

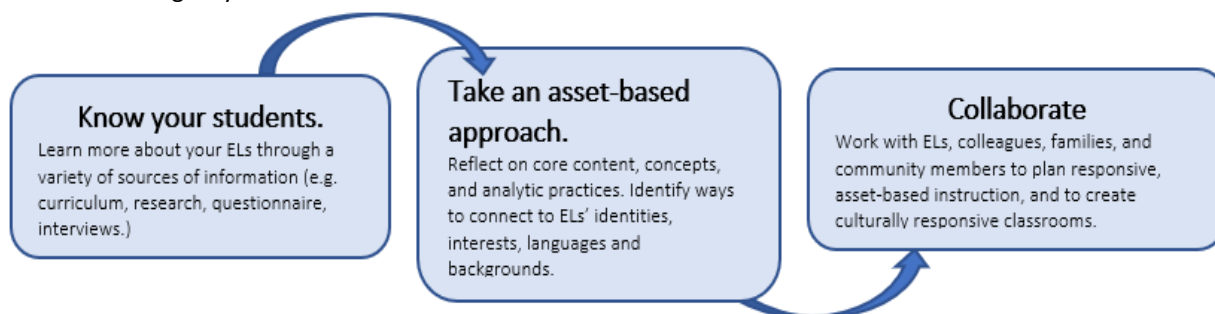


Quick Reference Guide: Classroom Level Asset-based Teaching and Learning

Instruction Reflects English Learners' Cultures

Educators know their students and deliver instruction that reflects their cultures, families, and experiences, such that it promotes student success with rigorous content.

Planning responsive, asset-based instruction involves knowing [English Learners \(ELs\) and their strengths, backgrounds, experiences, language and cultures](#). Effective educators develop the type of in-depth knowledge about ELs and grade-level instructional standards that can inform the development of meaningful and authentic learning experiences. Careful reflection on rigorous core content, concepts, and analytic practices enables educators to identify ways to make connections to [ELs' prior knowledge and strengths, cultural assets, and home language that they bring into the classroom](#) for future learning. This in turn shapes classroom cultures of high expectations while communicating this value to ELs. Such cultures lead to higher levels of student engagement, [deeper understanding and respect for multiple perspectives](#), and increased student agency.



Valuing Bilingualism and Biliteracy

Educators value bilingualism, biliteracy, and programs in their school that lead to proficiency in English and other languages.

Valuing bilingualism and biliteracy is central to developing inclusive, asset-based classroom and school cultures. These types of learning environments are developed by carefully [including ELs' languages, cultures and experiences in the classroom in visible, meaningful ways](#). By structuring classrooms and instruction to mirror the cultures and languages of ELs, educators promote [intercultural awareness](#) for both ELs and non-ELs. Incorporating EL's first languages and promoting proficiency in English as well as that first language develops helps create classrooms that are welcoming, safe learning environments that value and include the [assets and strengths students bring to school \(e.g. linguistic, cultural, and experiential\)](#). Initiatives such as the [State Seal of Biliteracy](#) can also help educators affirm ELs' identities by recognizing the benefits of their bilingualism. Promoting EL involvement in [world language](#) and [two-way immersion programs](#) and collaborating with other educators to highlight the value of bilingualism and biliteracy can also support a culture that values the strengths ELs bring to their learning communities.

Purpose of the State Seal of Biliteracy

- Encourage students to study and master languages;
- Certify attainment of biliteracy skills;
- Recognize the value of language diversity;
- Provide employers with a method of identifying people with language and biliteracy skills;
- Provide universities with a method to recognize and give credit to applicants for the attainment of high-level skills in languages;
- Prepare students with skills that will benefit them in the labor market and the global society; and
- Strengthen intergroup communication and honor the multiple cultures and languages in a community.”

[Guidance for Implementing the Massachusetts State Seal of Biliteracy](#)

Empowering English Learners by Leveraging Backgrounds and Supporting Risks

Educators empower ELs by providing instruction that leverages their cultures, families, and experiences and supports them to take academic and linguistic risks (e.g., reducing teacher talk and increasing student conversation, leadership opportunities, and cooperative learning).

Empowering ELs connects the assets they bring to future learning through careful instructional design. In these classrooms, assignments and activities build on students' cultures, languages, backgrounds, and experiences. Instruction meets ELs

where they are in their English language development and academic progress and focuses on providing them opportunities to practice new language and make meaning. This approach to teaching and learning relies on interactive, rigorous, collaborative learning experiences and using language as a way to teach and [to scaffold instruction](#). It also includes authentic opportunities to engage with communicating with different audiences for different purposes and choosing the appropriate language for each occasion, just as students do in real life. These activities promote [student autonomy and self-direction in learning](#) by promoting supported risk-taking.

Linguistically Rich Practices that Empower ELs

Educators systematically attend to building academic and linguistic confidence in their planning of supports and scaffolding for ELs.

Provides the space and opportunities for students to use learned language in meaningful ways using all of their linguistic resources.

Taking on leadership roles such as group leader or assistant teacher. Promoting critical stance and student agency through projects where students lead inquiry, collaboratively.

Rich and varied opportunities for cooperative learning to practice language and promote understanding.

Create different kinds of participation structures in cooperative learning to intentionally enable students to participate comfortably. This promotes shared understandings and encourages ELs to use all of their linguistic resources to understand and participate.

Actions-at-a-Glance: Asset-based Instruction

Asset-Based Instruction: What can educators at the classroom level do?

- Engage with professional learning opportunities to promote asset-based instruction of ELs such as culturally responsive pedagogy, building trusting relationships with families, etc.
- Make explicit linguistic connections between ELs' home language and English, illustrating the interconnected and interrelatedness of languages in tangible ways such as [language portfolios](#)
- Create opportunities for transferring knowledge and skills from one language to another
- Structure classroom instruction to reduce teacher talk and increase authentic student conversation
- Incorporate EL's backgrounds and languages into classroom greetings, translations, labels, curricular resources and materials, visual and written texts, instructional strategies and assessments
- Become familiar with the criteria for achieving the State Seal of Biliteracy
- Encourage and actively support ELs in working towards achieving the Seal of Biliteracy

Planning Resources

DESE Practical Tools and Resources

[Cultural Proficiency: A Strategy to Address Equity Gaps in Students' Achievement and Learning Experiences](#) provides examples from districts in the state that exemplify culturally proficient practices and provides links to resources that are useful for planning culturally responsive instruction.

[District Resources](#) provide tools for structuring responsive instruction, such as the Tiered Focused Monitoring Civil Rights Toolkit's Teacher Self-Assessment Tool.

[SEI Smart Card](#) can be used as a set of examples of what a culturally responsive classroom culture looks like for ELs.

[Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation: Classroom Teacher Rubric](#) includes standards related to culturally responsive and safe instruction and effective classroom environments (see Standard 2B and 2D) that can be used for self-reflection and to guide future instruction.

[World Languages](#) provides information about state world languages frameworks and other useful resources.

DESE Guidance

[Next Generation ESL Curriculum Project: ESL Curriculum Resource Guide](#) provides information about asset-based instruction for ELs (see Theory of Action and Key Characteristics on p. 10-12, Attending to the Role of Critical Stance and Social Justice in ESL Curriculum Development on p. 157-160, and Sociocultural Implications for Curriculum Development on p. 111-113).

[Standards of Effective Teaching Practice](#) provide guidance regarding culturally responsive education (see Standards 2B and 2D).

[Guidance for Implementing the Massachusetts State Seal of Biliteracy](#) provides relevant information such as criteria for receiving the seal (see p. 4-8) and can be used as a resource for planning instruction and promoting the seal.

[Guidance for Defining and Implementing Two Way Immersion Programs](#) provides useful information on these programs, including guidance on models, instructional practices, and a variety of practical resources (see p. 8-13 and Appendix B).

[Massachusetts Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education \(SLIFE\) Definition and Guidance](#) provides insights about asset-based approaches for this EL population (see Guiding Principles on p. 8).

Federal Resources

[English Learner Tool Kit: Chapter 5](#) provides resources for structuring instruction for ELs, including a diversity self-assessment (see p. 4).

Other Featured Resources

[Curriculum as Window and Mirror](#) explores how to structure classroom opportunities so students see themselves reflected in the curriculum and gain insights into other cultures, languages, and perspectives.

[Culturally Responsive Education](#) provides a collection of resources to help create culturally responsive classrooms.

[Translanguaging: A CUNY-NYSIEB Guide for Educators](#) provides examples of and strategies for translanguaging useful to guide classroom instruction that leverages ELs first languages to promote language learning in both first language and English.

[High-leverage principles of effective instruction for English learners](#) provides practices to support ELs (see Principle 2 and Principle 4).

[UDL Guidelines: Checkpoint 7.2](#) provides resources to help with planning responsive instruction, including ways to promote relevance, value, and authenticity in instruction and research supporting this type of instruction.

[Key principles for ELL instruction](#) highlights key principles for effective, rigorous instruction for ELs.

[The GO TO Strategies: Scaffolding Options for Teachers of English Language Learners, K-12](#) provides detailed descriptions of seventy-eight research-based practical strategies for effective EL instruction to maximize academic and language development.

[Principles for Culturally Responsive Teaching](#) explores principles and characteristics of culturally responsive teaching and includes examples of how to implement them.

[Culturally Responsive Teaching](#) provides exemplars of culturally responsive practice including videos and resources that showcase strategies for honoring and connecting to student identities, backgrounds, and cultures.