

This EL Coach Toolkit provides EL Coaches with the forms and guidance they need to effectively support content teachers in ensuring that ELs have access to high-quality curriculum. EL Coaches should use these tools across the three steps of EL coaching: pre-planning, observation, and post-teaching. This toolkit¹ includes:

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Overview

The goal of the EL Coach is to expand the role of the EL Specialist to include providing strategic development and support to content teachers. In the EL Coach role, the EL Specialist is trained to provide peer support to content teachers and other instructional staff to help them interact with ELs in new and more meaningful ways.

The EL Coach role is designed to **support all EL programs** and can be adapted to any school system working with any number of ELs across all learning scenarios. The EL Coach should be:

- a certified EL teacher,
- knowledgeable about language acquisition,
- familiar with common EL content supports and
- comfortable with working with other teachers as a peer coach.

The Department anticipates that using an EL Coach will offer the following benefits:

- Improve academic performance of ELs and foster a sense of inclusion
- Help teachers feel better prepared when working with ELs
- Help content teachers develop research-based strategies that can improve academic performance of all students, not just ELs
- Provide support to colleagues in problem solving and decision making
- Enable teachers and coaches to build strong collaborative professional relationships
- Enhance the school culture in ways that can lead to schoolwide change

Overall, the EL Coach Toolkit enables coaches to build a strong sense of collaboration with content teachers as they work to support ELs in the classroom. EL Coaches should review the guidance and materials and then meet with content teachers to begin the coaching process.

¹ The EL Coach Toolkit does not encompass all of the EL resources, and schools may choose to add to the tools available here to provide even more guidance and support to their ELs and the individuals who support them in this capacity.

Preparation and Coaching

Before following the steps in this toolkit, it is important to prepare the school and teachers for the process of coaching.

- School administration should introduce EL Coaches as collaborative partners and describe the EL Coach's role to all those in the building.
- EL Coaches should collaborate with administrators to select content teachers who are most willing to receive this kind of support, then begin adding other teachers as well.
- EL Coaches and content teachers should schedule regular times to meet.

The coaching process includes three key steps: pre-planning, coaching, and post-teaching. These steps help the EL Coach provide comprehensive and effective support.

Step 1: Pre-Planning

- Content teacher and EL Coach meet to discuss EL students' levels, lessons and strategies that will make content more accessible to ELs.
 - Identify language objectives
 - Identify language requirements
- EL Coach supports content teachers with identifying specific areas where ELs will need additional support (before, during or after the lesson).
- EL Coach and content teacher discuss how these supports will be provided (pre-teaching, differentiated instruction, or re-teaching).

Step 2: Observation

- EL coach observes and notes student(s) interaction with the lesson.
- EL coach observes how the teacher(s) provided supports.

Step 3: Post-Teaching

- Teacher receives or provides feedback and EL coach suggests adjustments.
- EL Coach and teacher(s) reviews student work and/or assessments.

Tools and Guidance

Tool #1 Guiding Questions for Pre-Planning

The first step in working collaboratively is to be purposeful in planning and reviewing lessons for specific obstacles for each English Learner. The set of ten questions, listed below, can assist teachers and specialists with making decisions during the planning process that will help ELs access the content.

1. How many ELs are in this class, and what are their proficiency levels, strengths and weaknesses?
2. What are their educational and cultural backgrounds? How can this be incorporated into the lesson?
3. What background knowledge may these ELs need to connect to the lesson/text?
4. Are there any cultural or linguistic biases that might need to be addressed before teaching?
5. How will the lesson's platform (small group, lecture, virtual) inhibit or support the student's mastery of content?
6. How much time will each EL need to complete this lesson?
7. What kinds of modifications/accommodations might we need to provide to each EL to make this lesson accessible?
8. What concepts, vocabulary or background knowledge might need to be taught before, during or after the lesson?
9. Who will be providing the supports to the EL students?
10. How will engagement of the ELs be measured?

Resources:

[EL Accommodation Checklist](#)

[EL Instructional Support Plan](#)

[EL Classroom Differentiation Plan](#)

[Task Analysis Tool](#)

[Common Planning Time Support Tool](#)

Tool #2
Lesson Annotation Organizer

The following chart can be used to annotate lesson plans. Language requirements and language objectives should be written to address specific needs of each EL based on their performance levels in each domain (listening, speaking, reading and writing) as well as any other learning characteristics that might impact an ELs ability to access the content.

Lesson	Language Requirements
	Language Objective
Notes	

Guidance for Conducting Lesson Observations

The following observation tool is designed to be a quick check for the benchmark indicators of effective EL instructional support and whether the collaborative planning process was beneficial for the teacher and student(s). This tool should be used to drive continued collaboration between the EL Coach and the content teacher, and on improving methods to make classroom content more accessible to all ELs. These observations are not intended to assess teachers or students but rather as an informative tool to effectively plan for subsequent coaching sessions.

Language domains: the observation benchmark is broken into the four language domains (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing). Not all lessons will require a student to engage in all four domains.

The table in Tool #3 is to be used to take notes during the observation. The EL Coach should take note of both the student (EL) and the teacher.

**Tool #3
Observation Benchmarks**

The following can be used while observing a lesson. The EL Coach should observe the teacher and EL students (when possible) to assess their engagement, if they were supported appropriately, if those supports were beneficial and/or delivered correctly.

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
<p>Student engaged in listening tasks.</p> <p>What kind of listening do the activities involve?</p> <p>One-way? Two-way?</p>	<p>Student engaged in speaking tasks.</p> <p>How were speaking tasks presented?</p> <p>Pairs? Small group? Large group?</p>	<p>Student engaged in reading tasks.</p> <p>How were reading texts presented?</p> <p>Aloud? Pairs? Small group?</p>	<p>Student engaged in writing tasks.</p> <p>What is the structure of the text they're writing?</p>
<p>Teacher supported the student to develop listening skills.</p> <p>What listening supports (if any) did the teacher provide?</p> <p>Were they helpful?</p>	<p>Teacher supported the student to develop speaking skills.</p> <p>What speaking supports (if any) were provided?</p> <p>Were they helpful?</p>	<p>Teacher supported the student to develop reading skills.</p> <p>What reading supports (if any) were provided?</p> <p>Were they helpful?</p>	<p>Teacher supported the student to develop writing skills.</p> <p>What writing supports (if any) were provided?</p> <p>Were they helpful?</p>
Notes	Notes	Notes	Notes

Tool #4
Observation Feedback Checklist

Teacher Interactions	Lesson Supports	Teacher Feedback	EL Participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Speaks slowly and clearly <input type="checkbox"/> Repeats student responses or paraphrases them <input type="checkbox"/> Repeats directions and simplifies <input type="checkbox"/> Uses gestures, facial expressions or other forms of body language to convey meaning <input type="checkbox"/> Uses visual aids <input type="checkbox"/> Uses simplified language <input type="checkbox"/> Explains cultural references or provides context <input type="checkbox"/> Provides opportunities for student to connect with lesson/content/ knowledge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provides modified versions of assignments (e.g. matching, fill-in-the-blank) <input type="checkbox"/> Uses summaries or outlines <input type="checkbox"/> Provides a word bank/glossary <input type="checkbox"/> Provides sentence starters <input type="checkbox"/> Provides graphic organizers <input type="checkbox"/> Provides dictionaries/translators <input type="checkbox"/> Matches text to visuals <input type="checkbox"/> Provides list of cognates <input type="checkbox"/> Differentiate instruction based on EL's proficiency level <input type="checkbox"/> Provides opportunities for ELs to practice all language domains (listening, speaking, reading, writing) <input type="checkbox"/> Has a multicultural perspective/awareness <input type="checkbox"/> Uses alternative forms of assessment (e.g., portfolio, labeling, drawing) to assess understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Engages with all ELs <input type="checkbox"/> Gives ELs extra time for responding and work <input type="checkbox"/> Utilizes non-verbal checks when needed <input type="checkbox"/> Provides feedback to ELs in a way they can understand <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluates for content or language only understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Interacts with other students <input type="checkbox"/> Follows along in text or materials <input type="checkbox"/> Uses non-verbal communication (e.g. thumbs-up/down) <input type="checkbox"/> Participates in verbal communication <input type="checkbox"/> Uses target language <input type="checkbox"/> Uses provided language supports <input type="checkbox"/> Asks questions related to lesson/content (to teacher or another student) <input type="checkbox"/> Copies notes/fills out graphic organizer

Did the teacher pronounce the names of ELs correctly? Y N Does teacher attempt to communicate with ELs? Y N

Tool #5
Post Teaching: Teacher Reflection

The content teacher should fill out this self-reflection soon after teaching the lesson that was planned collaboratively.

Question	Response	Comments
1. What part of the lesson did ELs find most accessible? Why?		
2. What part of the lesson did ELs find least accessible? Why?		
3. If you could do the lesson again, what would you change and why?		
4. How could you use the language objectives to better support ELs?		
5. How could you better support ELs with content objectives?		
6. What vocabulary was especially challenging for ELs?		
7. What background knowledge could have led to increased understanding?		

Tool #6
Post-Teaching: EL Coach Reflection

The EL Coach should fill out this self-reflection soon after observing the lesson that was planned collaboratively.

Question	Response	Comments
1. What part of the lesson did ELs find most accessible? Why?		
2. What part of the lesson did ELs find least accessible? Why?		
3. What changes would you suggest if this lesson was taught again?		
4. How can you better support the content teacher with the next lesson?		
5. What resources or strategies might you need to provide for the next lesson to help the teacher or EL?		

Tool #7
Student Work Review

While reviewing an EL’s class work, homework or an assessment, it’s important to evaluate if any errors were made because of a limited English proficiency, lack of content understanding or both. This will help to determine the level and types of support the student needs in the future.

Language Based Errors: Examples include being unable to access the text even with support, providing no or an insufficient response to questions/prompts, errors with sentence structure, lack of understanding directions, and non-academic vocabulary.

Content-Based Errors: Examples include errors that are similar to other non-ELs and demonstrate a lack of understanding of the content but an understanding of the language around it.

Evidence of Language-Based Errors	Evidence of Content-Based Errors

Understanding the difference between the types of errors will help to determine if the student needs more support with language acquisition in order to access the lesson, or if the content teacher needs to provide more content-based support.

Next Steps

1. Review and share any insights you gained from your individual reflections.
2. Set-aside time to meet regularly until the content teacher feels comfortable with adapting lessons and expectations to meet the needs of their ELs.
3. Review student work to identify any other areas where a student may require support.
4. Check-in with the student and teacher by offering suggestions on how to continue making the content accessible.
5. Work with the student to understand how to use the supports the teacher is providing.
6. Be prepared with different tools and options a teacher can use to support language and content development such as:
 - a. graphic organizers
 - b. anchor charts
 - c. visual dictionaries (electronic or paper)
 - d. video and audio links
 - e. annotated texts
7. Continue to develop a strong collaborative relationship with teachers through the co-planning, observation and the feedback process.