



DISTRICT PROGRAM

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Office for Civil Rights Compliance
Legal Background
Educational Theory Approach
English Language Development
Beginning Ability Level
Intermediate Ability Level
Advanced Ability Level

Elementary English Language Learner Programs
Secondary English Language Learner Programs
The Language Academy at Riverglen Junior High
Instructional Support /Sheltered Content at Junior & Senior High Schools

“An infant’s brain can perceive every possible sound in every language. By 10 months, babies have learned to screen out foreign sounds and to focus on the sounds of their native language.”

Newsweek, 1998



The Boise School District has designed a research-based language instruction program at elementary and secondary levels in order to accommodate the growing numbers of limited and non-English speaking students enrolling in the District. Certified English language teachers provide English language instruction using methodology called “Sheltered English.” Sheltered English is an approach that attempts to make academic instruction in English understandable to students who are limited in English proficiency. This program addresses the District’s legal responsibility as set out by the Idaho State Department of Education Consent Decree of 1983, which states that school districts must assess and provide appropriate instructional services to children who have limited English proficiency.

OFFICE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS COMPLIANCE

The Boise School District developed an Office for Civil Rights Title VI Compliance Guide for the English Language Learner program in 2000. This was a requirement of the State Department of Education (SDE) and the Office of Civil Rights (OCR). Final approval was received in 2003. Implementation of the OCR guidelines is a central focus for schools and staff serving English language learners.

The guide outlines District programs and access to equitable services for English language learners. Three main sections are included: (a) selecting an education approach, (b) implementing the educational program, and (c) program evaluation, review and improvement. The OCR Guide also contains five appendices with program forms, including version in other languages (available on our website).



LEGAL BACKGROUND

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin in programs receiving federal financial assistance. This law has been interpreted in the public school context as requiring appropriate steps to ensure that equal educational opportunities are afforded to students who are limited in their English-language proficiency.

Over the years, federal court decisions have recognized that school districts have a responsibility to take the steps necessary to provide equal educational opportunities to ELL (English language learner) students. In 1975 the U.S. Supreme Court ruled “There is no equity of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.” *Lau v. Nichols, 414 U.S. 563, 94 S.Ct. 786 (1974)*

"Education is not preparaprofessionaltion for life; education is life itself."

In addition to this court case and others, Congress passed the Equal Educational Opportunities Act. This recognizes the rights of ELL students and requires educational service providers to take appropriate action to help these students overcome language barriers.

Boise School District’s ELL Program reflects the guidelines set by the Office of Civil Rights based on the *Castañeda v. Pickard* case. The three core principles stemming from this case are: selecting an educational approach, implementing the educational program, and evaluation of the program.

If you are interested in finding out more about Boise School District’s Guide to Title VI Compliance, please contact Dr. Ann Farris at (208) 854-4133.

EDUCATIONAL THEORY AND APPROACH

The Boise School District utilizes a sheltered English approach for language instruction. This method is defined as a specific discipline allowing students to learn English systematically and cumulatively, moving from concrete to abstract levels of language in a spiraling fashion. The English Language Learner (ELL) program is sensitive to the first languages and cultures of the students and facilitates their integration into the program and culturally pluralistic mainstream. Both social English and academic English are addressed through the development of skills in understanding, speaking, reading, writing, and communicating. Students are prepared to compete and accelerate in the mainstream.

Understanding that proficiency in a second language takes from five to ten years, the Boise School District reviews research from language acquisition experts to form theory and approach. The District additionally continues analyzing their data to ensure that program models are effective for all ELL students.

Boise School District’s sheltered approach draws from the research of several experts in the field. Jim Cummins’ theories placed language into quadrants ranging from high



context, low cognitive demand to low context, high cognitive demand. Out of this theory, he categorized language into Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills and Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency. He then placed specific personal and academic language skills in this continuum to enable the appropriate selection of activities for ELL students.

Stephen Krashen's research also contributes to the Boise Schools' educational approach. Krashen has shown that acquisition occurs by understanding language containing "comprehensible input," that is, input which has structures that are a bit beyond the acquired level ("input+1"). In addition, ELL students can understand language that contains structures they do not know by utilizing context, extra linguistic information, and their knowledge of the world. The core of Krashen's research shows that success in second language acquisition is influenced by the learner's level of anxiety ("affective filter"), motivation, and self-confidence.

The sheltered approaches utilized by teachers in the district are modeled after the Sheltered Instruction Observational Protocol (the SIOP model) researched by Debra Short, Mary Ellen Vogt and Jana Echevarria. This model standardizes sheltered instruction into eight key components. Those are: preparation, background building, comprehensible input, strategies, interaction, practice/application, lesson delivery and review/assessment.

Additional research includes L.S. Vygotsky's theory of the relationship between cognitive and social phenomena. His findings confirmed that without feeling successful in intellectual transactions and other social interactions, one cannot develop the motivation to achieve or feel a sense of accomplishment and be capable of learning.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Boise School's English Language Learner Program focuses on two areas of language development. The first area is basic interpersonal communication skills (also known as BICS). This component of language acquisition deals with specific vocabulary native English speakers learn naturally as they grow up. BICS language instruction is implemented primarily in the language classroom and includes themes such as: the body, weather, food, clothes, colors, animals, house, school, family, and shapes. Basic conversation is also included. Questions like, "Can I get a drink?" "How are you?" and "Can I sharpen my pencil?" are also part of this instruction.

The second area of language development is cognitive academic language production (also known as CALP). Instruction in this vocabulary takes place in the regular classroom and is paralleled in the language classroom. CALP includes content specific vocabulary such as *Metis*, *mountie*, *plate tectonics*, *volume*, and *adverb*. Although the primary focus of ELL instruction is language arts, content such as social studies, science and math are used to help meet language goals as well.

Following is an outline of basic language concepts taught at three different levels of language acquisition. The levels are not used to group students, but rather to focus on specific objectives for each student. Multi-level grouping provides peer tutors and



language modeling from the students themselves. For a full set of State ELL standards linked to State Language Arts standards, please see the Idaho State Board of Education website.

BEGINNING ABILITY LEVEL

Beginning language instruction focuses on listening comprehension, vocabulary identification, speaking, reading, and writing. Basic interpersonal communication skills are the primary focus at this time. The themes mentioned in the introduction are central throughout every level, but they are especially important in the first six months to one year.

Boise District's Language Arts curriculum guides are utilized to introduce basic interpersonal communication and cognitive academic language to beginning level students in the language classroom. The following components are included

1. Communication utilizing nouns and verbs
2. Capitalization of sentences, proper nouns, and "I" pronouns
3. Punctuation using periods, question marks, and apostrophes
4. Writing in journals
5. Beginning sentence, story, and poetry writing
6. Listening to children's literature
7. Recalling details, developing vocabulary, comprehension, and retelling
8. Following directions
9. Reading for pleasure and participating in group discussions
10. Recognizing letters and their sounds

The beginning ELL student learns to read, write and, speak English utilizing an integrated approach. The rich context of literature functions as the "textbook" for English language instruction. A variety of books are used to focus on specific themes identifying key vocabulary. The vocabulary is then extended into conversation practice, spelling, writing activities, listening comprehension, and a wide variety of activities providing practice and repetition. Physical involvement in activities is key at this stage.

Content area textbooks are used even with beginning students. The students may not be able to read the text, but they can begin illustrating concepts, defining vocabulary, and following along with group oral reading. This "includes" them with the regular class and sets up expectations for future performance. Handing out worksheet packets during content area time isolates students from content and peers and shows students that they don't have to try to meet objectives at any level. Participation, no matter how limited, is preferable to isolation.

Some students may speak immediately and have difficulty with writing, while others will write or read long before they speak. The important thing to remember is that each of these students will have different backgrounds and experiences, both educationally and culturally. Also, learning to write English will take much longer for the student who cannot write in their first language.



Beginning students may not speak for one day or one year. Though most English language learners have a short “silent period,” some can last quite a while. This is nothing to worry about, as research shows that these students eventually catch up with others who speak right away at the same point on the language development continuum.

INTERMEDIATE ABILITY LEVEL

Example: a student was asked to “give a description of the main character.” She understood the explanation of “describe” the “most important person” but was not familiar with “description” or character”.

The language arts guidelines are utilized for intermediate English language learners as well. The following skills are introduced at the intermediate level in *addition* to those listed in the beginning level:

1. Communication using adjectives and adverbs
2. Capitalization of first word in direct quotes and titles
3. Punctuate using exclamation points, commas, apostrophes, and quotation marks
4. Predict outcomes, sequence, draw conclusions, compare and contrast
5. Paraphrase
6. Differentiate between realism and fantasy, compare different types of stories
7. Consonant clusters, digraphs, short and long vowels, plurals, possessives, contractions, syllabication
8. Write, edit, and publish stories and poems from personal experience and literature
9. Begin interpreting figurative language
10. Identify simile and metaphor

Intermediate students are in the regular classroom with the exception of approximately one to two hours of ELL instruction. In the ELL classroom, the above objectives are taught, re-taught, and reviewed. The skills are grade level, but the language is modified. This allows students to comprehend and internalize grade - level concepts.

In the classroom, students at this level should be able to attempt most assignments. They will need help from the ELL tutor or teacher. The expectation is that most assignments will be completed the same as any other student. Teachers and tutors can determine if an assignment is too unrealistic even with help. An example would be if several social studies worksheets were sent as homework. The ELL student may take twenty minutes to look up each answer, thus spending two to three hours on one worksheet. The teacher may select the one or two worksheets he/she feels is the most relevant for that student and not require the others.



ADVANCED ABILITY LEVEL

Advanced English language instruction focuses primarily on cognitive academic language proficiency. While basic vocabulary is reviewed, an emphasis is placed on preparing students for independent grade-level work. Advanced students are supported in the classroom during content lessons. They are expected to complete all regular assignments and tests with only minor adaptations. Tutors and teachers continue to read tests and explain synonymous vocabulary while teaching strategies for independence. Advanced students' vocabulary and conversation skills will usually far outperform their written skills. The intricacies of written English take much longer to learn than the spoken. For example, a sixth grader writes: "My heart is red. Your heart is black. My heart is full of laughter and caring. Yours is full of darkness and sickness. It's your choice to choose who you want to be." Obviously this student has an excellent command of English word usage. However, in rough draft form, even the word "*who*" is misspelled. In addition to content area support, the following skills are a focus in the advanced level:

1. Metaphor, simile
2. Idiomatic language
3. Writing essays that include introduction, three supporting paragraphs and a closing
4. Spelling
5. Dictionary skills
6. Skimming and scanning
7. Research skills
8. Refining English pronunciation

Advanced students may seem "lazy" or "unmotivated" due to the fluency of their verbal skills and their difficulty with the printed and written word. There are still, however, thousands of words that these students have not yet seen or learned to spell. Advanced students normally spend two to three times longer on assignments and projects. They may not display perfect English, but most go on to do quite well in secondary and college courses.

While these three levels have been examined separately, there is no way to divide students into such specific categories. Each student is at a different location on this continuum. Language learning is not sequential; however, allowances must be made for effective multi-level grouping in the ELL and regular classroom. Students learn a great deal from the examples of their peers. Peer teaching allows the English language learner to become a "teacher" of his/her knowledge as well.

Each ELL student will have a unique cultural, educational, and family background. As with any student, considering this uniqueness will aid in developing objectives and activities most effective for each child. Above all else, a smile and a relaxed attitude are the best assets!



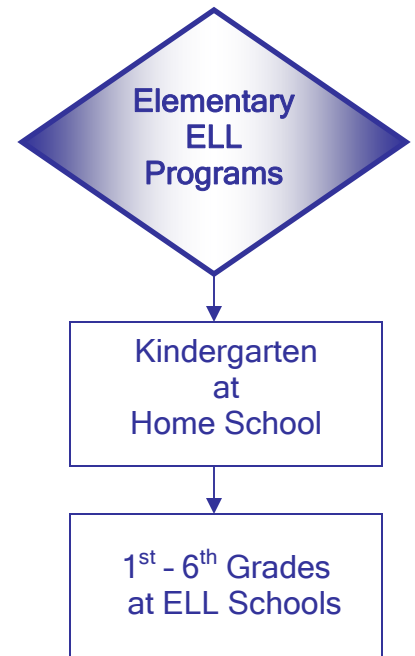
ELEMENTARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER PROGRAMS

Kindergarten ELL students stay at their home school in a classroom environment ideal for language development. ELL staff provide support for the kindergarten students, their parents, and teachers.

Boise School District has eleven elementary school sites with full time programs specifically designed for beginning to intermediate English language learners in first through sixth grades. Principals, classroom teachers, and support staff at these sites have had extensive opportunities for training in sheltered instruction and strategies, and have a certified ELL teacher and highly trained ELL paraprofessionals, as well. In addition, six elementary sites have part time certified ELL teachers.

Classroom teachers and ELL staff integrate English language instruction systematically throughout the first through sixth grade curriculum. ELL endorsed instructors teach specific targeted language development for beginning speakers. The instruction is designed to accelerate ELL students toward achieving state standards while building background and comprehension.

ELL parents additionally have the option of not enrolling their students at a designated ELL site, enrolling at their home school, instead. District ELL consulting teachers offer support, materials, and peer coaching for classroom teachers and other building staff in those schools.



SECONDARY ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNER PROGRAMS

Boise Schools' English Language Learner Program at the secondary level consists of two components: The *Boise Language Academy* and *sheltered classes* and *tutorial support* at the other junior and senior high schools for those students who have exited the academy or have been in U.S. schools two years or more.

THE LANGUAGE ACADEMY

The ELL Language Academy is a program-within-a-school that provides an intensive English language program to limited and non-English speaking students in grades 7-12.

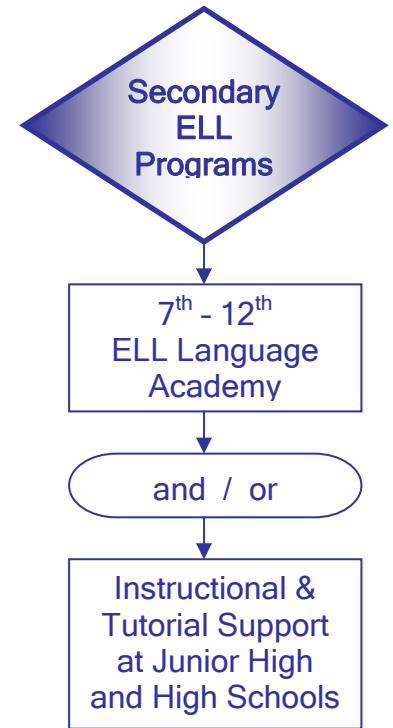
The Academy is a program primarily for "newcomers" to the country. This program provides the opportunity for junior high and high school students to build a strong English foundation through content instruction before attending their home schools.

- ❖ **Newcomer definition:** Students who are recent arrivals to the U.S. (two year or less) speak little or no English, may or may not have literacy skills in their primary language, and may or may not have completed school to their current grade level.



DISTRICT PROGRAM

- ❖ **Entry into Academy:** Newcomer limited or non-English speakers at ages appropriate for grades 7-12 who enroll in the Boise School District will be referred to the district's ELL Intake Specialists, Diane Goicoechea-Price or Sue Fornander at 854-5220. Students may enter at any time.
 - ❖ **Length of Daily Program:** Full day, 7:50 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.
 - ❖ **Length of Program:** Two school years or less depending on progress and student/family choice.
 - ❖ **Exit Criteria:** Students are transitioned from the ELL Language Academy program when they have completed two years (four semesters) *and/or* have reached a level of proficiency that would allow them to succeed in regular academic courses. Assessment of a student's proficiency will be based on curriculum-based evaluation measures, and performance-based measures, such as portfolios and standardized tests.
- The Academy staff meets as a team, examining multiple criteria before a student is exited. Meetings with family members and home visits are also conducted. A family may choose to have their student exited before it is recommended. A letter must be signed by the parents stating this intention.
- ❖ **Instruction/Assessment/Credit:** The core of instruction at the ELL Language Academy includes English, reading, writing, oral language, computer lab, sheltered math, sheltered social studies, and sheltered science. These courses are designated as "M" (modified) on the student's transcript. Students are graded with the traditional (A, B, C, . . .) system.
 - ❖ **Transportation:** Students are bused by Boise School District from their homes to the ELL Language Academy.



INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT AND SHELTERED CONTENT CLASSES AT JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

At each of the senior high schools, a certified English and/or ELL teacher teaches sections of sheltered English and Study Skills for those ELL students requiring specialized assistance with the English language. In addition, a variety of sheltered content courses, from Biology to Economics, are offered at Borah, Boise, and Capital.

Academic support is also provided at each junior and senior high school in collaboration with content area teachers. ELL paraprofessionals provide additional assistance for students who are transitioning from the Language Academy to their home schools and for those who move into the District and are not eligible for Academy services.