children and adolescents have the fundamental right to be respected and feel safe in their school environment, yet many do not because of their sexual orientation or gender expression. Research indicates that kindergarten through grade 6 students who are gender nonconforming are less likely than other students to feel very safe at school and more likely to indicate that they sometimes do not want to go to school because they feel unsafe or afraid. Furthermore, they are more likely to be made fun of, called names, or bullied (GLSEN and Harris Interactive 2012). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) students between the ages of 13 and 18 also report feeling unsafe and experiencing harassment or assault at school. Like their younger counterparts, they miss days of school to avoid a hostile climate. Notably, students in middle school report higher frequencies of victimization than students in high school (GLSEN 2012).

All California educators have a duty to protect students' right to physical and psychological safety and ensure that each of their students has the opportunity to thrive. The California *Education Code* (EC) Section 200 et seq. prohibits discrimination on the basis of various protected groups, including sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. California recognizes that discrimination and harassment in schools "can have a profound and prolonged adverse effect on students' ability to benefit from public education and maximize their potential" (California Department of Education 2012). Furthermore, research suggests that victimization based on sexual orientation or gender expression is related to lower academic achievement and educational aspirations as well as poorer psychological well-being (GSLEN 2012).

General recommendations from the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN 2012) for schools regarding students in this heterogeneous population include the following:

- Adopt and implement clear policies and procedures that address bullying and harassment for any reason, thus promoting respectful and safe environments for all students
- Provide training to educators and ensure that all students have access to a welcoming environment and supportive, respectful teachers and staff who will intervene on their behalf
- Increase students' access to an inclusive curriculum (California Senate Bill 48 added language to *Education Code* Section 51204.5 prescribing the inclusion of the contributions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Americans to the economic, political, and social development of California and the United States of America, with particular emphasis on portraying the role of these groups in contemporary society)

Additional recommendations include the following:

- Make available and share age-appropriate literature that reflects the diversity of humankind and thoughtfully deals with the complexities and dynamics of intolerance and discrimination

- Teach students by example and through discussion how to treat diverse others

California students who are not themselves in this population may have parents or guardians who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender. All students and their families need to feel safe, respected, and welcomed in school.

Advanced Learners

Advanced learners*,* for purposes of this framework*,* are students who demonstrate or are capable of demonstrating performance in ELA/literacy at a level significantly above the performance of their age group. They may include (1) students formally identified by a school district as gifted and talented pursuant to California *Education Code* Section 52200 and (2) other students who have not been formally identified as gifted and talented but who demonstrate the capacity for advanced performance in ELA/literacy. In California, each school district sets its own criteria for identifying gifted and talented students.

The informal identification of students' learning needs (#2 above) is important because some students, particularly California's culturally and linguistically diverse learners, may not exhibit advanced learning characteristics in culturally or linguistically congruent or familiar ways. For example, a kindergartener who enters U.S. schools as a newcomer to English and is fluently translating for others by the end of the year may not be formally identified as advanced but may in fact be best served by programs offered to gifted and talented students. Likewise, students with disabilities may not be identified as gifted and talented as readily as others by teachers, yet some students with disabilities may be also gifted and talented. They are "twice exceptional" and instruction must address both sets of needs (International Dyslexia Association 2013; Nicpon, Allmon, Sieck, and Stinson 2011). Teachers must be prepared through preservice and inservice professional learning programs to recognize the ***range of learners*** who are gifted and talented. As noted previously, the populations discussed in this chapter are not mutually exclusive and each is heterogeneous. A statement from National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) about the CCSS is provided in Figure 9.5.

Figure 9.5. The NAGC's Statement on the CCSS and Gifted Education

Application of the Common Core State Standards for Gifted and Talented Students

. . .

Gifted and talented students learn more quickly and differently from their classmates. They come from every ethnic background and socioeconomic group and vary from their age peers and from other gifted students in the ways and rate at which they learn, and the domains in which they are gifted. These differences require modifications to curriculum and instruction, as well as to assessments, to ensure that these students are appropriately challenged. Too many advanced students languish in today's classrooms with little rigor and much repetition. With careful planning, the new standards offer the prospect of improving the classroom experience for high-ability students in significant ways; not only in how the new materials are developed and presented, but also the ways in which student knowledge is measured, leading to appropriate instructional decision-making.

In considering advanced students, grade-level standards will be inadequate in challenging them each day with new information. Gifted learners are well able to meet, and exceed, the core standards on a faster timetable than their age peers. Therefore, it is critical that curriculum is matched to student ability through a range of content acceleration strategies and that teachers are able to implement an array of differentiation strategies to supplement and extend the curriculum. These include a variety of flexible grouping strategies, creative and critical-thinking opportunities, and other approaches designed to add depth and complexity to the curriculum. Significantly, the professional development investment in these differentiation skills benefits the entire student spectrum. It is particularly important in schools without gifted and talented programs, often in low-income communities, where students are dependent on the regular classroom teacher to meet their needs.

Assessment is a critical component of teaching and learning and, therefore, teachers and other key personnel should be familiar with a range of student assessment tools to ensure that students are able to transfer and apply learned content. Assessments should also measure student knowledge of above-grade level standards in order to make instructional modifications necessary to ensure that advanced students are continuing to learn new material and concepts every day.

The new math and language arts standards provide an opportunity for advanced students to succeed, with the support of rigorous curriculum, teaching strategies to adjust the depth and complexity, and assessments that measure the true level of student knowledge. Standards and accompanying instructional materials that consider their needs will help gifted students and their classmates succeed.

From the National Association for Gifted Children (www.nagc.org)

A synthesis of research (Rogers 2007) on the education of students identified as gifted and talented suggests that they should be provided the following:

- Daily challenge in their specific areas of talent

- Regular opportunities to be unique and to work independently in their areas of passion and talent
- Various forms of subject-based and grade-based acceleration as their educational needs require
- Opportunities to socialize and learn with peers with similar abilities
- Instruction that is differentiated in pace, amount of review and practice, and organization of content presentation

Instruction for advanced learners should focus on depth and complexity. Opportunities to engage with appropriately challenging text and content, conduct research, use technology creatively, and write regularly on topics that interest them can be especially valuable for advanced learners; these experiences allow students to engage more deeply with content and may contribute to motivation. Instruction that focuses on depth and complexity ensures cohesion in learning rather than piecemeal "enrichment."

As discussed in Chapter 3 in this framework, assessments and tasks vary in their cognitive complexity, or the "depth of knowledge" (often referred to as "DoK") called upon (Webb 2005). Depth of Knowledge levels include, from least to most complex, the following: recall and reproduction (Level 1), skills and concepts (Level 2), strategic thinking/reasoning (Level 3), and extended thinking (Level 4). The more complex tasks, those at DoK levels 3 and 4, generally require more time and involve the use of more resources. Advanced learners—***and all students***—should have ample opportunities to engage in a mixture of tasks with particular attention to those most cognitively engaging and challenging, that is, tasks involving strategic thinking/reasoning and extended thinking.

Snapshot 9.1 Advanced Learners Collaborate to Interpret Literary Text

Mrs. Bee's grade six class has been reading *The Giver* by Lois Lowry. The class is writing an essay and creating a presentation based on the Ceremony of Twelve. The advanced learners in Mrs. Bee's class research other rite of passage ceremonies around the world and incorporate elements of their research into their presentation. Using the depth and complexity concept of rules (Sandra Kaplan Depth and Complexity icons) the students justify their choice of rite of passage elements from other cultures and explain their relevance to the themes Lois Lowry uses in *The Giver.* The five advanced students in Mrs. Bee's class meet as a literature circle as part of their independent work contract with Mrs. Bee. The literature group reviews the rules of respect (making sure everyone has the same understanding), participation (everyone actively shares), time (stay on task), and preparation (completed the reading and have questions and/or comments) contained within their independent work contract. Each person in the group has a role to fulfill before coming into the literature circle based on the required chapter reading:

- Facilitator: Facilitates the discussion, asks the questions and makes sure everyone participates, keeps everyone on task, reviews the group rules, notes any unanswered questions, is the only person from the group allowed to approach the teacher for clarification, and closes the discussion. This member also identifies any details of the character(s), setting, plot, conflict, or events to discuss.
- Illustrator: Identifies the 'big picture' that the author is trying to create. The illustrator also identifies specific quotes and creates an image based on the quote for the group, identifies other familiar images based on character(s), setting, or conflict, and assists other group members with comprehension through quick sketches, photos, or clip art.
- Connector: Looks for real-world connections in the story to other stories and/or characters, historical events, or personal experiences. Identifies what is realistic in the story or what possible historical people and/or events may have influenced the author.
- Character Sleuth: Keeps track of one main character in the story. Identifies their strengths, weaknesses, thoughts, feelings, motives, etc. Identifies how the character changes over time and what events in the story force this change to happen.
- Linguist: Identifies figurative language in context and defines the literal meaning for: theme, character(s), setting and how this enhances the telling of the story. Identify any unknown words and definitions. Identifies specific quotes and explain why the author used literary devices.

Today, the facilitator begins the group's discussion about the Ceremony of Twelve. The Illustrator and the Connector have joined forces to work cooperatively to ensure the rest of the group understands the rites of passage in other cultures, both past and present. The Character Sleuth proposes a theory regarding the main character and the Ceremony of Twelve. He prepares for the group meeting by placing sticky notes next to sections of the text that support his theory. The Linguist identifies specific figurative language that can be used in the group's presentation. The group decides to:

Categorize (basic thinking skill) – using rules to organize things that share characteristics

Note Patterns (differentiate content – depth) identifying recurring elements or repeated factors
Use Media (research skills – resources) searching contemporary and historical archives online
Make a Photo Essay (product) printing and displaying a collection of pictures on a poster with a drawing of the Ceremony of Twelve in the Center.
Conduct a Panel Discussion (product) organizing an oral presentation to debate dilemmas or controversies involved with these rites of passage (ethics)
The group's presentation idea came from the following resource:
Kaplan, S. N, Gould, B., and Siegel, Victoria. 1995. *A Quick and Easy Method for Developing Differentiated Learning Experiences*. Calabasas, CA: Educator to Educator.

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RL.6.1, RL.6.2, RL.6.3, RL.6.4, SL.6.1

Students with Disabilities

In accordance with The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA), reauthorized in 2004, California provides special education and other related services as a part of a free appropriate public education to students who meet the criteria for any of the following (presented alphabetically): autism, deafness, deaf-blindness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impairment, specific learning disability, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment, including blindness. (See the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities for detailed descriptions.)

Students with specific learning disabilities and speech and language impairment make up approximately two-thirds of students receiving special education services (Data Quest 2011). Although specific learning disabilities vary widely, difficulty reading is the most common type of specific learning disability. (However, it is important to note that students experiencing difficulty reading do not necessarily have a learning disability. There are many causes for low achievement in reading, including inadequate instruction. Under IDEA, a student who is performing below grade level may not be determined to have a specific learning disability if the student's performance is primarily a result of limited English proficiency or if it is due to a lack of appropriate instruction.) All students with disabilities require knowledgeable teachers who work closely with education specialists and families to determine how best to provide equitable access to the curriculum.

The authors of the CCSS provided specific recommendations for ensuring that students with disabilities have appropriate access to the standards. Their statement, *Application to Students with Disabilities*, is provided in Figure 9.6. See Figure 9.7 for information about students with autism spectrum disorders, the fastest growing population of students with disabilities.

Figure 9.6. CCSSO Statement About the Application of the CCSS to Students with Disabilities

Application to Students with Disabilities

The Common Core State Standards articulate rigorous grade-level expectations in the areas of mathematics and English language arts. These standards identify the knowledge and skills students need in order to be successful in college and careers.

Students with disabilities—students eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—must be challenged to excel within the general curriculum and be prepared for success in their post-school lives, including college and/or careers. These common standards provide an historic opportunity to improve access to rigorous academic content standards for students with disabilities. The continued development of understanding about research-based instructional practices and a focus on their effective implementation will help improve access to mathematics and English language arts (ELA) standards for all students, including those with disabilities.

. . . *how* these high standards are taught and assessed is of the utmost importance in reaching this diverse group of students.

In order for students with disabilities to meet high academic standards and to fully demonstrate their conceptual and procedural knowledge and skills in mathematics, reading, writing, speaking and listening (English language arts), their instruction must incorporate supports and accommodations, including:

- Supports and related services designed to meet the unique needs of these students and to enable their access to the general education curriculum (IDEA 34 CFR §300.34, 2004).
- An Individualized Education Program (IEP) which includes annual goals aligned with and chosen to facilitate their attainment of grade-level academic standards.
- Teachers and specialized instructional support personnel who are prepared and qualified to deliver high-quality, evidence-based, individualized instruction and support services.

Promoting a culture of high expectations for all students is a fundamental goal of the Common Core State Standards. In order to participate with success in the general curriculum, students with disabilities, as appropriate, may be provided additional supports and services, such as:

- Instructional supports for learning— based on the principles of Universal Design for Learning

(UDL) —which foster student engagement by presenting information in multiple ways and allowing for diverse avenues of action and expression.

- Instructional accommodations (Thompson, Morse, Sharpe & Hall, 2005) —changes in materials or procedures—which do not change the standards but allow students to learn within the framework of the Common Core.
- Assistive technology devices and services to ensure access to the general education curriculum and the Common Core State Standards.

Some students with the most significant cognitive disabilities will require substantial supports and accommodations to have meaningful access to certain standards in both instruction and assessment, based on their communication and academic needs. These supports and accommodations should ensure that students receive access to multiple means of learning and opportunities to demonstrate knowledge, but retain the rigor and high expectations of the Common Core State Standards.

From the Common Core State Standards Initiative. 2010.
http://www.corestandards.org/assets/application-to-students-with-disabilities.pdf

Figure 9.7. Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders

Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) represent the fastest growing population of students with disabilities. Students with ASD experience many challenges, especially in the area of social awareness – understanding how their behavior and actions affect others and interpreting the nonverbal cues (body language) of others (Constable, Grossi, Moniz, and Ryan 2013). Having difficulty in recognizing and understanding the thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and intentions of others can be problematic in regards to achieving the ELA/Literacy standards that require communication and collaboration as well as those that require interpreting the feelings, thoughts, and intentions of characters or real persons. Teachers of students with ASD need to understand how these difficulties manifest themselves in the classroom in relation to the standards as well as how to provide instruction for these students to comprehend and write narratives related to the task at hand. Although some students with ASD are able to answer questions such as ‘who’, ‘what’, and ‘where,’ they often struggle answering questions asking ‘how’ and ‘why.’ These issues become progressively more challenging as the demands to integrate information for various purposes increases at the secondary level. Teachers can find supports to enhance comprehension and ameliorate potentially anxious and stressful experiences by incorporating cognitive behavioral strategies identified by the National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders. Among important considerations are the following;

- physically positioning oneself for face-to-face interactions and establishing attention
- providing verbal models for specific tasks
- responding to students’ verbal and nonverbal initiations

- providing meaningful verbal feedback
- expanding students’ utterances
- ensuring students have the prerequisite skills for a task
- breaking down tasks into manageable components
- knowing and using what students find motivating
- ensuring the use of appropriately challenging and interesting tasks

Students who receive special education and related services in the public school system must have an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP is a federally mandated individualized document specifically designed to address an individual’s unique needs. It includes information about the student’s current performance (including strengths), annual goals, and services and supports to be provided. The members of the IEP team—teachers, parents, school administrators, related services personnel, and students (when appropriate)—work collaboratively to improve educational results for students with disabilities. ELs with disabilities should have linguistically appropriate goals and objectives in their IEP in addition to all the services the student may require due to their disability. The IEP serves as the foundation of a quality education for each student with a disability.

Depending on the individualized needs, some students with disabilities may receive supports and/or services with a 504 plan rather than an IEP. A "504 plan" refers to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act, which specifies that no one with a disability can be excluded from participating in federally funded programs or activities, including elementary, secondary or postsecondary schooling. "Disability" in this context refers to a "physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities." This can include physical impairments; illnesses or injuries; communicable diseases; chronic conditions like asthma, allergies and diabetes; and learning problems. A 504 plan spells out the modifications and accommodations that will be needed for these students to have an opportunity perform at the same level as their peers, and might include such things as an extra set of textbooks, a peanut-free lunch environment, or a tape recorder or keyboard for taking notes.

Accommodations and Modifications for Students with Disabilities

Most students who are eligible for special education services are able to achieve the standards when the following three conditions are met:

1. Standards are implemented within the foundational principles of Universal Design for Learning. (See previous section in this chapter.)
2. A variety of evidence-based instructional strategies are considered to align materials, curriculum, and production to reflect the interests, preferences, and readiness of diverse learners maximizing students' potential to accelerate learning.
3. Appropriate accommodations are provided to help students access grade-level content.

Accommodations are changes that help a student to overcome or work around the disability. Accommodations do not reduce the learning or performance expectations but allow the student to complete an assignment of assessment with a change in presentation, response, setting, timing or scheduling so that learners are provided equitable access during instruction and assessment. They also include learner-appropriate behavior management techniques. See Figure 9.8.

More guidance is available in *The California Accommodations Guide: Selecting, Administering, and Evaluating Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment for Students with Disabilities* (California Department of Education 2012) and the CCSSO's *Accommodations Manual: How to Select, Administer, and Evaluate Use of Accommodations for Instruction and Assessment of Students with Disabilities* (Thompson, Morse, Sharpe, and Hall 2005).

Figure 9.8. Types of Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Type of Accommodation	Examples
Changes in timing or scheduling	• Extended time (e.g., to allow for limited dexterity) • Frequent breaks (e.g., to avoid physical discomfort) • Dividing assignment over several sessions (e.g., to avoid eye strain or frustration)
Changes in setting/environment	• Specialized furniture (e.g., adjustable height desk to allow for wheelchair) • Preferential seating (e.g., close to white board to support low vision or to be free from distractions) • Stabilization of instructional materials (e.g., book holder to support weak fine motor skills)
Changes in how the curriculum is presented	• Varied lesson presentation using multi-sensory techniques • Use of American Sign Language (ASL) • Provision of audio and digital versions of texts
Changes in how the student responds	• Uses large lined paper or computer for written work • Responds in Braille • Uses a recoding device to record/playback questions, passages, and responses
Behavioral strategies	• Use of behavioral management techniques appropriate for the learner • Reinforce self-monitoring and self-recording of behaviors

The selection of and evaluation of accommodations for students with disabilities who are also ELs must involve collaboration among educational specialists, the classroom teacher, teachers providing instruction in English Language Development, families, and the student. It is important to note that ELs are disproportionately represented in the population of students identified with disabilities.

The following five major conditions are important to consider in selecting accommodations for English learners and students with disabilities (Abedi and Ewers 2013):

1. Effectiveness: An accommodation must be effective in making an assessment more accessible to the recipients.
2. Validity: An accommodation should not alter the focal construct, i.e., the outcomes of accommodated and non-accommodated assessments should be

comparable.

3. Differential Impact: An accommodation should be sensitive to student's background characteristics, and their academic standing, i.e., one size may not fit all.
4. Relevance: An accommodation should be appropriate for the recipients.
5. Feasibility: An accommodation must be logistically feasible to implement in the assessment setting.

Unlike accommodations, ***modifications*** are adjustments to an assignment or assessment that changes what is expected or measured. Modifications should be used with caution as they alter, change, lower, or reduce learning expectations and can increase the gap between the achievement of students with disabilities and expectations for proficiency. Examples of modifications include:

- Reducing the expectations of an assignment or assessment (completing fewer problems, amount of materials or level of problems to complete),
- Making assignments or assessment items easier, or
- Providing clues to correct responses.

Accommodations and modifications play important roles in helping students with disabilities access the core curriculum and demonstrate what they know and can do. The student's IEP or 504 Plan team determines the appropriate accommodations and modifications for both instruction and state and district assessments. Decisions about accommodations and modifications must be made on an individual student basis, not on the basis of category of disability or administrative convenience. For example, rather than selecting accommodations and modifications from a generic checklist, IEP and 504 Plan team members (including families and the student) need to carefully consider and evaluate the effectiveness of accommodations for each student.

Accommodations and modifications support equitable instruction and assessment for students by lessening the effects of a student's disability. Without accommodations and modifications, students with disabilities may have difficulty accessing grade level instruction and participating fully on assessments. When possible, accommodations and modifications should be the same or similar across classroom instruction, classroom tests and state/district assessments. However, some accommodations and modifications may be appropriate only for instructional use and may not be appropriate for use on a standardized assessment. It is crucial that educators are familiar with state policies regarding accommodations used during assessment.

Serving Students with Disabilities

Depending upon the learner and the identified needs, different types and configurations of special services are provided to students with disabilities, ranging from consultative to intensive instruction. ***The education specialist and general education teacher share responsibility*** for developing and implementing Individualized Education Programs, ensuring students with disabilities are provided optimal support toward achievement of their highest potential, and communicating and collaborating with families in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways.

Some students with disabilities are served exclusively in the general education class and do not receive instruction directly from the education specialist. The specialist, however, consults with the general education teacher, providing resources, professional learning, and other support. Furthermore, the education specialist, along with the general education teacher, monitors the student’s progress.

Some students with disabilities receive core instruction in the general education class as well as instruction from the specialist when needed, either in the general education setting or in a special education setting. The general educator receives guidance from the specialist and the two (or more) collaborate to provide the student with optimal instruction. At times, general educators and education specialists engage in co-teaching; the general educator and the education specialist deliver instruction in the same general classroom setting to a blended group of students (that is, those with and without identified disabilities). There are several models of co-teaching (Bacharach, Heck, and Dahlberg 2010, Friend and Bursuck 2009), some of which are presented in Figure 11.7 in Chapter 11.

Some students with disabilities require highly specialized or intensive intervention instruction from the educational specialist in an alternative setting outside of the general education classroom. These students participate in general education classes and interact with students without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate given the nature of their disabilities.

Snapshot 9.2 Differentiated Instruction in a Grade Nine Co-Taught Language Arts Class

Ms. Williams, a general education language arts teacher, and Ms. Malouf, a special education teacher, co-teach an English 9 class of 36 students, nine of whom are students receiving specially designed instruction to support Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals for reading comprehension and written expression. The class is studying the literature of Edgar Allan Poe and supplementary informational documents.

After being introduced to Poe's life and reading selected poems and short stories, students are placed strategically into one of three groups and assigned one of three unique grade-level informational texts addressing different theories of Poe's cause of death, which will be used for part of their summative assessment at the conclusion of the unit, an argumentative essay.

As routinely practiced, the co-teachers carefully plan the groupings to ensure that membership is not static but changes frequently to ensure that all students have the opportunity to move across learning groups that best correspond to the instructional purpose and students' instructional skills, interests, and needs. In addition, Ms. Williams and Ms. Malouf switch their instructional roles to ensure shared responsibility for teaching all students. They also make sure that accommodations are provided as identified on the IEPs for students with disabilities. In their classroom, two students are provided digitized text and specialized software to access the text with auditory supports and visual enhancements and another student has access to a portable word processor with grammar/word spell check software to take notes and complete written assignments.

For today's lesson, the students are grouped according to the level of scaffolding and differentiated instruction needed to comprehend the text, with the final objective for all students to evaluate the three different theories. One group is given a text and provided with instructions on use of engagement structures to utilize while working on their assignment. They will work collaboratively in small groups of three to four, to identify and annotate claims and supporting textual evidence, as well as to provide elaboration to explain how the evidence supports the author's claim. The students are provided with elaboration stems as well as sentence starters to help support their meaningful engagement in listening and speaking. Ms. Williams and Ms. Malouf takes turns monitoring the small groups periodically throughout the instructional period.

Groups two and three are composed of students who need direct teacher support to navigate, comprehend, and respond to the text. Each group is provided one of the two remaining texts and works together with direct support from either Ms. Williams or Ms. Malouf to complete the same assignment as group one, focusing specifically on claims and supporting evidence. They are also provided with elaboration stems and sentence starters to help support their meaningful engagement in listening and speaking. The teachers differentiate instruction using read alouds and think alouds while providing additional visual supports by displaying, highlighting, and chunking the text using document cameras. All three groups are held to the same rigorous expectations and standards.

After the three groups are finished, each group of students presents their claims and evidence. As each group presents, the students add necessary facts and details as information is being shared, read, or discussed into an advanced organizer prepared by the teachers to support and interpret the incoming information. The students will continue to complete their organizers after they receive the other two texts to annotate.

At the end of class, students are given an Exit Slip with a prompt as a way for Ms. Williams and Ms. Malouf to assess how accurately students can independently express the authors' claims and the ways they support those claims. The Exit Slip provides an informal measure of the students' understanding, allowing the teachers to adapt and differentiate their planning and instruction for the following lesson.

At the end of the unit, students will write an argumentative essay using their completed advanced organizer as well as copies of all three texts.

Additional support is provided to some of the students in this class through enrollment in an English 9 supplemental support class with Ms. Malouf. This class is closely aligned to the English 9 course and is designed to provide additional time and support to assist students to achieve in the course and to build skills in which they are struggling. The lower teacher-to-student ratio in the class allows for targeted direct instruction based on student needs and designed to accelerate students to grade level. In addition, Ms. Malouf is able to pre-teach and reteach lessons and skills from the English 9 course by providing additional scaffolds as needed for learning and gradually removing them as students gain skills.

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: RL.9.10, RI.9.1, RI.9.2, RI.9.3, RI.9.5, RI.9.10, W.9.1, W.9.4, W.9.9b, SL.9.1, SL.9.4

Planning for and Supporting the Range of Learners

This section of the chapter focuses on classroom-and school/district-level processes and structures for planning for and supporting all of California's learners in transitional kindergarten through grade twelve. It begins with a discussion of Universal Design for Learning and then presents information about Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and the implementation of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy.

Universal Design for Learning

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is a research-based framework for guiding educational practice. (See www.udlcenter.org.) Based on the premise that "one-size-fits-all" curricula create unintentional barriers to learning for many students, including the mythical “average” student, UDL focuses on ***planning instruction*** in such a way to meet the varied needs of students. Not a special education initiative, UDL acknowledges the needs of all learners at the point of “first teaching,” thereby reducing the amount of follow-up and alternative instruction necessary.

UDL involves the use of effective teaching practices and the intentional differentiation of instruction from the outset to meet the needs of the full continuum of learners. Teachers who employ UDL attend to how information is shared along with choices of action, expression, and engagement. In other words, as they plan, general education teachers consider different ways to present information and content, different ways the students can express what they know, and different ways of stimulating students’ interest and motivation for learning--all based on students’ needs (CAST 2011). Principles and guidelines for the implementation of UDL are summarized in Figure 9.9, which is followed by a more detailed text discussion.

Figure 9.9. UDL Principles and Guidelines (CAST 2011)

Principle ***Provide multiple means of...***	**Guidelines** ***Provide options for...***
I. Representation	1. Perception 2. Language, mathematical expressions, and symbols 3. Comprehension
II. Action and Expression	4. Physical action 5. Expression and communication 6. Executive functions
III. Engagement	7. Recruiting interest 8. Effort and persistence 9. Self-regulation

Principle I: Provide multiple means of representation to give students various ways of acquiring, processing, and integrating information and knowledge.

Guideline 1: Provide options for perception.

- Customize the display of information (for example, change the size of text or images or changing the volume of speech)

- Provide alternatives for auditory information (for example, provide written transcripts or use American Sign Language)
- Provide alternatives for visual information (for example, provide descriptions of images, tactile graphics, or physical objects)

Guideline 2: Provide options for language, mathematical expressions, and symbols.

- Clarify vocabulary and symbols (for example, provide a glossary or graphic equivalents or teach word components)
- Clarify syntax and structure (for example, highlight transition words)
- Support decoding of text or mathematical notation (for example, use digital text with accompanying human voice recording)
- Promote understanding across languages (for example, use the language of the students)
- Illustrate key concepts through multiple media (for example, provide illustrations, simulations, or interactive graphics or make explicit the connections between text and illustrations, diagrams, or other representations of information)

Guideline 3: Provide options for comprehension.

- Activate or supply background knowledge (for example, use advanced organizers and make explicit cross-curricular connections)
- Highlight patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships (for example, use outlines to emphasize important ideas or draw students' attention to critical features)
- Guide information processing, visualization, and manipulation (for example, provide explicit prompts for each step in a sequential process)
- Maximize transfer and generalization (for example, embed new ideas in familiar contexts)

Principle II: Provide multiple means of action and expression to provide students with options for navigating and demonstrating learning.

Guideline 4: Provide options for physical action.

- Vary the methods for response and navigation (for example, provide learners with alternatives to responding on paper)
- Integrate assistive technologies (for example, have touch screens and alternative keyboards accessible)

Guideline 5: Provide multiple tools for construction and composition.

- Use multiple media for communication (for example, provide options for composing, such as in text and film)
- Provide appropriate tools for composition and problem solving (for example, provide concept mapping tools)
- Build fluencies with graduated levels of support for practice and performance (for example, provide more or less scaffolding depending upon the learner)

Guideline 6: Provide options for executive functions.

- Guide appropriate goal-setting (for example, support learners in estimating the difficulty of a goal)
- Support planning and strategy development (for example, support learners in identifying priorities and a sequence of steps)
- Facilitate managing information and resources (for example, provide guides for note-taking)
- Enhance capacity for monitoring progress (for example, prompt learners to identify the type of feedback they seek)

Principle III: Provide multiple means of engagement to tap individual learners' interests, challenge them appropriately, and motivate them to learn.

Guideline 7: Provide options for recruiting interest.

- Optimize individual choice and autonomy (for example, provide learners choice in the order they accomplish tasks)
- Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity (for example, provide home and community audiences for students' work)
- Minimize threats and distractions (for example, ensure respectful interactions and provide quiet spaces)

Guideline 8: Provide options for sustaining effort and persistence.

- Heighten salience of goals and objectives (for example, periodically discuss a targeted goal and its value)
- Vary demands and resources to optimize challenge (for example, provide a range of resources appropriate for the learner)
- Foster collaboration and communication (for example, offer structures for group work and discuss expectations)
- Increase mastery-oriented feedback (for example, provide timely and specific feedback)

Guideline 9: Provide options for self-regulation.

- Promote expectations and beliefs that optimize motivation (for example, help students set personal goals)
- Facilitate personal coping skills and strategies (for example, share checklists for managing behavior)
- Develop self-assessment and reflection (for example, support students in identifying progress toward goals)

When initial instruction is planned in such a way that it flexibly addresses learner variability, more students are likely to succeed. Fewer students will find the initial instruction inaccessible and therefore fewer will require additional, alternative “catch up” instruction.

Multi-Tiered System of Supports

A coordinated system of supports and services is crucial for ensuring appropriate and timely attention to students’ needs. The Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model expands California’s Response to Intervention and Instruction (RtI^2) process by aligning all systems of high quality first instruction, support, and intervention and including structures for building, changing, and sustaining systems. The foundational structures of MTSS include high-quality core instruction utilizing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles and appropriate supports, strategies, and accommodations. In addition, assessments and progress monitoring are employed to allow for a data-based, problem-solving approach to instructional decision-making.

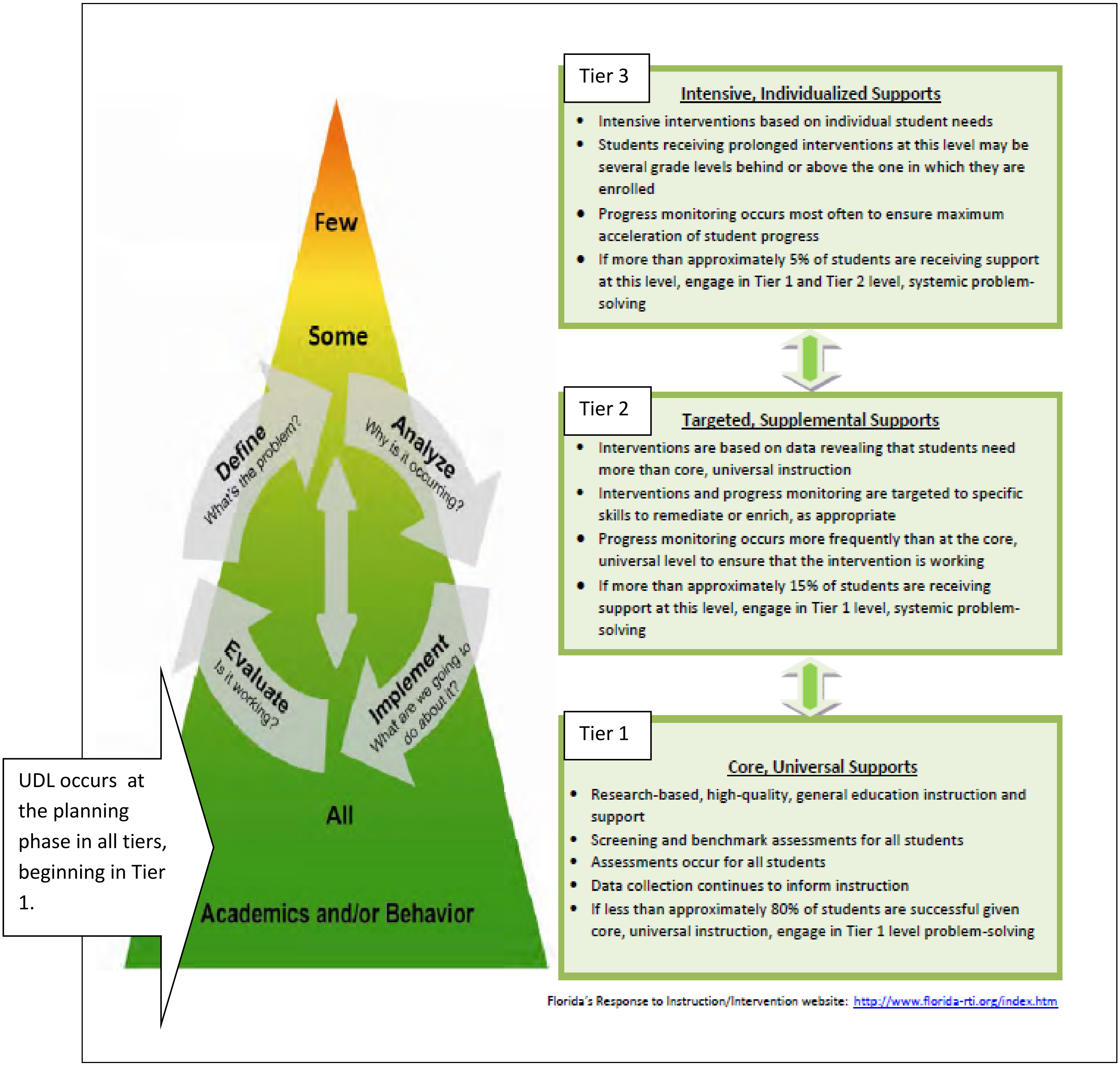
Like RtI^2, MTSS incorporates the three tiers structure of increasing levels of supports and begins with the establishment of strong core instruction in Tier 1. These tiers reflect the intensity of instruction, not specific programs, students, or staff (i.e., Title 1 or special education). The tiers are discussed here (adapted from Ventura County Office of Education 2011) and displayed in Figure 9.10.

- **Tier 1**: Tier 1 core/universal instruction, also known as "first teaching," is differentiated instruction delivered to ***all students in general education***. Differentiated instruction is the use of a variety of evidence-based instructional approaches to transform the materials, curriculum, and production in response to the interests, preferences, and readiness of diverse learners. It is not a program but a way for teachers to think effectively about whom they teach, where they teach, and how they teach to maximize all students' academic potential (Glass 2009). Teachers design instruction for this tier in accordance with the principles of UDL (see previous section in this chapter). The goal is that all students receive high quality standards-aligned instruction, using culturally and linguistically responsive teaching (see next section in this chapter), that meets the full range of student needs. ELD instruction is part of this core first teaching for ELs. Shared expectations for behavior helps to create learning environments in which students know the expected behavior. Valid universal screenings that identify students' progress toward identified goals are reliably administered to ensure all students benefit from core instruction. Tier 1 instruction should result in no less than 80% of students achieving grade-level expectations. If less than 80% do not succeed in Tier 1 instruction, schools must engage in close examination of the curriculum and teaching practices and make appropriate adjustments.
- **Tier 2**: Tier 2 is strategic/targeted instruction and supports provided to ***some students***--those who are not progressing or responding to Tier 1 efforts as expected. Generally, no more than 15% of students receive support at this level because Tier 1, first teaching, is excellent. Tier 2 instructional supports are provided to students ***in addition*** to what they receive in Tier 1. The supplemental instruction provided in Tier 2 may be an extension of the core curriculum utilized in Tier 1 or may include instruction and materials specifically designed for intervention. Tier 2 instruction may take a variety of forms. At the

elementary level, Tier 2 support might entail daily 30 minutes of targeted instruction to small groups for six to eight weeks. At the secondary level, Tier 2 support might include temporary support (before, during or afterschool) during which students are pre-taught or retaught concepts taught in the core curriculum. The model used is determined by schools or districts in accordance with local needs and structures. In both elementary and secondary settings, targeted students are provided more time and more focused instruction directed to specific learning needs. Students' progress toward identified goals is monitored frequently. The expectation is that supplemental support is temporary and that students will make significant growth to succeed in Tier 1.

- **Tier 3**: Tier 3 consists of intensive intervention. It is necessary for ***very few students***, approximately five percent. Students who receive these services are those who have experienced difficulty with the grade-level standards in the general education curriculum and have not benefitted from Tier 2 supplemental instruction they received. More intensive, Tier 3, intervention may occur in a learning center or may be at a different pace than Tier 2 instruction. The instruction for elementary students in Tier 3 might be for 40-60 minutes daily for a period of six to eight weeks, although some students may need intensive intervention for longer periods of time. Tier 3 intervention for secondary students might consist of a double block of daily instruction for a semester or longer. Instruction focuses on skill and concept development. However, access and alignment to grade-level CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy is critical for these students and careful planning is required to integrate interventions and standards. In both elementary and secondary settings, the instructional goal is to provide research-based intervention more often and for longer periods of time with reduced student/teacher ratios. The intention is to accelerate students' progress so they can return to and succeed in the core instructional program, that is, Tier 1.

9.10. Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS)



UDL occurs at the planning phase in all tiers, beginning in Tier 1.

Tier 3

Intensive, Individualized Supports

- Intensive interventions based on individual student needs
- Students receiving prolonged interventions at this level may be several grade levels behind or above the one in which they are enrolled
- Progress monitoring occurs most often to ensure maximum acceleration of student progress
- If more than approximately 5% of students are receiving support at this level, engage in Tier 1 and Tier 2 level, systemic problem-solving

Tier 2

Targeted, Supplemental Supports

- Interventions are based on data revealing that students need more than core, universal instruction
- Interventions and progress monitoring are targeted to specific skills to remediate or enrich, as appropriate
- Progress monitoring occurs more frequently than at the core, universal level to ensure that the intervention is working
- If more than approximately 15% of students are receiving support at this level, engage in Tier 1 level, systemic problem-solving

Tier 1

Core, Universal Supports

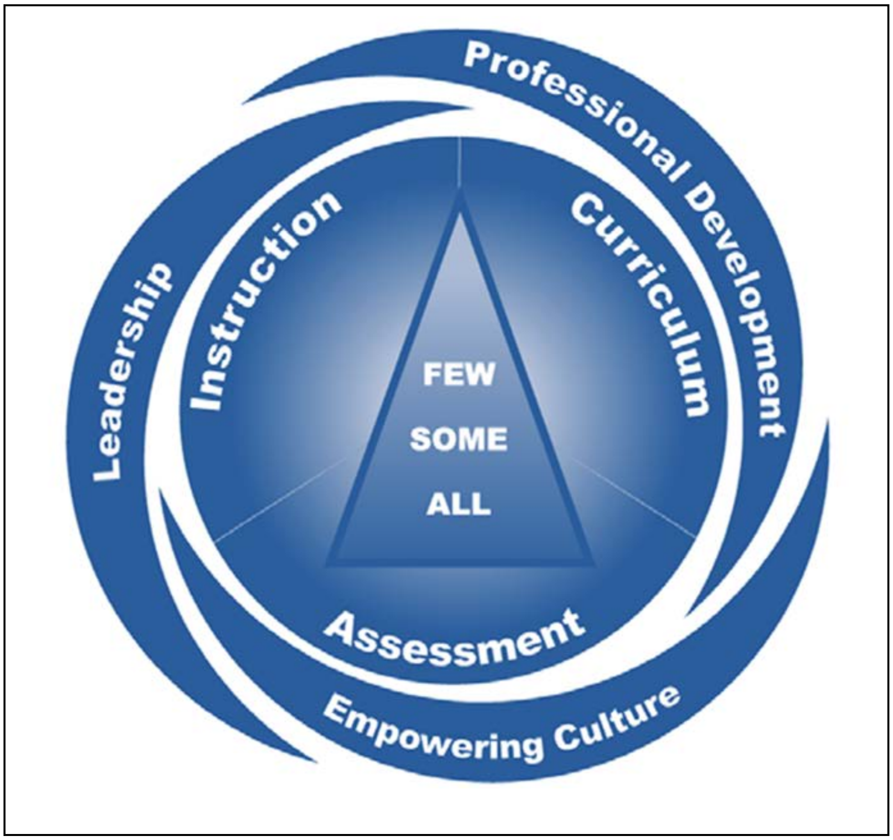
- Research-based, high-quality, general education instruction and support
- Screening and benchmark assessments for all students
- Assessments occur for all students
- Data collection continues to inform instruction
- If less than approximately 80% of students are successful given core, universal instruction, engage in Tier 1 level problem-solving

Florida's Response to Instruction/Intervention website: http://www.florida-rti.org/index.htm

Adapted from Florida's Response to Instruction/Intervention website: http://www.florida-rti.org/index.htm.

MTSS occurs in the context of excellent curricula, effective instruction, and a comprehensive assessment system as well as effective leadership, professional learning and an empowering culture. (See Figure 9.11.) Schools and districts should have in place a well defined framework for MTSS, including a leadership and organizational structures, routines for program evaluation and progress monitoring of students, initial and ongoing professional learning for all educators, and clear two-way communication between parents and educators.

Figure 9.11. The Larger Context of MTSS



Source: Kansas MTSS: www.kansasmtss.org

Additional considerations for ELs: Instruction and assessment must be both *linguistically and culturally congruent* in order for it to be appropriate for ELs (Brown and Doolittle, 2008), and students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds should be taken into account when determining appropriate approaches to instruction and intervention. For additional information, see the section in this chapter on Linguistic and Cultural Congruence for ELs.

Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Teaching

In order to create truly equitable classrooms, schools, and districts—ones that support all students' achievement of the capacities of literate individuals—educators must continuously strive for social justice, access, and equity. This requires educators to adopt a stance of inquiry toward their practice and to engage in ongoing, collaborative discussions with their colleagues about challenging issues, including race, culture, language, and equity. The National Center for Culturally Responsive Educational Systems (NCCRESt) highlights the importance of creating a shared responsibility for cultural responsiveness:

> Culturally responsive educational systems are grounded in the belief that we live in a society where specific groups of people are afforded privileges that are not accessible to other groups. By privileging some over others, a class structure is created in which the advantaged have more access to high quality education and later, more job opportunities in high status careers. This leads to socio-economic stratification and the development of majority/minority polarity. We can turn the tide on this institutionalized situation by building systems that are responsive to cultural difference and seek to include rather than exclude difference. … Moreover, culturally responsive educational systems create spaces for teacher reflection, inquiry, and mutual support around issues of cultural differences. (NCCRESt 2008, 15)

Culturally and linguistically responsive teaching and equity-focused approaches emphasize validating and valuing students' cultural and linguistic heritage while also ensuring their full development of standard English (SE), and more precisely, academic English. Simply immersing students in SE and ignoring differences between SE and the dialects of English that Standard English Learners use is ineffective because "extensive overlaps in vocabulary, phonology, and grammar can cause speakers to miss subtle but significant differences between their own and the target dialect" (Rickford 1999, 12). Teachers should adopt an "additive" approach toward the culture and language development of their students by enacting the following principles:

- **Self-educate**: Teachers should develop an awareness of and positive disposition toward their students' cultural and linguistic heritage, their communication styles, and of their students' dialects of English (LeMoine 1999; McIntyre and Turner 2013; Moll and González 1994).
- **Draw on and value students' cultural backgrounds**: Teachers should learn about their students' lives and make connections between their experiences, backgrounds, and interests and content learning (McIntyre and Turner 2013).
- **Address language status**: Teachers should treat all languages and all dialects of English in the classroom as equally valid and valuable and take the stance that multilingualism and dialect variation is natural. In addition, teachers should make transparent for their students, in developmentally appropriate ways, that while standard English is the type of English privileged in school, bilingualism and "bidialecticism," or proficiency in multiple dialects of English, are highly valued assets (Harris-Wright 1999).
- **Expand language awareness***:* Teachers should develop their students' understandings of how, why, and when to use different registers and dialects of English to meet the expectations of different contexts and balance activities that develop students' awareness of English varietal differences and similarities while also acknowledging the need for students to fully develop academic English. When appropriate, teachers should include their students' primary language or dialect in instruction. Making the hidden curriculum of language visible in respectful and pedagogically sound ways is one way of ensuring the civil rights of linguistically diverse students (Christie 1999; Delpit 1995).
- **Support the development of academic English***:* Teachers should focus instruction on intellectually rich and engaging tasks that allow students to use academic English in meaningful ways. Teachers should also make transparent to students how academic English works to make meaning in different disciplines. This includes helping students to develop "register awareness" so that they understand how to meet the language expectations of different contexts (Schleppegrell 2004; Spycher 2013).

- **Promote pride in cultural and linguistic heritage***:* Language and culture are inextricably linked, and students' dispositions toward school learning are affected by the degree to which schools convey that students' cultural and linguistic heritage are valued. Therefore, teachers should allow—and indeed encourage—their students to use their primary language(s) and dialects when appropriate in the classroom and infuse cultural and linguistic heritage into the curriculum (Gay 2000).

Instructional Practices for Supporting Students Experiencing Difficulty Reading

In this section, guidance is provided regarding research-based instruction for students who are experiencing difficulty with reading, whether due to a disability or not. As noted in a previous section of this chapter, the largest group of students with disabilities are those with specific learning disabilities, which often involves difficulty reading. In addition, many students without disabilities demonstrate poor reading achievement. Presented here are general guidelines for supporting students experiencing difficulty with reading; ***what is appropriate for individuals will vary depending on many factors***, including the particular needs, age, language proficiency in English and in the primary language, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, circumstances, and past experiences of the students. Instruction should take place in the context of a supportive, respectful environment that communicates high expectations of all students. Furthermore, attention must be paid to student motivation (see Chapters 1 and 3).

Support for students experiencing difficulty begins with close attention to students' progress and, for ELs, includes consideration of primary language and literacy skills, knowledge, and abilities. Ideally, students complete the primary grades with a good working command of foundational skills; a rapidly expanding vocabulary and increasingly complex syntactic structures and developing body of content knowledge; the ability to comprehend and communicate about a variety of text types on their grade level, including making inferences and making connections with other texts and knowledge; and an interest in engaging with texts both as composers and consumers. This early solid foundation best positions all learners for future success.

However, even when learners receive the highest quality, differentiated first instruction (UDL and MTSS Tier 1), some may experience difficulty for any number of reasons. The most effective interventions occur at the first sign of difficulty, whatever the grade level. Teachers must be observant and responsive, and Multi-Tiered System of Supports must be in place in schools. Much can be accomplished with immediate action. Some interventions will be short term; others will demand more time. The more severe the difficulty, the more time will be required. And, the older the students, the more time will be required. Vaughn and her colleagues (2012b, p. 523) note "there is accumulating evidence that remediating reading problems in students after fourth grade will require a long-term commitment; it may be necessary to provide reading interventions throughout secondary school while also increasing instructional practices such as vocabulary and comprehension enhancements within content-area instruction." Attentive educators and careful diagnosis, therefore, are crucial (see Chapter 8).

A report by Vaughn and others (2012a, p. 5) identifies research-based practices for supporting students experiencing difficulty with reading. They are summarized here. Many overlap with the recommendations provided by Gersten and colleagues (2008). ***Depending upon students' response to differentiated first instruction and to initial interventions and depending upon their particular needs, ages, circumstances, and past experiences,*** the following practices result in achievement gains:

- Integrating strategies that support cognitive processing (e.g., self-regulation and memory) with academic instruction by:
    - Thinking aloud to demonstrate, for example, approaches to a task and reflections on a text
    - Teaching students to use self-regulation strategies by, for example, asking what they do when they do not recognize a word in a text
    - Teaching students to be metacognitive and to identify and repair "breakdowns" in understanding
    - Teaching explicitly memory enhancement techniques, such as taking notes and using graphic organizers or other text organizers
    - Providing task-specific feedback (e.g., "your organizing paragraph in this paper made it clear what you are addressing throughout, which is very helpful

  to readers") rather than person-directed feedback (e.g., "you are a good writer") so students attribute success to effort and behavior rather than personal, fixed abilities

- Intensifying instructional delivery by
  - Making instruction explicit, which includes clear explanations and teacher modeling
  - Making instruction systematic, which includes breaking down complex skills into manageable chunks and sequencing tasks from easier to more difficult with the provision of scaffolding to control the level of difficulty
  - Providing students with frequent opportunities to respond and practice with immediate and precise, task-specific teacher feedback
  - Providing students with independent practice, appropriately developed so that students demonstrate mastery of new skills at a high level of success
- Increasing instructional time by increasing one or more of the following, as appropriate for the age, characteristics, needs, and progress of the students while also balancing time for interventions with time for other curricular areas:
  - Frequency of intervention (for example, from three days to five days a week)
  - Length of instructional sessions (for example, from 20 minute to 30 minutes per session—age and engagement of the learner must be considered)
  - Duration of intervention (that is, extend the period of time over which interventions are delivered from 20 sessions, for example, to 40 sessions)
- Reducing group size

Snapshot 9.3 Direct Instruction of Metaphors with Grade Four Students Who Have a Learning Disability and Those Experiencing Difficulty in ELA

Mr. Fajardo's class consists of several students with learning disabilities and nearly half the class is achieving below grade level in reading and writing. He knows that his students require explicit, carefully sequenced instruction along with ample practice and immediate feedback in order to achieve lesson objectives. Employing a direct instruction model of teaching (see Chapter 3 of this framework), he begins his lesson on verbs as metaphors by reminding the students of a book he and the class recently enjoyed. He opens the book and reads aloud a metaphor he had tagged. He indicates pleasure with the author's language, drawing attention to the figurative language: "Listen to that! Madeleine L'Engle* writes, 'The moon ripped through' the clouds! What a terrific image—almost violent! That matches the setting. It was a stormy night." He states that the objective of current lesson is that the students will be able to identify this type of metaphor. He reminds them that they already know about nouns as metaphors. At the conclusion of today's lesson will be able to define verb metaphors and determine whether a statement contains metaphorical use of a verb. Mr. Fajardo explains that this is important because metaphors of several kinds are commonly used in oral and written text—as well as in popular culture, such as songs and raps—and are a powerful way to convey ideas. Mr. Fajardo then provides students with a definition of the concept and he returns to the example he shared at the opening of the lesson. He notes explicitly how it meets the definition. He provides a number of additional examples, including "He shot down my idea" and "My heart filled with joy." He contrasts them with sentences that do not contain metaphorical use of verbs. Mr. Fajardo then uses a document camera to reveal, one at a time, eight statements. When he reads each one aloud, students use their personal red and green cards, with which they have had ample practice in other lessons, to indicate whether or not the statement being displayed contains a verb used as a metaphor. They hold up the green card if it does and the red card if it does not. The teacher closely observes students' responses, checking for understanding, and provides additional explanation to the group as appropriate. Then, students are given time to practice with a peer. Each pair is provided a set of sentence strips. Some sentences include verb metaphors; others do not. Student pairs sort the strips into two groups while Mr. Fajardo circulates and provides assistance as necessary. When the students have completed the sorting, they briefly discuss each sentence and identify the verb metaphor. He summarizes the lesson and restates the objective. For independent practice, the students record any verb metaphors they find in the texts they are reading independently or that they observe being used in conversations or in media, such as songs or television newscasts. They bring their examples to class the following day and share them.

*L'Engle, Madeleine. *A Wrinkle in Time*. 1962. New York: Dell.

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy: L.4.5

Regular, careful monitoring of students' progress (including students' behavior and attitudes) must occur to ensure that instructional approaches and interventions are appropriate and effective. Formative assessments—those conducted in the moment in the immediate context of instruction—can prove very valuable for informing instruction. (See Chapter 8.)

Of critical importance is the monitoring of the acquisition of the foundational skills in the early grades. Acquisition of these skills is fundamental to progress in literacy achievement. Children experiencing difficulty with the code, including building fluency, must be provided immediate support. Intensifying instruction, increasing instructional time, reducing group size, and providing ample practice with text in meaningful contexts are crucial for these students.

Given the complex nature of the English language arts and literacy, it is imperative that teachers recognize the many ways students may experience difficulty. Among them are difficulties with the code, difficulties making meaning, language limitations (e.g., limited vocabulary) or mismatches, and inadequate relevant content knowledge. In addition, students may not be engaged for any number of reasons, including that they are not motivated by the curriculum, instruction, or texts or that they do not perceive themselves as having the potential to achieve at the same level as their peers in the classroom context. Any of these areas may need to be the target of support. In addition, it is also important for teachers of ELs to recognize that, by definition, ELs are learning English as they are also engaging in literacy tasks in English. What may appear to be a reading difficulty may, in fact, be normal English language development. For additional information on determining appropriate instruction and intervention approaches for ELs, see *A Cultural, Linguistic, and Ecological Framework for Response to Intervention with English Language Learners* (Brown and Doolittle 2008).

As noted in the report by Vaughn and others (2012a) summarized above, systematic instruction includes breaking down complex tasks into smaller segments. Teachers will find it helpful to “unpack” the standards to identify what the students need to do and be able to do as teachers work to plan for and implement instruction. Figure 9.12 identifies some components of a sampling of CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy.

1113 Figure 9.12. Components of Four CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy	**Among the components are the following:**
RFS.1.2c Isolate and pronounce initial, medial vowel, and final sounds (phonemes) in spoken single-syllable words.	• Isolate and pronounce initial sounds (phonemes) in spoken single-syllable words • Isolate and pronounce medial vowel sounds (phonemes) in spoken single-syllable words • Isolate and pronounce final sounds (phonemes) in spoken single-syllable words
RI.5.5 Compare and contrast the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in two or more texts.	• Identify an overall chronology text structure • Identify an overall comparison text structure • Identify an overall cause-effect text structure • Identify an overall problem/solution text structure • Compare overall chronology and comparison text structures (and other combinations of overall text structures) of two or more texts • Contrast overall cause/effect and problem/solution text structures (and other combinations of overall text structures) of two or more texts
SL.2.1 Ask and answer questions about key details in a text read aloud or information presented orally or through other media. a. Give, restate, and follow simple two-step directions.	• Ask questions about details in a text read aloud • Ask questions about information presented orally or through other media • Answer questions about details in a text read aloud • Answer questions about information presented orally or through other media • Give simple two-step directions • Restate simple two-step directions • Follow simple two-step directions
WHSSSTS.9-10.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	• Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development is appropriate to the task • Produce clear and coherent writing in which the organization is appropriate to the task • Produce clear and coherent writing in which the style is appropriate to the task • Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development is appropriate to the purpose

CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy	Among the components are the following:
	• Produce clear and coherent writing in which the organization is appropriate to the purpose • Produce clear and coherent writing in which the style is appropriate to the purpose • Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development is appropriate to the audience • Produce clear and coherent writing in which the organization is appropriate to the audience • Produce clear and coherent writing in which the style is appropriate to the audience

A significant component of the CA CCSS for ELA/Literacy is engaging with complex texts. All students must be provided the opportunity, with appropriate instructional support, to engage with texts that are more challenging than those they can read independently. In Chapter 3 of this framework, Figure 3.10 displays strategies for supporting all learners' engagement with complex text and additional supports for linguistically diverse learners. Here, Figure 9.13 duplicates the previous figure and adds a column in which particular supports for students with learning disabilities or who are experiencing difficulties reading are offered. The figure provides general guidelines, and any of the strategies may be useful for any student. It is important that teachers know their students, assess their understanding during instruction, and appreciate that students' successful engagement with complex texts demands excellent teaching.

1126 Figure 9.13. Strategies for Supporting Learners' Engagement with Complex Text

	Teachers support *all* students' understanding of complex text by...	**Additional, amplified, or differentiated support for linguistically diverse learners may include...**	**Additional, amplified, or differentiated support for students with learning disabilities or students experiencing difficulties reading may include…**
Background Knowledge	• Leveraging students' existing background knowledge	• Drawing on primary language and home culture to make connections with existing background knowledge • Developing students' awareness that their background knowledge may "live" in another language or culture	• Providing visual supports and think-alouds to aid in connecting new content to build background knowledge • Engaging in activities to activate students' relevant prior knowledge • Previewing introductory materials
Comprehension Strategies	• Teaching and modeling, through thinking aloud and explicit reference to strategies, how to make meaning from the text using specific reading comprehension strategies (e.g., questioning, visualizing) • Providing multiple opportunities to employ learned comprehension strategies	• Emphasizing a clear focus on the goal of reading as meaning making (with fluent decoding an important skill) while ELs are still learning to communicate through English	• Explicit modeling and discussion of strategies and opportunities for practice with guidance in meaningful contexts • Ensuring ample opportunities for success

	Teachers support *all* students' understanding of complex text by...	**Additional, amplified, or differentiated support for linguistically diverse learners may include...**	**Additional, amplified, or differentiated support for students with learning disabilities or students experiencing difficulties reading may include…**
Vocabulary	• Explicitly teaching vocabulary critical to understanding and developing academic vocabulary over time • Explicitly teaching how to use morphological knowledge and context clues to derive the meaning of new words as they are encountered	• Explicitly teaching cognates and about particular cognates • Making morphological relationships between languages transparent (e.g., word endings for nouns in Spanish , –dad, -ión, ía, encia) that have the English counterparts (–ty, -tion/-sion, -y, -ence/-ency)	• Integrating media as context to gain meaning to the content to illustrate, define complex vocabulary (e.g. *erosion*, *tsunami*) • Planning for multiple opportunities to apply key words • Building from informal to formal understanding
Text Organization and Grammatical Structures	• Explicitly teaching and discussing text organization, text features, and other language resources, such as grammatical structures (e.g., complex sentences) and how to analyze them to support comprehension	• Delving deeper into text organization and grammatical features in texts that are new or challenging and necessary to understand in order to build content knowledge • Drawing attention to grammatical differences between the primary language and English (e.g., word order differences)	• Drawing attention to similarities and differences in text organization, features, and contrast text structures
Discussions	• Engaging students in peer discussions--both brief and extended--to promote collaborative sense making of text and opportunities to use newly acquired vocabulary	• Structuring discussions that promote equitable participation, academic discourse, and the strategic use of new grammatical structures and specific vocabulary	• Strategically forming groups to best support students experiencing difficulty

	Teachers support *all* students' understanding of complex text by...	**Additional, amplified, or differentiated support for linguistically diverse learners may include...**	**Additional, amplified, or differentiated support for students with learning disabilities or students experiencing difficulties reading may include…**
Sequencing	• Systematically sequencing texts and tasks so that they build upon one another • Continuing to model close/ analytical reading of complex texts during teacher read-alouds while also ensuring students build proficiency in reading complex texts themselves	• Focusing on the language demands of texts and carefully sequencing tasks to build understanding and effective use of the language in them •	• Offering texts at students' readability levels that explain key ideas to build proficiency in reading in preparation for engaging students in more difficult text
Rereading	• Rereading the text or selected passages to look for answers to questions or to clarify points of confusion	• Rereading the text to build understanding of ideas and language incrementally (e.g., beginning with literal comprehension questions on initial readings and moving to inferential and analytical comprehension questions on subsequent reads) • Repeated exposure to the rich language over time, focusing on particular language (e.g., different vocabulary) during each reading	• Strategically chunking and rereading text to maintain engagement to construct and clarify ideas and organize them and to provide opportunities for success

	Teachers support *all* students' understanding of complex text by...	**Additional, amplified, or differentiated support for linguistically diverse learners may include...**	**Additional, amplified, or differentiated support for students with learning disabilities or students experiencing difficulties reading may include…**
Tools	• Teaching students to develop outlines, charts, diagrams, graphic organizers or other tools to summarize and synthesize content	• Explicitly modeling how to use the outlines or graphic organizers to analyze/discuss a model text and providing guided practice for students before they use the tools independently • Using the tools as a scaffold for discussions or writing	• Offering technology tools to develop outlines, charts, diagrams, or graphic organizers to summarize and synthesize content and providing opportunities to collaboratively (with the teacher and with peers) develop and use tools
Writing	• Teaching students to return to the text as they write in response to the text and providing them with models and feedback	• Providing an opportunity for students to talk about their ideas with a peer before (or after) writing • Providing written language models (e.g., charts of model phrasing, important words, sentence and text frames), as appropriate	• Using graphic organizers to help students organize their thoughts before writing • Allowing for students to express ideas with labeled drawings, diagrams, or graphic organizers

In addition to monitoring students' progress and immediately providing appropriate instruction, it is essential to involve and listen to parents and families. They can provide crucial information and insights about the learner, and their influence on students' learning and motivation is considerable (Roberts 2013).

Linguistic and Cultural Congruence for ELs

For ELs, instruction and assessment must be both *linguistically and culturally congruent* in order for it to be appropriate (Brown and Doolittle 2008), and students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds should be taken into account when determining appropriate approaches to instruction and intervention. Special consideration should be given to a student's linguistic proficiency in their primary language, and a strategic combination of primary language proficiency assessments, English language proficiency assessments, and English literacy assessments helps teachers to tailor their language and literacy instruction and monitor progress appropriately (Esparza-Brown 2011; Linan-Thompson and Ortiz 2009).

If an EL student experiences difficulty with literacy achievement, the type of instruction the student receives should be examined along with student assessment data in order to ensure that the student is not erroneously identified as in need of interventions, including special education services, when the instruction itself was not culturally and linguistically appropriate and of the highest instructional caliber. As Brown and Doolittle (2008, 6) note,

> When an ELL student becomes a focus of concern, the instructional program itself must be examined to determine the match between the demands of the curriculum and the child’s current level of proficiency in the language of instruction. It is important to examine the achievement of the student’s “true peers” (similar language proficiencies, culture and experiential background) to see if they are excelling or not. If several “true peers” are struggling, this is an indication that the instruction is less than optimal for that group of students.

Careful attention to the particular linguistic and cultural learning needs of individual students ensures their opportunity to thrive in school and prevents disproportionate (under and over representation) of ELs and other student populations in special education. Guidance on using screening and progress monitoring tools for ELs in Multi-tiered System of Supports, is provided in the National Center on Response to Intervention’s *RTI for English Language Learners: Appropriately Using Screening and Progress Monitoring Tools to Improve Instructional Outcomes* (Brown and Sanford 2011).

Literacy Learning and Males

The disparity in educational performance between males and females has been widely reported in terms of college attendance and completion, high school completion, and reading test scores (Cornwell, Mustard, and Van Parys 2012) with females outperforming males across all categories and racial groups. An examination of the English language arts scores on the California Standards Test confirms this conclusion

(CDE, DataQuest 2013). Cornwell, Mustard, and Van Parys argue that teachers (predominantly female in elementary school) disproportionately weigh behavior, such as sitting for long periods, demonstrating knowledge in the classroom, and supplying effort on assignments, in their assessments of children’s performance.

Tailoring classroom instruction in literacy to capture and sustain the interest and effort of boys and young men has been discussed for many years (Smith and Wilhelm 2002, 2006; Zambo and Brozo 2008), as has the needs of African-American males (Tatum 2006, 2008, 2009, McWhorter 2006). Special attention should be paid to the performance of males in literacy, particularly boys and young men of color.

Wood and Jocius (2013) recommend an approach with black males that incorporates culturally relevant texts, collaboration, and critical conversations. Engaging students with texts that reflect themselves as protagonists is important to help students connect in more personal ways. “Teachers need to carefully design literacy experiences that both encourage critical examination of texts and foster personal and emotional connections” (665). Tatum (2009) argues for literacy as a collaborative act and selecting “enabling texts” that connect with the lives of African American adolescent males inside and outside of school. Serafini (2013) suggests a number of practices to reach all boys:

- Provide wider access to reading materials
    - Books and texts should focus on plot, be visually appealing, purposeful, relatable, edgy, and humorous.
- Balance fiction and informational texts
    - Support browsing
    - Use shorter texts
    - Provide extended amounts of time to read
    - Reduce the focus on after reading activities
    - View reading as a social activity
    - Focus on visual and multimodal texts
    - Invite male readers into the classroom
    - Develop boys’ identities as readers

Actively engaging all youth in reading, writing, thinking, and communicating is critically important; it is even more so for boys and young men who may otherwise not see the potential of literacy for opening windows into their worlds and beyond.

Conclusion

California is committed to equity and access for all learners. Ensuring that all learners achieve their highest potential is a challenging and multi-faceted endeavor, but it is one that can be accomplished by knowledgeable, skillful, and dedicated teams of educators who work closely with families and equally dedicated communities. Our children and youth deserve no less, and our state and nation will be stronger as a result.

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Web Resources

California School for the Blind
http://www.csb-cde.ca.gov/

Diversity Kit, The: An Introductory Resource for Social Change in Education
http://www.alliance.brown.edu/tdl/diversitykitpdfs/diversitykit.pdf

Equity Assistance Center at WestEd
www.wested.org/eac

The ARC Framework6 (Attachment, Self-Regulation, Competency) for Runaway and Homeless Youth Serving Agencies
http://www.hhyp.org/downloads/ HHYP_ARC_Framework.pdf

Homelessness Resource Center Webpage - Resilience and Youth
http://homeless.samhsa.gov/Search.aspx?searc h=resilience+and+youth

National Center for Learning Disabilities
www.ncld.org

The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders
www.autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu

NCHE Information by Topic Webpage - Resilience
http://center.serve.org/nche/ibt/ sps_resilience.php

Nota Bergman's Blog: That's How I Talk
http://thatshowitalk.blogspot.com/

Pre-K-12 Gifted Programming Standards
http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=546