

learners and, in some cases, as immigrants. Thus, to be academically successful, ELLs may require additional supports and services that would not be required for non-ELLs” (8-9). They suggest that the unique needs of ELs displayed in Figure 11.4 should be considered in any improvement efforts in schools and districts serving ELs.

Figure 11.4: Addressing the Unique Needs of ELs

English language development and access to the academic curriculum. ELLs face the unique challenge of developing proficiency in English while simultaneously mastering grade-level academic content. Thus, in addition to learning social English, ELLs must develop the academic language and literacy skills needed to meaningfully access the grade-level curriculum. As ELLs are developing such skills, they require appropriate instructional modifications and supports to make academic content comprehensible. To improve ELL outcomes, schools might take actions to ensure that both ESL and content-area teachers are well prepared to employ effective instructional strategies that support ELLs’ dual English language development and academic needs.

Culture and socialization needs. ELLs come from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and schools may be able to enhance ELLs’ educational experiences by taking that diversity into account. For example, schools might strive to support ELLs’ reading comprehension by choosing instructional texts with culturally-familiar content or by preparing ELLs with appropriate background knowledge when using texts with less familiar content. Furthermore, by fostering an appreciation for diversity within the school’s culture, schools may help to facilitate ELLs’ transition from home to school and make them feel valued for their cultural heritage and experiences.

Parent and family engagement. Parents and families play important roles in promoting positive student behavior and achievement, but language barriers and a lack of familiarity with the U.S. system of schooling may make it difficult for parents of ELLs to stay informed about their children’s progress and become involved in school decisions and activities. Schools can take steps to ease obstacles to parent involvement by providing parent outreach supports, ensuring that school-related communications are disseminated in a language and mode that parents understand, and offering services such as ESL classes and workshops on navigating the school system.

Issues of isolation and segregation. Interactions with model English speakers can help facilitate ELLs’ English language development, yet for ELLs who reside in linguistically-isolated households or communities, attend segregated schools, or participate in classes separately from English-proficient peers, access to model English speakers can be limited. To increase this access, schools might choose to incorporate more inclusive teaching practices, use more heterogeneous student groupings, create structured opportunities for ELLs to engage with English-proficient peers, and train ELLs and non-ELLs in strategies for productive peer-to-peer interactions.

Interruptions in schooling or limited formal schooling. Some ELLs have experienced interruptions in their schooling, or arrive in U.S. schools with limited prior schooling. Such students possess varying levels of literacy in their native language and may need intensive and accelerated learning supports to help prepare them to participate meaningfully in academic classrooms. Schools may look for ways to better assess and address these students' individualized learning needs and help them adjust to academic settings by offering short-term newcomer programs or other specialized strategies.

Exiting from ELL status. An important goal in serving ELLs is to help these students become proficient enough in English that they no longer require specialized supports to engage productively with academic content and can therefore exit from ELL status. Schools might use focused strategies to help ELLs—particularly those who have been in ELL status for many years—satisfy ELL exit criteria, which vary across states and districts but can include such factors as performance on the state English language proficiency assessment, performance on state content assessments, teacher recommendations, and classroom grades. Furthermore, once students transition out of ELL status, schools can continue to monitor their progress and provide tutoring, academic counseling, and other supports to former ELLs who need it.

High school completion. Adolescent ELLs face a limited time frame in which to develop English language and literacy skills, master academic content, and satisfy course requirements for graduation. Fitting in coursework that supports their English language development and acquisition of appropriately rigorous academic content can pose challenges. Schools can help mitigate those challenges by creating instructional supports that accelerate ELLs' acquisition of English and academic content, afford opportunities for credit recovery, allow flexible scheduling, or provide extended instructional time.

NCEE (2014)

These recommendations are consistent with those made throughout this framework. While the recommendations listed above address the unique needs of ELs, schools and districts should ensure that their improvement efforts genuinely take into account the particular characteristics, backgrounds, and learning needs of their student population.

Shared Leadership and Responsibility

Research on effective professional learning (Desimone 2009) and on effective implementation, or change, (Fixson and Blase 2009) points to collective participation and facilitative administrative action as important elements of success. *Collective participation* occurs when teachers in the same school, grade level, or department participate in the same professional learning. This collective participation has the potential to promote collaboration, discussion, and shared responsibility (Borko 2004; Darling-Hammond and Sykes 1999; Grossman, Wineburg, and Woolworth 2001; Lewis,