

Standards and their Implications for English Learners: A Review of Recommendations

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April 24, 2014-LCE Academy

Overview

- **When we use the word “Standards” what are we referring to?**
- **What are the implications of these standards for English learners (ELs)?**
- **What does research say?**
- **How are others addressing these challenges for ELs?**

Standards

■ State

- Colorado Academic Standards (CAS)
 - 10 content areas

■ National

- Common Core State Standards (CCSS)
 - Language Arts and Mathematics ONLY
 - Incorporated into CAS for those subjects
- Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)
 - Science ONLY (not incorporated into the CAS)

What does this mean for ELs?

- **Increased rigor within the standards**
- **More emphasis on reading and writing (text complexity, argumentation, etc.)**
- **Accelerated concepts in younger grades**
- **Higher expectations**

...within the Context of Science

Reference Articles

Helen Quinn, Okhee Lee, and Guadalupe Valdes
(Understanding Language article, 2012)

Language Demands and Opportunities in Relation to Next Generation Science Standards for English Language Learners: What teachers Need to Know

Okhee Lee, Helen Quinn, and Guadalupe Valdes
(AERA article, 2013)

Science and Language for English Language Learners in Relation to Next Generation Science Standards and with Implications for Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics

Implications for ELs

- **Need for a practice-oriented science classroom-** this can be a rich language-learning as well as science-learning environment, provided teachers ensure that ELLs are supported to participate.
- **Teacher knowledge about language and language learning support strategies-** these can improve the overall science learning experience of all students, especially of ELs.
- **Engagement in any of the science and engineering practices-** this involves both scientific sense-making and language use.
- **Argumentation from evidence requires students to apply both mental and diagrammed models** – this is used to clarify thinking and to develop model-based explanations using evidence (data and observations), logic, and information obtained from outside sources or prior experience.

Implications for ELs

- **Requirement for classroom science discourse-** this demands both receptive and productive language.
- **The classroom culture of argumentation must be developed and supported-** this ensures that all voices are respected and included, even as the process reveals flaws in a student's model or explanation or limitations of their language proficiency skills.
- **Language is essential to successfully engage in any of the practices-** these provide language learning opportunities.
- **Language style and complexity of texts written for science learners-** these are different from those of other written genres encountered in other school subjects and from spoken language.

What does research say?

Supporting Science and Language Learning for ELLs

- Five areas where teachers can support science and language for ELLs: (1) literacy strategies with all students, (2) language support strategies with ELLs, (3) discourse strategies with ELLs, (4) home language support, and (5) home culture connections.
- A major challenge for teachers is in how to structure activities so as to reduce the language barrier for participation while maintaining the rigor of science content and processes.
- Teachers need to recognize ELLs' varying levels of developing language proficiency and adjust norms of interaction with a student accordingly, for example, by using clearer enunciation or longer periods of wait time.

Douglas, R., Klentschy, M. P., Worth, K., & Binder, W. (Eds.). (2006). *Linking science and literacy in the K-8 classroom*. Arlington, VA: National Science Teachers Association.

What are you doing?

What challenges/opportunities are you being faced with?

Is it about the “Standards” or the “Pedagogy” or both?

What is the real issue/challenge?

In small groups or pairs:

- review the RWC 5th grade *Grade Level Expectations (GLEs)*,
- determine what these demand for the student, and
- decide what teachers will need to do.

Fifth Grade RWC-GLEs

1. Oral Expression and Listening

1. Effective communication requires speakers to express an opinion, provide information, describe a process, and persuade an audience
2. Listening strategies are techniques that contribute to understanding different situations and serving different purposes

2. Reading for All Purposes

1. Literary texts are understood and interpreted using a range of strategies
2. Ideas found in a variety of informational texts need to be compared and understood
3. Knowledge of morphology and word relationships matters when reading

3. Writing and Composition

1. The recursive writing process contributes to the creative and unique literary genres for a variety of audiences and purposes
2. The recursive writing process creates stronger informational and persuasive texts for a variety of audiences and purposes
3. Conventions apply consistently when evaluating written texts

4. Research and Reasoning

1. High-quality research requires information that is organized and presented with documentation
2. Identifying and evaluating concepts and ideas have implications and consequences
3. Quality reasoning requires asking questions and analyzing and evaluating viewpoints

Closing reflections

1. **What stood out?**
2. **What did you learn?**
3. **What can you use?**
4. **What questions do you have?**

References / Resources

- Lee, O., Quinn, H. & Valdes, G. (2013). Science and Language for English Language Learners in Relation to Next Generation Science Standards and with Implications for Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics. *Educational Researcher*, 42, pp. 223-233.
- Quinn, H., Lee, O., & Valdés, G. (2012). *Language demands and opportunities in relation to Next Generation Science Standards for English language learners: What teachers need to know*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University, Understanding Language Initiative at Stanford University (ell.stanford.edu).

- **CAS website**
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/coloradostandards>
- **Sample Curriculum Project**
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/standardsandinstruction/samplecurriculumproject>
- **CCSS website**
<http://www.corestandards.org/>
- **NGSS website**
<http://www.nextgenscience.org/next-generation-science-standards>
- **Understanding Language**
<http://ell.stanford.edu/>
- **NCELA publications (e.g., AccELerate!)**
<http://www.ncelea.us/publications>

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