CCNETWORK Content Center | English Language Proficiency

Designing System Coherence For Content-Based English Language Development

ADVANCING COMPREHENSIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTATION BRIEF SERIES

JULY 2026

Introduction

The Center on English Language Proficiency (ELP) developed this series to help Regional Centers, state agencies, and local systems turn vision into action—designing, implementing, and strengthening coherent Comprehensive ELD systems that work in practice and improve outcomes for English Learners. The **Advancing Comprehensive English Language Development (ELD) Implementation Brief Series** brings together the core components for high-quality Comprehensive ELD, across both content-based ELD and designated ELD.

This **Designing System Coherence For Content-Based English Language Development** brief is the second in a four-part series on implementing high-quality Comprehensive ELD. Brief 1 examined evidence-based classroom practices. Brief 2 focuses on the organizational structures, resources, and supports needed to implement coherent content-based ELD consistently and at scale.

When systems are coherent, educators receive consistent guidance and support, implementation efforts reinforce one another, and districts and schools are better positioned to implement evidence-based practices consistently across classrooms.

EMBARGOED COPY
NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

About the Series

*English Learners' academic achievement and English language development are strengthened through supports that address students' social, academic, and linguistic development. The **Advancing Comprehensive English Language Development (ELD) Implementation Brief Series** highlights evidence-based practices and systems that support the design, implementation, and systemic coherence for Comprehensive ELD. Evidence-based practices are approaches or strategies supported by rigorous research showing improvement in student outcomes and/or a strong rationale based on prior evidence.[1,2,3,4] Although research continues to identify effective educational practices, evidence is inconsistently used in decision-making due to persistent barriers.[5,6,7,8] This contributes to achievement gaps between students classified as English Learners* and non-English Learners.*

**We use the federal term "English Learners (ELs)" to refer to students developing English proficiency while building on diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. We affirm the use of asset-based terms such as "multilingual learners," which emphasize students' developing proficiency in English and one or more additional languages. For additional context, see the federal legal requirements guiding equitable services and supports for English Learners.*

What is System Coherence?

Research has increasingly identified evidence-based practices that support English Learners' language development and academic achievement, including content-based instruction that intentionally develops disciplinary academic language through subject matter learning and designated ELD instruction that provides dedicated time for specialized language development support.[9,10,11] Yet implementing these practices consistently across classrooms, schools, and districts remains a persistent challenge.

Even when educators share a commitment to supporting English Learners, they often work within systems where curriculum, professional learning, assessment, coaching, accountability requirements, and improvement initiatives are not fully aligned. Largely because of how our education system evolved, fragmentation has become the norm. Funding streams, compliance requirements, accountability systems, and department-led initiatives have frequently developed in isolation, despite ultimately affecting the same educators, classrooms, and students.[12] As a result, districts and schools often face competing priorities and inconsistent implementation expectations, leading to uneven access to high-quality, language-rich instruction for English Learners.

System coherence refers to the alignment of policies, leadership, structures, resources, and implementation supports around a shared vision for teaching and learning.

Addressing this challenge requires more than identifying effective classroom practices. It also requires attention to the systems that support implementation. **System coherence** refers to the alignment of policies, leadership, structures, resources, and implementation supports around a shared vision for teaching and learning[13], including:

- **Policies and guidance**
- **Leadership and communication**
- **Organizational structures and resources**
- **Professional learning and implementation supports**

System coherence is closely related to, but distinct from, **instructional coherence**, which describes the extent to which students experience aligned content, instruction, and learning goals across learning settings.[14, 15, 16] Put simply, instructional coherence reflects what students experience, while system coherence reflects how education systems organize themselves to support those experiences.[17] When systems are coherent, educators receive consistent guidance and support, implementation efforts reinforce one another, and districts and schools are better positioned to implement evidence-based practices consistently across classrooms.[18]

EMBARGOED COPY
NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

What is System Coherence for Content-Based ELD Instruction?

Content-based English Language Development (ELD), also referred to as integrated ELD, is grounded in the understanding that language development and content learning are mutually reinforcing rather than separate goals. English Learners develop academic language most effectively when they engage in meaningful disciplinary learning that requires them to explain, analyze, argue, problem solve, and communicate ideas using increasingly complex language.[19, 20, 21] Because language develops through participation in rigorous academic work, content-based ELD views language as central to how students access, engage with, and demonstrate understanding of grade-level content.

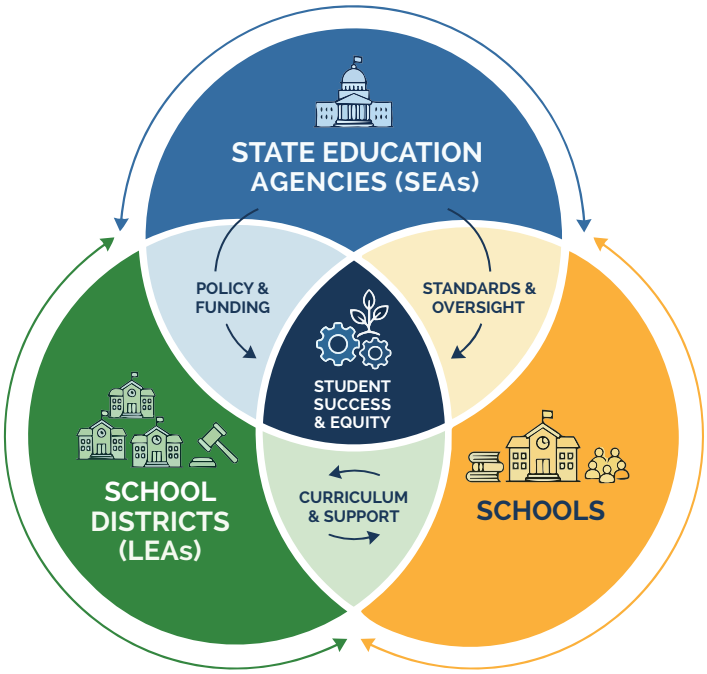
For content-based ELD, coherence means that curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional learning, leadership practices, and student supports all reinforce a common approach to integrated language and content learning.[22] In coherent systems:

- **Educators receive consistent messages about the role of language in disciplinary learning;**
- **Instructional materials reinforce common expectations for language development;**
- **Professional learning builds shared expertise among educators; and**
- **Assessments support both language development and content learning.**

These system elements work together to support a common instructional approach and create more consistent learning experiences for English Learners.

While the focus of this brief is content-based ELD, coherent systems also establish connections between integrated and designated ELD so that designated ELD reinforces and extends students' participation in grade-level learning rather than functioning as a disconnected instructional experience.[23]

What Do Coherent Content-Based ELD Systems Look Like?



System coherence for content-based ELD must be built across multiple levels of the education system; building coherence is not a one-time alignment effort. **State education agencies** establish the policies, guidance, funding, and accountability structures that shape how schools and districts support integrated language and content learning for English Learners. **School districts** translate those priorities into curriculum, professional learning, assessment systems, instructional guidance, and organizational supports that help educators embed language development within grade-level content instruction. **Schools** then organize leadership, collaboration, staffing, and student supports in ways that make this vision actionable in daily practice. Because actions at each level influence the others, coherence depends on alignment across the system rather than isolated efforts within any one organization.

Below we illustrate what system coherence can look like at the state, district, and school levels, highlighting both practices that support the development of coherent systems and common sources of fragmentation that can undermine implementation.

EMBARGOED COPY
NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

State-Level Coherence

State-level coherence creates the conditions for consistent implementation across districts and schools. State policy efforts to support coherence for English Learners vary, but many states have increasingly developed shared visions through statewide roadmaps, frameworks, and guidance that align English Learner services, curriculum, funding, educator development, and accountability to support consistent implementation of evidence-based approaches to ELD.

Several states have adopted different approaches to advancing system coherence for English Learners.[A] Rhode Island offers one example through its Multilingual Learner Blueprint strategic plan, educator proficiency requirements, implementation guidance, and regulations, all of which are designed to support a shared vision for integrated language and content learning across the education system.[24] New York has adopted a similar approach through its Blueprint for English Language Learner/Multilingual Learner Success, which positions language development and access to rigorous grade-level content as shared responsibilities across schools and districts and reinforces that vision through statewide guidance, regulations, and support for multilingual education.[25] California's English Learner Roadmap provides another example, establishing a statewide framework that connects English Learner outcomes to curriculum, professional learning, accountability, and district planning while emphasizing the integration of language development with rigorous academic instruction.[26] Additional examples of state plan bright spots can be found here.

Table 1 illustrates what system coherence can look like at the SEA level, offering examples of how state policies, structures, and supports can either reinforce or undermine content-based ELD — and how states can align these to bring a coherent vision into practice across districts and schools.

TABLE 1 **Examples of State-Level Fragmentation and Coherence for Content-Based ELD**

Without Coherence	With Coherence
English Learner priorities are addressed through disconnected initiatives, guidance documents, and programs.	☑ A statewide vision or blueprint provides a shared framework for English Learner success.
Professional learning, technical assistance, funding, accountability, and implementation supports operate independently.	☑ State supports are aligned around common priorities and reinforce a shared instructional vision.
ELD is treated as a separate program, while curriculum, instruction, and assessment initiatives focus primarily on content achievement.	☑ Language development lives within academic instruction, curriculum, assessment, and improvement efforts, reinforcing shared expectations for content-based ELD.
Educator preparation, certification, and professional learning systems provide inconsistent expectations for supporting English Learners.	☑ Educator preparation, certification, and professional learning are aligned around a common vision of how all general education and specialized teachers support both language development and academic learning.

Note: *These examples are drawn from the body of literature in the preceding narrative.*

[A] *The examples highlighted in this section are illustrative rather than comprehensive. They were selected to demonstrate specific features of system coherence for content-based ELD across diverse contexts and should not be interpreted as an exhaustive review of states engaged in this work. Many other state education agencies are implementing promising approaches to strengthening coherence for English Learners.*

EMBARGOED COPY
NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION!

District-Level Coherence

Districts are often the primary organizing level for systems coherence because they can establish a shared instructional vision and coordinate the systems that support implementation. Coherent district systems align curriculum, ELD, professional learning, coaching, assessment, and continuous improvement efforts so that educators receive consistent guidance rather than competing priorities.[27]

Although many coherence-building practices are enacted within schools and classrooms, districts play an important role in ensuring that those practices are supported and implemented consistently across schools. Efforts to strengthen coherence may range from selecting instructional materials that support both language development and content learning to creating opportunities for collaboration between ELD and content educators to coordinating continuous improvement efforts around shared expectations for English Learner instruction. Some districts formalize these efforts through instructional frameworks, strategic plans, or English Learner master plans that set a clear vision, clarify roles and responsibilities, and align policies, programs, and supports for English Learners across the district.[28]

Although many coherence-building practices are enacted within schools and classrooms, districts play an important role in ensuring that those practices are supported and implemented consistently across schools.

TABLE 2 **Examples of District-Level Fragmentation and Coherence for Content-Based ELD**

Without Coherence	With Coherence
District leadership sends mixed messages about priorities for English Learner instruction or leaves responsibility for implementation to individual departments or schools.	☑ District leadership establishes and communicates a shared vision, aligned to a statewide framework if available, for content-based ELD.
English Learner-focused curriculum, ELD, assessment, coaching, and professional learning efforts operate independently.	☑ District leadership aligns organizational structures that allow departments to coordinate flexibly around a shared instructional vision for EL education.
Educators have limited opportunities to collaboratively plan, examine student work, and strengthen content-based ELD practices.	☑ The district provides protected time and structures for collaborative planning, coaching, and continuous learning focused on content-based ELD.
Designated ELD and core content instruction operate as separate instructional experiences.	☑ The district provides guidance, resources, and planning supports that connect designated ELD to grade-level content learning.
Multiple initiatives compete for educators' time and attention.	☑ The district ensures a focused direction and shared instructional priorities guide improvement efforts.

EMBARGOED COPY
NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

Note: *These examples are drawn from the body of literature in the preceding narrative.*

These Bright Spot examples demonstrate how districts can align leadership, professional learning, instructional supports, and organizational structures around a shared vision for content-based ELD.

Bright Spot Selection Approach

The district examples in this brief illustrate how coherent systems can support content-based English Language Development (ELD). Rather than identifying "exemplary" districts, the examples were selected to highlight specific system features and were drawn from credible sources, including professional organizations, research studies, and publicly available documentation. Together, they demonstrate how districts can align leadership, professional learning, instructional supports, and organizational structures around a shared vision for content-based ELD.

BRIGHT SPOT

Rural North Carolina District: Building Coherence Through Coordinated Systems of Support

*A **rural North Carolina district** demonstrates how system coherence can strengthen content-based ELD by aligning professional learning, instructional supports, collaboration, and data use around a shared vision for integrated language and content instruction.*[29]

BRIGHT SPOT

Building Coherence for English Learner Success in Elk Grove Unified School District (California)

***California's Elk Grove Unified School District** illustrates how aligning leadership, data, professional learning, and shared responsibility can strengthen outcomes for English Learners through sustained system coherence.*[31,32]

BRIGHT SPOT

Beaverton School District (Oregon): Building Coherence Through Integrated Language Development

***Oregon's Beaverton School District** shows how aligning staffing, professional learning, and co-teaching can make language development a shared responsibility across the school day.*[30]

Click here to learn more about the district bright spots.

EMBARGOED COPY
NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

School-Level Coherence

At the school level, coherence relies on strong instructional leadership, educator collaboration, shared instructional expectations, and ongoing attention to implementation. As noted in Brief 1, effective implementation of evidence-based, content-based ELD practices depends on systems of support that foster collaboration, instructional coherence, professional learning, and engagement with students, families, and communities. English Learners often experience fragmented instruction when language supports or designated ELD are siloed from grade-level content.[33] Research indicates that schools implement content-based ELD more consistently when curriculum, professional learning, coaching, assessments, and classroom observations reinforce the same instructional priorities.[34,35] For example, if a school prioritizes academic discussion, that focus must be reflected consistently in classroom instruction, collaborative planning, coaching, and observation practices. Schools strengthen coherence by establishing shared expectations for language-rich instruction, protecting collaborative planning time, using evidence to guide continuous improvement, and deliberately connecting designated and integrated ELD.[36,37]

Schools can strengthen coherence when leaders intentionally create structures that support collaboration and shared responsibility for English Learners. At Shanghai Community International School, school leaders supported a shift from a pull-out model to a co-teaching approach and established regular collaborative planning cycles between classroom and ELD teachers. Educators used student data to guide instruction, co-planned lessons, and developed shared expectations for integrating language development into grade-level learning.[38]

Similarly, at Northwood Middle School[38] in Illinois, instructional leaders supported a collaborative co-teaching model in which language specialists and classroom teachers jointly planned and delivered instruction, helping ensure that language and content learning were reinforced throughout the school day. These examples illustrate how school leaders can strengthen coherence by creating the structures, routines, and expectations that support collaboration and integrated language and content instruction.

TABLE 3 **Examples of School-Level Fragmentation and Coherence for Content-Based ELD**

Without Coherence	With Coherence
Expectations for English Learner instruction vary across classrooms and instructional settings.	☑ School leaders and staff establish and reinforce shared expectations for integrating language development into grade-level learning.
Designated ELD operates separately from core instruction.	☑ Designated and integrated ELD reinforce one another and support students' participation in grade-level learning.
Educators work in isolation with limited opportunities to coordinate instruction.	☑ Structured collaboration and planning support coordination among content teachers, ELD specialists, and instructional leaders.
Classroom observations, coaching, and professional learning emphasize different priorities.	☑ Classroom observations, coaching, and professional learning reinforce shared instructional expectations.
Collaboration structures function independently leading to fragmentation for educators.	☑ Collaboration structures (PDs, PLCs, coaching, etc.) function interdependently leading to focused direction for educators.

Note: *These examples are drawn from the body of literature in the preceding narrative.*

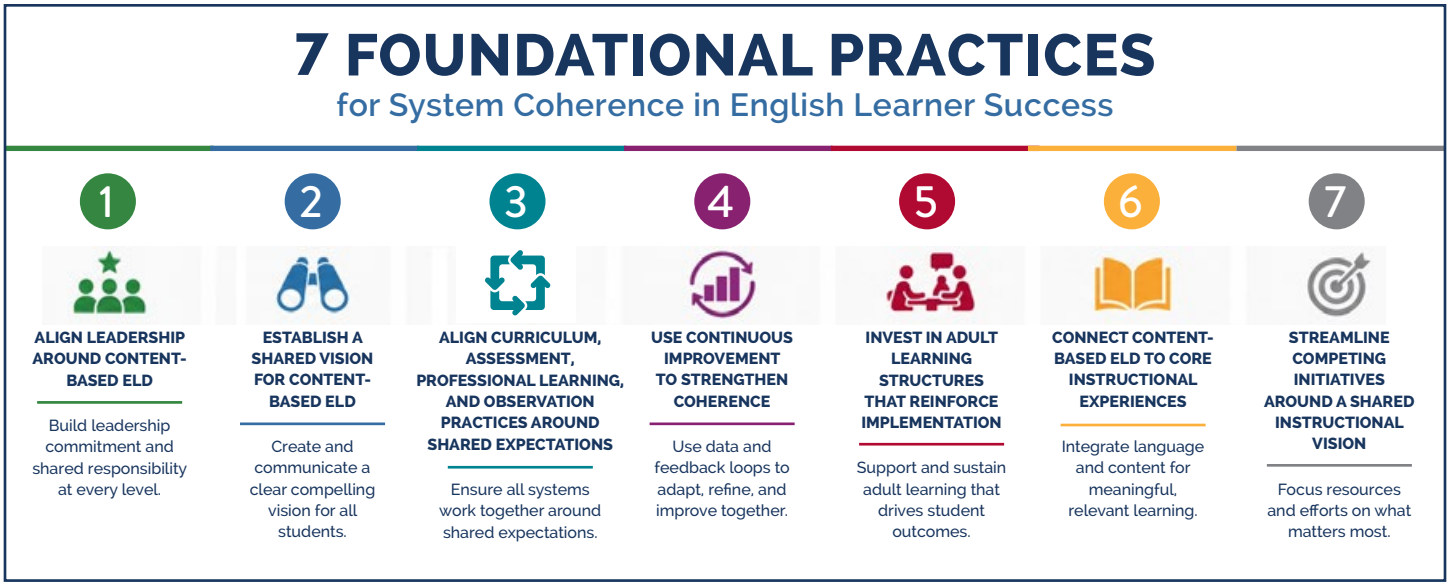
EMBARGOED COPY
NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

A central question for education leaders is: What does a system need to have in place to consistently deliver high-quality, coherent, evidence-based content-based ELD?

Actionable Foundational Practices for Building System Coherence for Content-Based ELD

Building system coherence for content-based ELD requires more than adopting a particular curriculum, professional development program, or policy. A central question for education leaders is: What does a system need to have in place to consistently deliver high-quality, coherent, evidence-based content-based ELD? As previously shared, research on system coherence suggests that effective implementation depends on the alignment of leadership, curriculum, assessment, professional learning, accountability, and organizational structures around a shared vision for teaching and learning.[39,40] For English Learners, coherence depends on aligning the policies, supports, and structures that enable effective and systemwide content-based ELD implementation.[41,42]

The practices that follow describe foundational conditions that help create coherent systems for content-based ELD. While districts play a particularly important role in coordinating these efforts, successful implementation depends on alignment across state, district, and school levels of the education system.[43,44,45]



Companion Resource: Actionable Foundational Practices Tool

This brief introduces seven foundational practices for building system coherence for content-based ELD. For leaders seeking to move from understanding to implementation, an accompanying Actionable Foundational Practices Tool provides reflection questions, concrete actions, and planning resources to help state, district, and school teams assess current conditions, identify opportunities for growth, and strengthen system coherence over time.

EMBARGOED COPY
NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

1 Align Leadership Around Content-Based ELD

Coherent systems require leaders at all levels to align policies, priorities, resources, and structures around a shared instructional vision — reducing the fragmentation that often surrounds English Learner programming.[46, 47, 48, 49, 50] When leadership is aligned, educators experience consistent expectations and supports; when it is fragmented, competing priorities undermine coherent instructional experiences for English Learners.[51,52]

> *Consider this tool:* ***Clarifying roles can strengthen cross-functional implementation by identifying when initiatives require communication, coordination, or deeper collaboration across teams. The Coherence Lab's Collaboration Continuum Tool can help departments make intentional choices to deepen collaboration. As both a reflection and discussion tool, the continuum can help teams assess their current practices and move toward an ideal state of collaboration.***

2 Establish a Shared Vision for Content-Based ELD

Leaders establishing coherent systems recognize that language development occurs through both designated ELD and integrated language development within grade-level content instruction. These systems treat language development as a shared responsibility across educators and build on the assets English Learners bring to the classroom. As a result, language expectations are intentionally embedded throughout Tier 1 instruction and supported by a shared commitment to English Learner success.

3 Align Curriculum, Assessment, Professional Learning, and Observation Practices Around Shared Expectations

Coherence becomes visible when curriculum, assessment, professional learning, instructional leadership, and observation practices reinforce a shared vision for integrated language and content instruction.[53,54] Coherent systems also align key processes—including identification, placement, services, interventions, and reclassification—to ensure English Learners receive appropriate supports and equitable access to rigorous learning opportunities. Shared tools, planning protocols, and professional learning structures help create consistent implementation of content-based ELD across the system.[55,56]

4 Use Continuous Improvement to Strengthen Coherence

Building coherence for content-based ELD is an ongoing process rather than a one-time implementation effort. Districts benefit from regularly examining whether leadership, curriculum, assessment, professional learning, and instructional supports are reinforcing a shared vision for integrated language and content learning. Continuous improvement processes help identify strengths, address fragmentation, and strengthen alignment across the system. By using data, feedback, and collaborative inquiry, districts can ensure English Learners experience consistent opportunities for rigorous, language-rich learning while adapting implementation to local contexts and needs.

EMBARGOED COPY
NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

5 Invest in Adult Learning Structures That Reinforce Implementation

Sustained collaboration and job-embedded professional learning support consistent implementation of content-based ELD across classrooms. Educators benefit from ongoing opportunities to collaboratively plan, examine student work, and strengthen connections between language development and disciplinary learning.[57,58] Coherent systems treat collaboration, coaching, and professional learning as core implementation structures rather than supplemental supports. Protected collaboration time, aligned coaching practices, and shared instructional routines help reinforce consistent expectations for integrated language and content instruction across the system.[59,60]

Consider this tool: ***Systems can strengthen implementation by gathering ongoing feedback from the people most proximate to the problem – educators, students, families – on how they experience content-based ELD across classrooms and schools. The Coherence Lab's Empathy Interview Tool can help systems leaders do just that.***

6 Connect Content-Based ELD to Core Instructional Experiences

Coherent systems establish clear connections between designated and integrated ELD. Designated ELD is most effective when it reinforces and extends the language demands students encounter during grade-level content instruction rather than functioning as a disconnected instructional block.[61,62] Aligning designated ELD to core instruction helps create more consistent learning experiences for English Learners across the school day and supports English proficiency development through access to high-quality, grade-level instruction. Shared language expectations, aligned instructional routines, and coordinated planning structures can help educators strengthen the connection between language development and disciplinary learning.[63,64]

7 Streamline Competing Initiatives Around a Shared Instructional Vision

Districts and schools often navigate multiple instructional initiatives simultaneously. Without clear alignment, these efforts can create competing expectations for educators and contribute to fragmented implementation experiences.[65] Coherent systems prioritize a smaller set of shared instructional expectations and align curriculum, professional learning, coaching, and assessment practices around those priorities. Embedding content-based ELD within broader instructional improvement efforts can help strengthen consistency and sustainability across the system.[66]

Consider this tool: ***Systems can use initiative-mapping or initiative inventory processes to identify overlapping instructional efforts and strengthen alignment across curriculum, professional learning, multilingual learner supports, and instructional improvement priorities. The Coherence Lab's Initiative Inventory Tool supports teams in identifying barriers to coherence and narrowing priorities across initiatives.***

Was this brief helpful? Let us know. Click here.

How Can You Learn More?

System coherence that supports the implementation of evidence-based classroom practices for ELD, as introduced in Brief 1, is built through intentional alignment across curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional learning, and leadership systems so that English Learners consistently experience rigorous, language-rich learning opportunities throughout the school day and regardless of the school they attend.

Additional briefs in this series provide a deeper exploration of designated ELD at the classroom level and an additional brief on system coherence for designated ELD.

Regional Content Centers, SEAs, LEAs, and schools all play important roles in strengthening the conditions that support coherent implementation of content-based ELD across diverse educational contexts.

Explore Additional Resources

Authors and Affiliations

Center on English Language Proficiency:

Estrada-Miller, Jeimee, University of California Riverside

Matias, Aline, Education First

Gonzalez, Raquel, Estrada Darley Miller Group

Lavadenz, Magaly, Center for Equity for English Learners at Loyola Marymount University

Armas, Elvira, Center for Equity for English Learners at Loyola Marymount University

Citation

Estrada-Miller, J., Matias, A., Gonzalez, R., Lavadenz, M., & Armas, E. (2026, July). Advancing comprehensive English language development: Designing system coherence for content-based English language development (Implementation Brief No. 2). The Center on English Language Proficiency at Loyola Marymount University.

EMBARGOED COPY
NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

References

1. (2015–2016). Every Student Succeeds Act, Pub. L. No. 114–95, 129 Stat. 1802 (2015).
2. Goldenberg, C. (2012). Research on English learner instruction. In M. Calderon (Ed.), Breaking through: Effective instruction & assessment for reaching English Learners (pp. 39–61). Solution Tree Press.
3. Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. (2013). How languages are learned (4th ed.). Oxford University Press.
4. Gross, B. (2016). What works? Evidence-based policymaking under ESSA. In A. Jochim & B. Gross (Eds.), Maximizing opportunities under ESSA (The SEA of the Future, Vol. 6, pp. 25–37). Building State Capacity & Productivity Center at Edvance Research, Inc.
5. Farley-Ripple, E. N., May, H., Karpyn, A., Tilley, K., & McDonough, K. (2018). Rethinking connections between research and practice in education: A conceptual framework. Educational Researcher, 47(4), 235–245. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X18761042
6. Finnigan, K. S., Daly, A. J., & Che, J. (2013). Systemwide reform in districts under pressure. Journal of Educational Administration, 51(4), 476–497. 10.1108/jea.2013.07451daa.002
7. Honig, M. I., Venkateswaran, N., & McNeil, P. (2017). Research use as learning: The case of fundamental change in school district central offices. American Educational Research Journal, 54(5), 938–971. https://doi.org/10.3102/0002831217712466
8. Penuel, W. R., Briggs, D. C., Davidson, K. L., Herlihy, C., Sherer, D., Hill, H. C., Farrell, C. C., & Allen, A.-R. (2016). Findings from a national survey of research use among school and district leaders (Technical Report No. 1). National Center for Research in Policy and Practice.
9. Baker, S. K., Lesaux, N. K., Jayanthi, M., Dimino, J., Proctor, C. P., Morris, J., Gersten, R., Haymond, K., Kieffer, M. J., Linan-Thompson, S., & Newman-Gonchar, R. (2014). Teaching academic content and literacy to English Learners in elementary and middle school (NCEE 2014-4012). National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications_reviews.aspx
10. Gersten, R., Baker, S. K., Shanahan, T., Linan-Thompson, S., Collins, P., & Scarcella, R. (2007). Effective literacy and English language instruction for English Learners in the elementary grades: A practice guide (NCEE 2007-4011). National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education.
11. Teja, Z., & Schonert-Reichl, K. A. (2013). Peer relations of Chinese adolescent newcomers: Relations of peer group integration and friendship quality to psychological and school adjustment. Journal of International Migration and Integration, 14(3), 535–556. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12134-012-0253-5
12. Fullan, M., & Quinn, J. (2016). Coherence: The right drivers in action for schools, districts, and systems. Corwin.
13. TNTP. (2026). Coherence at scale: A state guide to supporting instructional systems. https://tntp.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Coherence-at-Scale-TNTP.pdf
14. Newmann, F. M., Smith, B., Allensworth, E., & Bryk, A. S. (2001). Instructional program coherence: What it is and why it should guide school improvement policy. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 23(4), 297–321. https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737023004297
15. Newmann, F. M., Smith, B., Allensworth, E., & Bryk, A. S. (2001). Instructional program coherence: What it is and why it should guide school improvement policy. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 23(4), 297–321. https://doi.org/10.3102/01623737023004297
16. Council of Chief State School Officers. (2024). Making sense of instructional coherence: A state leader's guide to support coherent systems.https://learning.ccsso.org/making-sense-of-instructional-coherence
17. TNTP. TNTP. (2026). Coherence at scale: A state guide to supporting instructional systems. https://tntp.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Coherence-at-Scale-TNTP.pdf
18. Kaufman, J. H., Snoke, J., Thompson, L. E., Doan, S., Setodji, C. M., Lawrence, R. A., Schweig, J. D., Grant, D., & Opfer, V. D. (2021). Creating coherent instructional systems: A guide for states, districts, schools, and teachers (RR-A134-30). RAND Corporation. https://doi.org/10.7249/RRA134-30
19. Avenia-Tapper, B., & Llosa, L. (2015). Construct relevant or irrelevant? The role of linguistic complexity in the assessment of English language learners' science knowledge. Educational Assessment, 20(2), 95–111. https://d-miller.github.io/DRK12/topic1/6888.pdf
20. WIDA. (2020). WIDA English language development standards framework, 2020 edition: Kindergarten–grade 12. Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System. https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/WIDA-ELD-Standards-Framework-2020.pdf
21. Duckor, B., Holmberg, C., & Rossi, A. (2020). Seven high-leverage formative assessment moves to support ELLs. The California Reader, 54(2), 15–24. https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/seven-high-leverage-formative-assessment-moves-to-support-ells
22. WIDA. (2023). Implementation guide for the WIDA English language development standards framework, 2020 edition: Kindergarten–grade 12.https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/Implementation-Guide-WIDA-ELD-Standards-Framework.pdf
23. California Department of Education. (2015). English language arts/English language development framework for California public schools: Kindergarten through grade twelve. https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/cf/documents/elaeldframework.pdf
24. Rhode Island Department of Education. (2021). A blueprint for multilingual learner success in Rhode Island. https://ride.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur806/files/Portals/0/Uploads/Documents/OSCAS/English-Learner-Pages/Blueprint-MLL/RIDE-Blueprint-for-MLL-Success_0621.pdf
25. New York State Education Department. (2014). The New York State blueprint for English language learner/multilingual learner success. https://www.nysed.gov/sites/default/files/nys-blueprint-for-ell-success.pdf
26. California Department of Education. (2017). California English learner roadmap: Strengthening comprehensive educational policies, programs, and practices for English Learners. https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/ml/roadmap.asp
27. Gallagher, H. A., Faw, L., & Cottingham, B. W. (2026, February). How districts scale instructional improvement that lasts [Practice brief]. Policy Analysis for California Education. https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/how-districts-scale-instructional-improvement-lasts
28. Armas, E., Lavadenz, M., Rozsa, N., & O'Brien, G. (2021). English learner master plan playbook: Developing equitable local policies for multilingual and English learner students. Loyola Marymount University Center for Equity for English Learners. https://soe.lmu.edu/media/lmuschoolofeducation/centersandinstitutes/ceel/documents/EL%20Master%20Plan%20Playbook%202021.pdf
29. Park, H. (2026). Advancing implementation: Phase 2: Research on WIDA English language development standards, part 2: A case study of transformative practices in a rural North Carolina district (WIDA Research Report No. RR-2026-5). University of Wisconsin–Madison. https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/Research-Report-Standards-Implementation-Study-Phase2-Part2.pdf
30. Klein, A. (2024, October 16). 2 districts overhauled how they teach English Learners. Here's how. Education Week. https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/2-districts-overhauled-how-they-teach-english-learners-heres-how/2024/10
31. Olsen, L. (2023). Bright spots: Five districts move the English Learner Roadmap forward: A compendium of successful implementation. Californians Together. https://californianstogether.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/21029-EL-RISE-A-Bright-Spots-Compendium-Case-Study-REV-1.pdf
32. Elk Grove Unified School District. (n.d.). Multilingual education strategic plan. Elk Grove Unified School District. https://www.egusd.net/Departments/Multilingual-Education/index.html

EMBARGOED COPY
NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

33. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising futures. The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/24677

34. Lee, S., Woo, A., Kaufman, J. H., & Doan, S. (2025). Lost in translation—Teachers report feeling unprepared to support multilingual learners: Findings from the 2024 American Instructional Resources Surveys. RAND Corporation. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA134-29.html

35. Armas, E. G., & Lavadenz, M. (2011). The observation protocol for academic literacies (OPAL): A tool for supporting teachers of English language learners. CABE, The Multilingual Educator Conference Edition,16–22.https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/ceel_journalarticles/1

36. Duckor, B., & Holmberg, C. (2020). Seven high-leverage formative assessment moves to support ELLs. Educational Leadership, 77(4), 46–52. https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/seven-high-leverage-formative-assessment-moves-to-support-ells

37. Alvarez, L., Ananda, S., Walqui, A., Sato, E., & Rabinowitz, S. (2014). Focusing formative assessment on the needs of English Language Learners. WestEd.

38. Nordmeyer, J., & Honigsfeld, A. (2020). Collaboration: Working together to serve multilingual learners (WIDA Focus Bulletin). https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/FocusBulletin-Collaboration.pdf

39. Fullan, M., & Quinn, J. (2016). Coherence: The right drivers in action for schools, districts, and systems. Corwin.

40. Honig, M. I., & Hatch, T. C. (2004). Crafting coherence: How schools strategically manage multiple, external demands. Educational Researcher, 33(8), 16–30. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033008016

41. Olsen, L. (2010). Reparable harm: Fulfilling the unkept promise of educational opportunity for California's long term English Learners (2nd ed.). Californians Together. https://www.rcoe.us/media/izzbrlfz/olsen_reparableharm2ndedition.pdf

42. Walqui, A., & van Lier, L. (2010). Scaffolding the academic success of adolescent English language learners: A pedagogy of promise. WestEd.

43. Fullan, M., & Quinn, J. (2016). Coherence: The right drivers in action for schools, districts, and systems. Corwin.

44. Council of Chief State School Officers. (2024). Making sense of instructional coherence: A state leader's guide to support coherent systems. https://learning.ccsso.org/making-sense-of-instructional-coherence

45. TNTP. (2026). Coherence at scale: A state guide to supporting instructional systems. https://tntp.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Coherence-at-Scale-TNTP.pdf

46. Fullan, M., & Quinn, J. (2016). Coherence: The right drivers in action for schools, districts, and systems. Corwin.

47. Honig, M. I., & Hatch, T. C. (2004). Crafting coherence: How schools strategically manage multiple, external demands. Educational Researcher, 33(8), 16–30. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033008016

48. Olsen, L. (2010). Reparable harm: Fulfilling the unkept promise of educational opportunity for California's long term English Learners (2nd ed.). Californians Together. https://www.rcoe.us/media/izzbrlfz/olsen_reparableharm2ndedition.pdf

49. Council of Chief State School Officers. (2024). Making sense of instructional coherence: A state leader's guide to support coherent systems. https://learning.ccsso.org/making-sense-of-instructional-coherence

50. TNTP. (2026). Coherence at scale: A state guide to supporting instructional systems. https://tntp.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/Coherence-at-Scale-TNTP.pdf

51. Fullan, M., & Quinn, J. (2016). Coherence: The right drivers in action for schools, districts, and systems. Corwin

52. Honig, M. I., & Hatch, T. C. (2004). Crafting coherence: How schools strategically manage multiple, external demands. Educational Researcher, 33(8), 16–30. https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X033008016

53. WIDA. (2023). Implementation guide for the WIDA English language development standards framework, 2020 edition: Kindergarten–grade 12.https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/Implementation-Guide-WIDA-ELD-Standards-Framework.pdf

54. California Department of Education. (2015). English language arts/English language development framework for California public schools: Kindergarten through grade twelve. https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/cf/documents/elaeldframework.pdf

55. Armas, E. G., & Lavadenz, M. (2011). The observation protocol for academic literacies (OPAL): A tool for supporting teachers of English language learners. CABE, The Multilingual Educator Conference Edition,16–22.https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/ceel_journalarticles/1

56. California Department of Education. (2017). California English learner roadmap: Strengthening comprehensive educational policies, programs, and practices for English Learners. cde.ca.gov/sp/ml/roadmap.asp

57. Nordmeyer, J., & Honigsfeld, A. (2020). Collaboration: Working together to serve multilingual learners (Updated November 2025) [WIDA Focus Bulletin]. WIDA, University of Wisconsin–Madison. https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/FocusBulletin-Collaboration.pdf

58. Nordmeyer, J., & Honigsfeld, A. (2020). Collaboration: Working together to serve multilingual learners (Updated November 2025) [WIDA Focus Bulletin]. WIDA, University of Wisconsin–Madison. https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/FocusBulletin-Collaboration.pdf

59. California Department of Education. (2017). California English learner roadmap: Strengthening comprehensive educational policies, programs, and practices for English Learners. cde.ca.gov/sp/ml/roadmap.asp

60. Nordmeyer, J., & Honigsfeld, A. (2020). Collaboration: Working together to serve multilingual learners (Updated November 2025) [WIDA Focus Bulletin]. WIDA, University of Wisconsin–Madison. https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/FocusBulletin-Collaboration.pdf

61. California Department of Education. (2015). English language arts/English language development framework for California public schools: Kindergarten through grade twelve. https://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/rl/cf/documents/elaeldframework.pdf

62. WIDA. (2023). Implementation guide for the WIDA English language development standards framework, 2020 edition: Kindergarten–grade 12.https://wida.wisc.edu/sites/default/files/resource/Implementation-Guide-WIDA-ELD-Standards-Framework.pdf

63. California Department of Education. (2017). California English learner roadmap: Strengthening comprehensive educational policies, programs, and practices for English Learners. cde.ca.gov/sp/ml/roadmap.asp

64. Van Houten, L., Dunn, L., Bond, M. F., Blitz, J., Makkonen, R., & Austin, K. (2021). Supporting integrated English learner student instruction: A guide to assess professional learning needs based on the Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle School Practice Guide (REL 2022–122). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory West. https://ies.ed.gov/sites/default/files/rel-west/document/2025/11/REL_2022122.pdf

65. Gallagher, H. A., Faw, L., & Cottingham, B. W. (2026, February). How districts scale instructional improvement that lasts [Practice brief]. Policy Analysis for California Education. https://edpolicyinca.org/publications/how-districts-scale-instructional-improvement-lasts

66. Polikoff, M. S., Wang, E. L., Haderlein, S. K., Kaufman, J. H., Woo, A., Silver, D., & Opfer, V. D. (2020). Exploring coherence in English language arts instructional systems in the Common Core era (RR-A279-1). RAND Corporation. https://doi.org/10.7249/RRA279-1

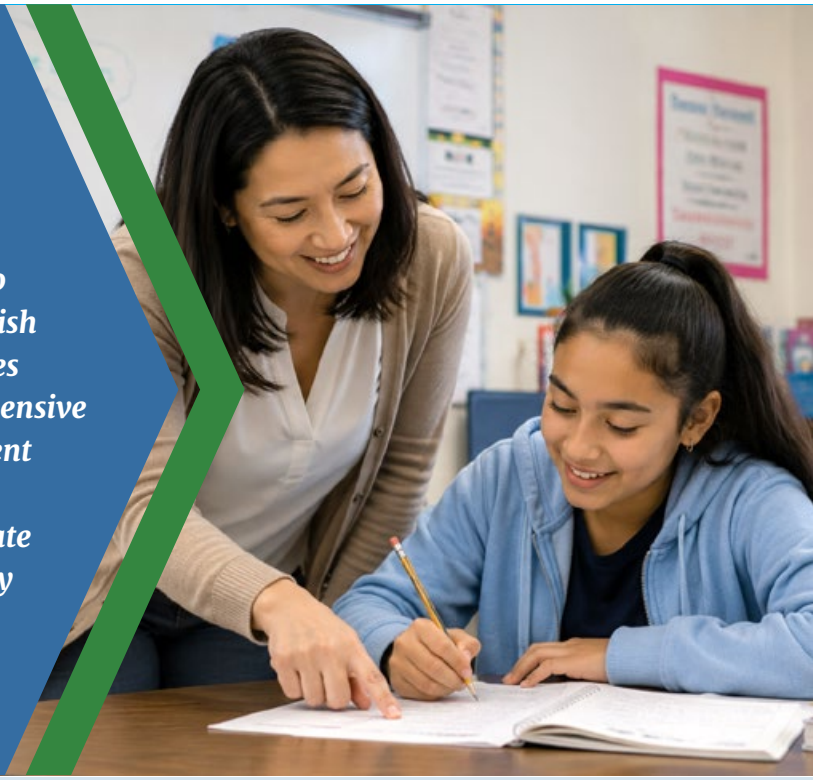
EMBARGOED COPY
NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION

CCNETWORK Content Center

English Language Proficiency

About Us

The Center on English Language Proficiency (ELP) operates as a content center within the Comprehensive Center Network (CCNetwork) and focuses on using an assets-based approach to improve educational outcomes and increase English Language Proficiency. ELP provides vital resources and technical assistance to the National Comprehensive Center, 14 Regional Centers, the other three Content Centers, and, by extension, to SEAs, REAs, LEAs, TEAs, schools, practitioners, research partners, state partners, professional organizations and advocacy groups. This support is specifically designed to assist their work with state and local education agencies.



Our Mission

The Center on English Language Proficiency engages with national and regional partners to improve educational outcomes for all students by providing research- and asset-based support for English Learners, ensuring that all students achieve English proficiency and thrive.

Our Vision

All English Learners achieve full English proficiency and excel across all academic subjects.

The contents of this implementation brief were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education (Department). The Department does not mandate or prescribe practices, models, or other activities described or discussed in this document. The contents of this implementation brief may contain examples of, adaptations of, and links to resources created and maintained by another public or private organization. The Department does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of this outside information. The content of this implementation brief does not necessarily represent the policy of the Department. This publication is not intended to represent the views or policy of or be an endorsement of any views expressed, or materials provided by any Federal agency. 2026 Center on English Language Proficiency.

EMBARGOED COPY

NOT FOR DISTRIBUTION