

Literacy Content Block for English-Medium Classrooms

Introduction



Introduction to the Literacy Content Blocks

Literacy Content Blocks are a central element of the California Literacy Roadmap. The purpose of the California Literacy Roadmap is to provide current and comprehensive, yet concise, guidance to help educators implement effective literacy instruction for all California students. Specifically, it is designed to help educators apply the *English Language Arts/English Language Development Framework for California Public Schools* (ELA/ELD Framework) to classroom instruction, navigate available resources and professional learning opportunities, and improve literacy outcomes for all students, with a focus on equity.

The Literacy Content Blocks are intended to guide literacy instruction based on local context and students' identified assets and assessed needs. Literacy Content Blocks are provided for English-medium classrooms in transitional kindergarten through grade twelve and for multilingual classroom settings in transitional kindergarten through grade five. The blocks reflect an intentional approach to literacy that promotes carefully sequenced initial instruction, appropriate practice and reinforcement, intervention as necessary, and meaningful application in ELA and other content areas.

Overview

Users of the Literacy Content Blocks will find:

- Alignment with the California Common Core State Standards for ELA and Literacy, the California ELD Standards, and the California Preschool/Transitional Kindergarten Learning Foundations for Language and Literacy Development.
- Alignment with the California ELA/ELD Framework, English Learner Roadmap, Dyslexia Guidelines, Comprehensive State Literacy Plan, and Digital Learning Integration and Standards Guidance for ELA, Literacy, and ELD.
- Guidance on Comprehensive ELD instruction based on the California ELD Standards, including both integrated and designated ELD, designed to build students' English proficiency, refine their use of academic English, and ensure their access to subject area content.
- Basic principles that characterize effective instruction across all literacy areas.
- Selected, intentional repetition across literacy areas and grade levels, illustrating the integrated nature of literacy, the continuum of learning throughout the years, and the principles that are relevant for all learners, such as the value of motivation.

Organization

The Literacy Content Blocks are organized into four areas:

- Language
- Foundational Literacy Skills
- Integrated Reading and Writing
- Comprehensive ELD

Each area provides instructional guidance for the range of children that California's educators serve. Areas include statements that define and describe the specific literacy area and recommendations for the use of instructional time. Evidence-based practices that depict effective teaching approaches follow. These practices outline the key aspects and progression of literacy development to be addressed at the grade.

How the Literacy Content Blocks Can Be Used

The Literacy Content Blocks can and should be used, alongside standards and the many resources to which these content blocks are aligned, to guide the following:

- Individual reflections on personal knowledge, priorities, and practices.
- Team discussions of instructional materials and approaches, assessment results, and needed interventions.
- Schoolwide and individual plans for professional learning, including coaching.
- Development of school and district literacy plans, including a Multi-Tiered System of Support, analysis of the implementation of instruction across all literacy areas, and selection of curricula and assessment instruments.

Important Understandings

The guidance presented in the Literacy Content Blocks should be interpreted in the context of the following understandings:

- **The California ELA/ELD Framework underpins the Literacy Content Blocks.** The framework identifies five themes that crosscut the strands of the standards for ELA, Literacy, and ELD. They include Foundational Skills, Meaning Making, Language Development, Effective Expression, and Content Knowledge. These themes, although not specifically identified in the Literacy Content Blocks, informed their preparation. For example, Meaning Making is crucial in planning instruction in all four areas of the Literacy Content Blocks: Language, Foundational Literacy Skills, Integrated Reading and Writing,

and Comprehensive ELD. Users of the Literacy Content Blocks will find that some guidance is, by design, repeated across the four areas to reflect the crosscutting nature of the themes.

- **Appreciating each student’s individual strengths and areas for growth allows educators to tailor instruction that is both responsive and effective.** To address the needs of students who have unfinished learning from prior grades and therefore need instructional bridges, as well as those who may be excelling beyond their current grade, teachers need to attend both to learning progressions and to the goals of grade-level curriculum. Through careful progress monitoring and differentiated instruction, with supplemental and intensified supports where needed, educators should aim to support every learner’s progression along the literacy learning continuum and help them apply their developing literacy skills in all curricular areas.
- **Students grow and develop over time,** and instruction should be planned, organized, and implemented with children’s social-emotional, cognitive, and physical maturity in mind, as well as their academic progress. For example, whereas all students—regardless of age—need some consistency in learning experiences and environments, younger children typically require more predictability and routines even as they are engaging in new instruction and activities.
- **Students identified as English learners are diverse** in their backgrounds, experiences, and levels of English language proficiency. Newcomer programs offer support to students who have recently arrived to help them navigate new academic, language, and social-emotional experiences. Many students new to English progress quickly through the initial stage (Emerging level) of language proficiency (based on the CA ELD Standards), but most need focused instruction to advance to the later stages (Expanding and Bridging levels) required of literacy development. This document attends particularly to instructional guidance for these more advanced levels.
- **Students bring a wide variation of abilities and needs,** requiring that teachers, specialists, and families work together to determine how best to provide equitable access to the curriculum and ensure that all students excel. Universal practices may include breaking learning tasks into smaller steps, using visuals (e.g., diagrams, graphics, pictures, props) and other modes of instruction (e.g., movement) to support understanding and recall, providing frequent feedback, adjusting seating, and providing additional time. Consult the individualized education plan or 504 plan for specific accommodations or modifications identified for individual students.
- **Relationships with adults and peers matter** and influence a student’s motivation, attention, and effort. Thus, establishing a positive, safe, inclusive, warm, and caring environment is crucial at every age and grade.

- **Adults within effective systems share responsibility** for student learning, collaborate regularly, and engage in data-driven decision-making. Well-designed school structures—schedules, staffing, instructional materials, assessment tools and processes, interventions, and ongoing professional learning and coaching—implemented within a Multi-Tiered System of Support framework are key to continuous improvement and student success.