

Purpose of this Guidance

Educators have quickly shifted to providing high quality remote learning educational experiences using a variety of approaches: online platforms, apps, hard copies, letters and parent communications, etc. Multilingual students and families have additional linguistic and cultural considerations that must be addressed when designing instruction in virtual and blended settings.

The tool below is for use by English Learner educators and intended to be shared with general education teachers week by week. The structure allows for chunking and sharing critical concepts to support English Learners in blended and virtual learning settings. Corresponding tools and resources are suggested to support the implementation of each critical concept. Use this aligned [Collaborative Planning Lesson Template](#) to help co-design instruction for ELs.

The critical concepts are adapted from the following article: [Critical Concepts in distance learning for multilingual learners](#). Eric Herrmann

Remote Learning is a Team Effort! Work as a team to determine appropriate language, content and cultural supports.

Week	Critical Concept	Suggested Resources
1	<p>Consider the Linguistic Demand of Assignments, Websites, and Materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In order to consider the linguistic demand of assignments, websites, and materials, it is important to understand the language proficiency levels of your students. The WIDA Can Do Name Charts is an excellent tool to organize and track the levels of English language proficiency levels of your students in the skills of listening, reading, writing and speaking. When designing instruction and assessment for English Learners, closely examine the language that students will need to be familiar with, including the words and phrases they will need to master, in order to understand the content, and later demonstrate their learning. The Teacher Can Dos tool will help you match instructional moves to students' levels of English language proficiency. Identifying and sharing language objectives with the students sets a clear expectation of the language skills you are planning on teaching and expecting students to learn. The Writing and Using Content and Language Objectives guidance tool will help you craft skill-focused language objectives aimed at moving students along the continuum of English language proficiency. 	<p>WIDA Can Do Name Charts: This resource is organized in grade clusters (K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12), and includes a description of skills English Learners can do at each proficiency level with visual, graphic, or interactive support from classroom teachers.</p> <p>Suggested use: Record a student's name and WIDA scores for listening, reading, writing and speaking to aid in scaffolding an instructional plan.</p> <p>Teacher Can Dos: This document includes differentiation strategies that teachers can do in order to support English learners at each level of proficiency in all language domains: reading, writing, listening and speaking. It aligns with the WIDA Can Do descriptors above and can aid teachers in planning for visual, graphic or interactive support.</p> <p>Writing and Using Content and Language Objectives: Language objectives support content objectives by providing support to make concepts understandable for students who are still developing English language skills. They provide a target to allow English Learners (and all learners) to demonstrate mastery in reading, writing, listening and speaking.</p> <p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determining the linguistic demand of tasks

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2	<p>Build Background Knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current “learn-at-home” scenario can provide us with an opportunity to connect to and affirm and deepen our students’ cultural and background knowledge on a variety of topics. It also gives us an opportunity to connect with families and celebrate the cultural and multilingual assets their home environment provides. Background knowledge and prior knowledge are key to connecting students with new learning. Tapping into what they know and where they come from prepares both students and teachers to personalize learning. Thinking routines such as “chalk talk” can open spaces for students to share their ideas, experiences, and knowledge. • Connecting “new” to “known” is powerful. The more people know about a topic, the more they will learn about that topic when presented with new information. There are many ways to help build background knowledge in students, even when they are learning in virtual and blended contexts. Having students read an article or book about a topic written at their independent reading level is an excellent way to both provide reading practice as well as build knowledge. This is also a powerful chance for teachers to choose articles and texts that affirm and connect with the cultural backgrounds of their students. • For texts that are written beyond students’ independent reading level, reading a text aloud is another powerful strategy. There are many resources for read-alouds available online, including videos of authors reading books. Teachers can also record themselves reading a book and send the video to their students as a way to make a more personal connection. Video clips are another engaging tool that can be utilized to provide students with new concepts, facts, and ideas. Storyline has a collection of read-alouds by famous actors and actresses that provide engaging ways to help students tap into their cultural assets and background knowledge. 	<p>Strategies for Activating Background Knowledge: These instructional moves can help activate prior knowledge and connect with background experiences in face to face or remote instruction. Including student voice, stories and perspectives will open spaces for your students to share their cultural assets.</p> <p>ColorinColorado suggests looking for resources that go beyond the textbook that will engage students and involve them in the learning process so that they find elements they can connect to and learn from. These may include:</p> <p>Art</p> <p>There are many ways to bring educational content to life through art, and to use art as a starting point for discussing different cultural traditions. For example, in a history class, you may offer students a couple of different artistic representations of historical events from different perspectives, and ask whether a particular perspective resonates with their experiences.</p> <p>Using artwork that depicts day-to-day events and celebrations can also be a provocative starting point for a discussion about the similarities and differences between other cultures, and a way of affirming the students' daily lives, traditions, and lifestyles in the classroom.</p> <p>Check out these free museum tours to share with students.</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Students are a great resource for sharing music, and older students especially like to share music, discuss the meaning, and connect it to content. If the song is in a language some students do not understand, ask the student to translate it and discuss the meaning. Songs from other countries often describe political events or re-tell folk stories in poetic form.</p> <p>Check out these multilingual songs to share with students.</p> <p>Culture Kits</p> <p>Culture kits may have themes such as the "The Fifties," "Work Life," or "African American Lives." Each kit contains items relevant to the topic, reading materials, and questions that can be asked of a person who has experience in that area. It would be a wonderful addition to a curriculum if students created their own Culture Kits with special items that would bring culture alive as a way of sharing their cultures and discussing what can be learned from different multicultural traditions.</p> <p>Consider using Padlet or another free app to curate and share Culture Kits with students.</p>

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2	Build Background Knowledge, continued	<p>Literature, Stories, and Folktales from Other Cultures While this seems like a simple and logical place to start, it will take some research to find just the right additions for an educational unit. However, libraries across the nation have increased the amount of multicultural literature available from a wide variety of countries and cultures. Some of the material is written in other languages, and some of it is translated into English. There are also many publishers who have focused on increasing multicultural literature in the classroom, and Language Arts series often will have a multicultural connection with suggestions of books to read with the class. Check out these collections of multilingual e-books for students: https://worldstories.org.uk/ & https://www.uniteforliteracy.com/</p> <p>Storytelling Many cultures have a rich tradition of storytelling that often gets lost in the U.S. with the focus on developing literacy skills. Many of the common stories in cultures have been translated and written in story form, but children also enjoy telling and acting out stories. There are many resources to help build storytelling skills, and some students may also have a relative who is a great storyteller and would be willing to visit the class and tell a story. The class can have great discussions about what made the story interesting, what the story was trying to tell them, and if they know other stories that are similar. For example, many cultures have a story version of "Cinderella." Check out this list of storytelling apps for students.</p>
3	<p>Comprehensible Input: Videos, Pictures, Infographics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When providing instruction to multilingual learners, it is imperative to ensure that instruction is comprehensible. In order to ensure comprehensibility, it is important to understand what students can do with language. Referring to the WIDA Can Do Name Charts and the Teacher Can Dos tool will help you match input to students' levels of English language proficiency. There are a variety of strategies that are available to make instruction more comprehensible. One of the most common is to include visual cues such as pictures or gestures to make the instruction more understandable. Videos can also be used for this purpose. Infographics can be an engaging tool as well to provide content while lowering the linguistic demand, which enhances the comprehensibility of the information being provided. 	<p>Say it with visuals! Adult and young learners both benefit from comprehensible speech, text, instruction and materials. Learn more about comprehensible input from some great infographics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infographic from TESOL: Comprehensible input Infographic from EmpoweringELLs.com: Comprehensible content Infographic from SupportEd: Comprehensible text Infographic from ElementaryEnglishLanguageLearners: Comprehensible instruction Math infographic: A high school mathematics teacher uses comprehensible input techniques to make sure his students understand the concepts presented in his lessons <p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehension: Do your English learners understand your instruction?

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4	<p>Guided Practice and Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Along with comprehensible input, students need guided practice. This follows the gradual release of responsibility model of “I do – We do – You do,” wherein the teacher models the concepts and skills to be learned, the students practice with teacher guidance, then practice with peers, and finally practice independently. It can be a challenge to provide guided practice in distance learning with barriers such as lack of technology, connectivity or ability to communicate. Providing multiple points of entry with activities such as choice boards to allow students to talk, do, observe, draw and engage with content. Refer to the WIDA Can Do Name Charts to determine appropriate points of entry. To avoid having students continue to make errors as they practice new concepts, it is important to keep independent practice time short. Provide clear, specific and ongoing feedback to students as quickly as possible, so that students can practice the concepts and skills correctly. The Teacher Can Dos tool will help you match expectations for student output to students’ levels of English language proficiency. 	<p>Guided Practice with scaffolds: This infographic with sensory, interactive and graphic scaffolds can help English Learners (and all learners!) practice with their peers and apply independently. Scaffolds are temporary, supportive structures that can be gradually removed as students gain language and content.</p> <p>This Structure of a Digital Mini Lesson includes sentence stems to scaffold online lessons using the “I do, we do, you do” approach.</p> <p>Teacher to student, peer to peer: Corrective Feedback for ELLs must include language supports along with content. Teachers should model and support vocabulary/phrases, sentences and discourse needed for the task. The Teacher Can Dos can help teachers plan feedback that supports each level of proficiency.</p> <p>Peer feedback can be directly taught by using protocols and setting norms. Teach students how to be kind, specific and helpful with these sentence stems.</p> <p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The importance of guided practice in the classroom Providing feedback to English learners: why, when, and how
5	<p>Interaction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multilingual students at all levels of English Language Proficiency need repeated and numerous opportunities to practice language with their peers as they practice with newly acquired skills. While this can be done through independent practice, opening frequent spaces for partner and group collaboration and discussion leads to deeper learning. Asynchronous and synchronous learning platforms have different benefits for English Learners. If you are able to provide live opportunities, build in frequent opportunities for students to discuss the content. If online learning is not an option, consider calling students to have them talk with you. Encourage families and students to discuss concepts in their native language. If students have access to technology such as a cell phone, they can also record videos of themselves in free online platforms such as Flipgrid to send to the teacher or their classmates. Students can share short videos through email or text, and respond to videos recorded by their teachers or peers. The Teacher Can Dos tool will help you match oral language activities to students’ levels of English language proficiency. 	<p>10 Ways to Get Students Learning Academic Language During Distance Learning and Beyond: This article offers strategies such as linguistic frames, routines and tips for encouraging interaction in remote and blended instruction. Here are some quick tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide frequent opportunities with discussion protocols. This slide template can help teachers use “talk moves” in an online setting. Pair and group students intentionally, and vary it up: Similar and mixed home languages, interests, academic abilities and language proficiency levels are some suggestions on this infographic. Set norms and assign group roles in online discussions. Directly teach higher order thinking and academic language by providing vocabulary, sentence frames and discourse supports. Model conversations using these tools, and encourage students to use them while they talk to peers. <p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> From interaction to discourse: increase EL academic language proficiency Tightening up ‘turn and talk’ to foster more purposeful linguistic practice

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6	Assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First, consider: What essential content are you assessing? What essential language skills do students need to show mastery? Directly teach vocabulary, sentences/phrases and discourse skills using the Teacher Can Dos. Ensure that assessments are appropriate for the student's language proficiency level using the WIDA Can Do Name Charts. Multiple apps and online platforms can be used to check for understanding, such as allowing students to record videos and audio. Many guided practice activities are also great formative assessments when a teacher observes or uses a rubric to gauge understanding. In any assessment, focus on the essential language and content that you taught. Return to your objectives to the lesson, and hone in on the critical concepts and skills that were included in the lesson. 	<p>Equitable assessment and grading for ELs: Explore 5 practices with this Infographic from SupportEd and article from Colorin Colorado.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Identify the content & language standards. Incorporate scaffolds to support ELs. Support EL progress along the way. Assess EL progress equitably with scaffolded assessments appropriate for the student's English proficiency. Involve ELs, families and colleagues to collaborate and communicate. <p>Vary your assessments. Informal and formative assessments can help teachers identify language and content goals. Choice boards such as this digital choice board, math choice board and "no tech needed" choice board can serve as formative assessments and support flexible, student-centered instruction.</p> <p>Language Assessments Assessing Language Proficiency During School Closures: These sample questionnaires can help teachers determine if ELs are at the beginning, intermediate or advanced levels of English if WIDA scores are unavailable.</p> <p>Further Reading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 Smart Fast Ways to do Formative Assessment: 40 tools & tricks Assessment for English learners: content, language, or both?

Oakland Schools Resources for Educators, Multilingual Students & Families

- [Accommodations for ELs: Remote Learning & Beyond](#)
- [Online Platforms with Accommodations for English Learners](#)
- Oakland Schools Guidance: [K-5](#) and [6-12](#) ESL/Multilingual Learners During Temporary School Closings: Communication and learning tools
- [Oakland Schools ESL Padlet](#): K-12 learning, community, SEL, health and translation resources
- [SIOP aligned remote learning considerations](#): Kallee Iverson; Walled Lake
- [Shared folder with grade level remote lesson examples](#)