1 Introduction to the Framework

The framework uses the English-Language Arts Content Standards as its curricular platform and aligns curriculum, assessment, instruction, and organization to provide a comprehensive, coherent structure for language arts teaching and learning.

The purpose of the California *Reading/Language Arts Framework* is to provide a blueprint for organizing instruction so that every child meets or exceeds the language arts content standards. It will guide the implementation of the standards by specifying the design of instructional materials, curriculum, instruction, and professional development. The standards designate what to teach at specific grade levels, and this framework provides guidelines and selected research-based approaches for implementing instruction to ensure optimal benefits for all students, including those with special learning needs (e.g., English learners, students who use African American vernacular English, students with learning disabilities and reading difficulties, and advanced learners).

Audiences for the Framework

The framework has two primary audiences: (1) teachers and other educators involved in English–language arts instruction; and (2) developers and publishers of language arts programs and materials. Parents, members of the community, and policymakers can be guided by the framework as they review language arts programs at the local and state levels. Educators will use this framework and the content standards as a road map for curriculum and instruction. Publishers must attend to the content and pedagogical requirements specified in the content standards and the framework to ensure that all

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California students have access to research-based instructional and practice materials. Carefully articulated curricular sequences and quality instructional materials enable teachers to invest more energy in delivering instruction and assessing the effectiveness of instruction for the full range of learners in their classrooms.

The Context of the Language Arts

In a suburban elementary school, seven-year-old Joshua enters the second grade reading two correct words in a minute and scoring at the ninth percentile on a standardized measure of receptive vocabulary. He cannot read the words *mom* or *can* or identify pictures that represent the meanings of *group* or *pair*. In the same second-grade classroom, seven-year-old Ricardo reads third-grade material fluently and provides a detailed and vivid recall of the story depicting the race between a tortoise and a hare. Judith, an eleven-year-old student with a reading disability, is repeating the fourth grade in an urban school in another part of the state. She labors over each of the words in a history passage on the California Gold Rush and has extreme difficulty in writing basic sentences to summarize the major points in the text.

Michael, an eighth-grade student in a rural school, reads and comprehends Guy de Maupassant's short story "The Necklace" with ease, carefully comparing and contrasting the theme with that of other short stories and communicating his ideas fluently and eloquently in writing. In a suburban high school on the coast, the instructional diversity of an eleventh-grade classroom poses particular challenges as

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students with reading abilities that span more than six grade levels read *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck and orally support their viewpoints and positions with details from the text.

The individual differences of the students just mentioned are as varied as their educational performances. Many plausible factors can explain why Michael excels and Judith struggles. Previous instructional experiences, prior knowledge of concepts and content, the socioeconomic level of the family, and motivation are all part of the complex equation of factors that can determine children's literacy success. The common denominator of the students is the need to develop competence in the language arts to ensure that they will be able to access information with ease, apply language skills at levels demanded in the twenty-first century, appreciate literature, and obtain the liberty society offers to those who can use the English language with facility. The mission of all public schools must be to ensure that students acquire that proficiency to enhance their civic participation and their academic, social, personal, and economic success in today's society and tomorrow's world.

The Challenge in the Language Arts

Facility in the language arts is the enabling skill that traverses academic disciplines and translates into meaningful personal, social, and economic outcomes for individuals. Literacy is the key to becoming an independent learner in all the other disciplines. Society has long recognized the importance of successful reading. But only recently have we begun to understand the profound, enduring consequences of not learning to read well and the newly found evidence of the critical abbreviated period in which to alter patterns of reading failure (Biancarosa and Snow, 2004; California Department of Education, 1995; Juel, 1988; Lyon and Chhabra, 1996; Shaywitz, 2003; Snow, 2002;

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Torgesen, 2002). Most important, we recognize the convergence of evidence to guide instruction in the language arts (National Reading Panel, 2000; National Research Council, 1998).

One need not look beyond school dropout data, prison rosters, or public assistance rolls to find that the problem of illiteracy is pervasive and is especially common to many who are not succeeding in a society whose literacy demands continue to exacerbate the divisions between the haves and the have-nots (Stanovich, 1986). Studies of individuals who are resilient in facing personal and social adversity indicate that the ability to read and write well renders powerful, far-reaching positive effects. Literacy levels are positively associated with both higher annual income and lower unemployment. On the other hand, the absence of proficient reading and writing skills is associated not only with academic failure and dropping out of school but also with unemployment and involvement with the judicial system (Biancarosa and Snow, 2004; Cornwall and Bawden, 1992; National Research Council, 1998; Shaywitz, 2003; Werner, 1993).

Stanovich (1998, 1986) observes that students who read early and successfully not only reap the advantages of early literacy but also accumulate experiences with print that continue to differentiate good readers from poor readers throughout their academic careers. Unfortunately, the rich-get-richer phenomenon known as the Matthew Effect (see glossary) has been verified in both the academic and the economic domains. Individuals who test at the least-proficient levels of literacy are often unemployable because even low-skill jobs today demand adequate ability in reading (Biancarosa and Snow, 2004). These results are put into proper context when examining the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data where 50% of the fourth grade students assessed in California were categorized in the below basic range of performance (U.S. Department of Education, 2003).

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In 1993 Peter Drucker described the advent of the knowledge society in which knowledge workers will replace blue-collar workers as the dominant class in the twenty-first century. According to Drucker, society will demand more sophisticated print-oriented skills than are currently required of the American workforce. America will be greatly challenged in general to develop competitive knowledge workers. In 1996 Simmons and Kame'enui remarked that those referred to as vulnerable learners would be especially challenged; that is, students who, because of their instructional, socioeconomic, experiential, physiological, and neurological characteristics, bring different and often additional requirements to instruction and curriculum.

The Charge to Educators

Reading/language arts and related disciplines are the beneficiaries of an abundance of converging research that produces a professional knowledge base related to fostering and sustaining competence in the language arts, particularly beginning reading. Noteworthy advances have identified the features of curricular and instructional interventions to offset negative factors that can accompany children when they enter school (Borman, Hewes, Overman, and Brown, 2003; Ehri, 2002; Foorman and Torgesen, 2001; Hanson and Farrell, 1995; National Reading Panel, 2000; Torgesen, 2001). As educational leaders it is our charge to use that knowledge base responsibly and strategically to ensure that all children educated in California public schools will graduate with the knowledge and skills that allow them to access and employ the power

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of the printed word. Toward that end this framework is designed to provide a blueprint for curriculum and instruction to enhance all students' potential as producers and users of language.

Guiding Principles

In an effort to accelerate and sustain all learners' proficiency in the language arts, ten principles are used to guide this framework and address the complexity of the content and context of language arts instruction. The principles direct the purpose, design, delivery, and evaluation of instruction. Accordingly, the framework:

- *Uses the English–language arts content standards as its curricular platform and aligns curriculum, assessment, instruction, and organization* to provide a comprehensive, coherent structure for language arts teaching and learning. The standards serve as curricular guideposts for teachers and provide clear-cut curricular goals for all learners. Genuine alignment of curriculum, assessment, instruction, and organization rests at the school level. There the components must be identified, implemented, and adjusted to fit the conditions and contexts of the school and the needs of the learners (Coyne, Kame`enui, and Simmons, 2001).
- *Stresses the importance of a balanced, comprehensive program. Balanced* is defined as the strategic selection and scheduling of instruction to ensure that students meet or exceed those standards, and *comprehensive* is defined as the inclusion of all content standards. Although more or less emphasis is placed on particular strands, depending on students' needs at a given time, all strands are to be developed simultaneously (Simmons, Kame'enui, Good, Harn, Cole, and Braun, 2002).

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— *Balanced* does not mean that all skills and standards receive equal emphasis at a given point in time. Rather, it implies that the overall emphasis accorded to a skill or standard is determined by its priority or importance relative to students' language and literacy levels and needs. For example, in kindergarten and the first grade, students first learn to apply and practice decoding and word-attack skills in carefully controlled, decodable texts. Later in the first grade and in subsequent grades the emphasis on decodable texts shifts to less-controlled passages and literature as students develop proficiency in the skills needed for reading in an alphabetic writing system (Ehri, 2002; Simmons, Kame`enui, Coyne, and Chard, 2002).

— A *comprehensive* program ensures that students learn to read and write, comprehend and compose, appreciate and analyze, and perform and enjoy the language arts. They should spend time immersed in high-quality literature and work with expository text, learn foundational skills in the alphabetic writing system, and study real books. A comprehensive program ensures that students master foundational skills as a gateway to using all forms of language as tools for thinking, learning, and communicating (Bay Area Reading Task Force, 1997).

- *Emphasizes that students must be fluent readers at least by the end of the third grade* and that third-grade competence depends on the specific and cumulative mastery of skills in kindergarten through grade three together with the development of positive attitudes toward reading and writing (Coyne, Kame'enui, and Simmons, 2001; National Reading Panel, 2000; Torgesen, Rashotte, and Alexander, 2001; Shaywitz, 2003; Stanovich, 2000). Consistent with the content standards, the framework recognizes that the advanced skills of comprehending narrative and

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informational text and literary response and analysis and the creation of eloquent prose all depend on solid vocabulary, decoding, and word-recognition skills fostered in the early grades and sustained throughout the school years (Beck, McKeown, and Kucan, 2002; Biancarosa and Snow, 2004; Ehri, 2001).

- *Describes the important skills, concepts, and strategies that students must be able to use after the third grade* and attends specifically to those advanced higher-order skills from grades four through twelve that require explicit and systematic instruction (Mastropieri, Scruggs, and Graetz, 2003).
- *Provides guidance to ensure that all educators and learners understand* that (1) specific skills in reading, writing, speaking, and listening must be taught and learned; (2) the language arts are related, reciprocal processes that build on and strengthen one another; and (3) the language arts can be learned across all academic disciplines.
- *Promotes a preventive rather than remedial approach.* The most effective instructional approach is to prevent reading/language arts problems before they begin (Shaywitz, 2003; Torgesen, 2001). The key to success is to make the first instruction students receive their best instruction (National Research Council, 1998; Simmons, Kame`enui, Coyne, and Chard, 2002).
- *Assumes that all learners will work toward the same standards* yet recognizes that not all learners will acquire skills and knowledge at the same rate. Intervention strategies must be in place to identify students who are not progressing adequately and to intervene at all levels as early and as long as necessary to support their acquisition of learning in the language arts (Simmons, Kame'enui, Good, Harn, Cole, and Braun, 2002).

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- *Addresses the full range of learners in classrooms*, with specific attention being given to language arts instruction and the learning needs of English learners, special education students, students with learning difficulties, and advanced learners. The framework addresses students with special needs at both ends of the academic continuum; that is, those who enter with less-than-adequate skills and struggle to develop fundamental competence and those who enter with advanced skills that require curriculum modifications to foster optimal achievement (Baker, Kame`ennui, and Simmons, 2002; Gersten and Baker, 2000; Gersten and Jimenez, 2002).
- *Assumes that virtually all students can learn to read* and that older struggling readers will benefit from refocusing instruction on building the skills, strategies, and knowledge that are the foundation for subsequent success in reading/language arts (Shaywitz, 2003; Torgesen, 2002).
- *Is designed to be useful to a wide range of consumers*, including professional developers, reading specialists, library media teachers, principals, district and county leaders of curriculum and instruction, college and university teacher educators, teachers, parents, community members, and publishers. However, the framework is first and foremost a tool for teachers and a guide for publishers and developers of educational materials.

Organization of the Framework

The organization of this framework is based on the content of the *English–Language Arts Content Standards* (California Department of Education 1998a). Accordingly, the framework:

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- Presents the goals and key components of an effective language arts program (Chapter 2)
- Describes the curriculum content and instructional practices needed for students to master the *English–Language Arts Content Standards* (Chapter 3 for K–3, Chapter 4 for grades 4–8, and Chapter 5 for grades 9–12)
- Guides the development of appropriate assessment tools and methods to ensure that each student's progress toward achieving specific knowledge, skills, and understanding in language arts is measured (Chapter 6)
- Suggests specific strategies to promote access to appropriately challenging curriculum for students with special needs (Chapter 7)
- Describes the systems of support, including professional development, that should be in place for effective implementation of a rigorous and coherent language arts curriculum (Chapter 8)
- Specifies requirements for instructional resources, including print and electronic learning resources (Chapter 9)

Chapters 3, 4, and 5, which detail standards-based curriculum content and instructional practices for the major grade-level clusters (K–3, 4–8, and 9–12), are further organized according to (1) curriculum content overview for each grade-level cluster; (2) overview of standards and instruction for each grade; (3) classroom connections indicating sample integration points (K–8); and (4) curricular and instructional profiles illustrating a selected standard for each grade. Note: The

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corresponding text from the English–Language Arts Content Standards can be found at the end of each grade-level section.

Essential to the organization of this framework is the structure of the standards themselves. They are categorized by domain: reading, writing, written and oral English-language conventions, and listening and speaking. Within each domain, strands and substrands are also used to categorize the standards. The structure of the content standards is illustrated on the following page in the sample table for the first grade. Appendix A provides an overview of the domain strands and substrands by grade.

The standards (e.g., 1.1–1.3) within substrands and strands serve as benchmarks by which to gauge what students should learn at designated points in time and over time. The strands are not intended to suggest that each standard is to be given equal weight in a given year. Instead, the weight and emphasis of a particular strand must be determined by (1) the role of the standards within the strand to developing competence within a specific domain, such as reading or writing; and (2) the performance of the learners. The English–language arts content standards illustrate the complexity of teaching the language arts, the multiple components that must be examined and integrated to create a comprehensive program, and the critical and integral relation of earlier and later skills.

The standards are mastery standards, meaning that students should master or be proficient in the knowledge, skills, and strategies specified in a particular standard, at least by the end of the designated grade. Instruction to develop such proficiency is not, however, restricted to a specific grade. Publishers and teachers should consider the prerequisite skills and sequence of instruction students will need to master a standard by the end of the grade and introduce and sequence instruction within and between grades to ensure mastery at least by the grade in which the standard is identified. For

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example, Reading Standard 1.9 specifies that students will be able to divide single-syllable words into their components (e.g., /*c*/ /*a*/ /*t*/ = cat). This standard does not propose that students wait until the first grade to begin sequential segmentation but that they master the skill at least by the end of the first grade.

Structure of the Content Standards

DOMAIN: Reading 1.0

STRAND: Word analysis, fluency, and systematic vocabulary development

SUBSTRAND: Concepts about print

STANDARD:

1.1 Match oral words to printed words.

1.2 Identify the title and author of a reading selection.

1.3 Identify letters, words, and sentences.

In recognition that a substantial portion of the instructional day must be devoted to language arts instruction, educators and publishers of instructional materials should address the history–social science and science content standards simultaneously with the language arts standards, particularly for kindergarten through grade three.

Two considerations regarding the treatment of standards are that (1) the complexity of the language arts and the number of content standards preclude a comprehensive, detailed analysis of each standard in the framework; and (2) the discussion of the standards in the framework parallels their organization by domains, strands, and substrands, whereas in practice those features are interwoven. *No attempt is made to address every standard within the grade-level discussions; rather, standards important to understanding the domains or standards new to a particular grade are highlighted*

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and discussed. Standards may be paraphrased or restated to illustrate the descriptions. The full text of the *English–Language Arts Content Standards* is included in the corresponding grade-level sections. Similarly, the connections between standards are not thoroughly explored in the descriptions of grade-level standards. Instead, they are addressed in (1) the samples of integration points in the grade-level sections; and (2) the representative content standards and instructional connections in Appendix B.

Curricular and instructional profiles serve as a starting point for curriculum planning and instruction for a selected standard at each grade level. Profiles include critical dimensions that should be components of effective language arts lessons. Ideally, the components would be incorporated into published commercial materials. But if the components are not fully developed in existing materials, the profiles offer a model for teachers to use in modifying and strengthening instruction for the full range of learners. It is not suggested, however, that profiles be developed for all standards. Instead, designers will want to consider the interrelationship of standards across domains and strands in curriculum planning and instruction and in the development of instructional resources. (See the following “Key to Curricular and Instructional Profiles” for details on the elements of the curricular and instructional profiles.)

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Key to Curricular and Instructional Profiles

Domain, Strand, Substrand, and Standard

Prerequisite or corequisite standards (or both) are listed at the beginning of the profile for each grade.

Curricular and Instructional Decisions

Instructional Objectives

Definitions of what is to be taught and learned.

Instructional Design

Strategic selection and sequencing of information to be taught. Features of instructional design include what to teach, when to introduce skills and concepts, how to select examples, how to integrate standards, and how to teach for transference and generalization.

Instructional Delivery

Procedures and strategies teachers use to develop students' skills and knowledge. Materials should provide clear steps of how to introduce the skill or strategy. This dimension includes what teachers and students do. Modeling, pacing, reinforcement, questioning, corrections, and feedback are also included. It further involves the structure of delivery, including teacher demonstration or modeling, guided practice, peer-mediated instruction, and independent practice and application.

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Assessment

Three critical purposes are addressed:

1. *Entry-level assessment for instructional planning:* how to determine the skill level of students through the use of meaningful indicators of reading and language arts proficiency prior to instruction
2. *Monitoring student progress toward the instructional objective:* how to determine whether students are making adequate progress on skills and concepts taught directly
3. *Post-test assessment toward the standard:* how to determine the effectiveness of instruction and students' proficiency after instruction

Universal Access

Although all learners work toward mastery of the same standards, curriculum and instruction are differentiated to meet students' needs. Some students may meet more than one of the following descriptions:

1. *Students with reading difficulties or disabilities.* Are the standard and objective appropriate for the learner in content and number of objectives? Can students use the same materials? Or will materials need to be modified to accommodate the speaking, listening, reading, or writing competence of the learners?
2. *Students who are advanced learners.* Determine whether the content has been mastered by the student. Do the content and activities need to be accelerated or enriched? Are the content and objectives appropriate for the learners? If not, how can the materials and requirements of the task be modified?

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3. *Students who are English learners.* Is more extensive instruction of vocabulary or other English-language features necessary to achieve the standard? Is the rate of introduction of new information manageable for learners? Is there sufficient oral and written modeling of new skills and concepts and reinforcement of previously taught information? Have linguistic elements in the lesson or materials been modified as appropriate for the proficiency level of the students?

Instructional Materials

Criteria to consider include the following:

1. Introduction of content, skills, and strategies is carefully sequenced.
2. Number and range of examples are adequate.
3. Prerequisite skills are addressed, and materials provide sufficient review of previously taught skills and strategies.
4. Assessment tasks parallel the requirements of the standard.

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