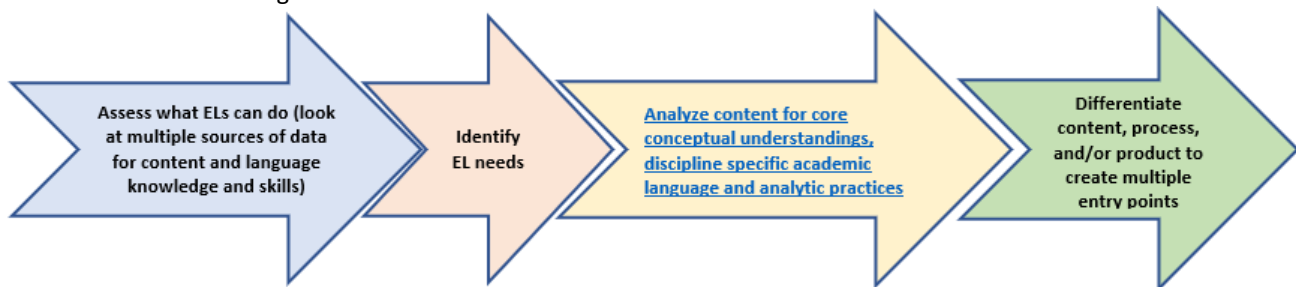


Quick Reference Guide: Classroom Level Effective, Well-Prepared, and Culturally Responsive Educators



Differentiating Instruction for a Student-Centered Classroom

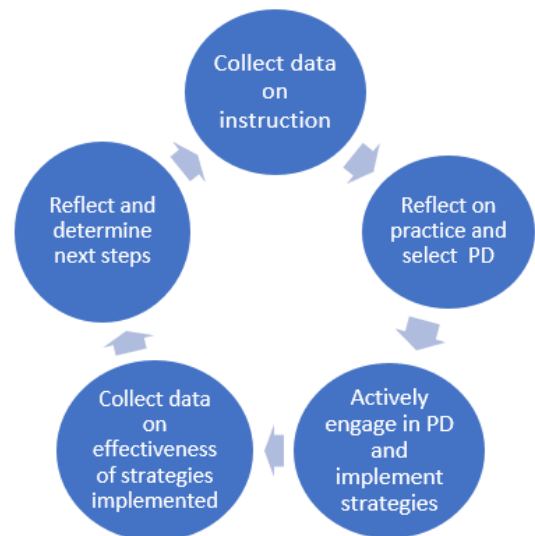
Educators differentiate instruction to respond to the educational backgrounds and English proficiency levels of their ELs. Optimal learning environments for all students, but especially English Learners (ELs), are [highly differentiated to meet the needs of diverse learners](#). Effective differentiation starts with the belief that all students thrive when provided with meaningful learning experiences that take into consideration their individual characteristics and needs and then provide necessary supports. This requires [deep knowledge of ELs’ strengths and needs, a strong grasp of core content, and the ability to create multiple, appropriate entry points for students at different English language proficiency levels while maintaining rigorous expectations](#). Knowing ELs well informs a continual cycle of assessing what students can currently do and where they need to grow. This knowledge of students’ backgrounds directly informs next instructional moves. In these student-centered classrooms ELs also play an important role as collaborators and benefit from explicit instruction in making strategic choices for how to learn. ELs also benefit from support as they become more autonomous and figure out how to monitor their own learning and advocate for their needs.



On-Going Professional Learning to Promote Best Practices for ELs

Educators draw upon their training and preparation to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students using research-based best practices (e.g., using specific content and pedagogical knowledge learned in the SEI endorsement course and other EL-related professional development).

Effective educators make a difference for EL success. They stay current on research and evidence-backed practices through [on-going, quality professional learning](#). Effective educators use [self-reflection](#) to gather data from their ELs and analyze the effectiveness of their instruction with this group of students. This analysis involves looking at lesson plans, student work samples and surveying ELs. It also includes collaborating with colleagues to determine EL strengths and needs, find out areas of improvement, and figure out next steps for instruction. Self-reflection and collaboration also inform goal-setting and future professional learning plans to support accomplishing goals. Effective educators of ELs are also action focused, applying what they learn in different contexts with students, for example in the SEI Endorsement course or other EL focused professional learning. They implement the research-based best practices to plan rigorous, culturally responsive instruction and collect evidence to assess the effectiveness of the strategies they implemented. In this way they engage in a continuous cycle of improvement.



Culturally Responsive Classrooms

Educators create classroom spaces in which ELs of all cultures feel supported to learn and succeed (e.g., choosing content that reflects and respects various cultures; displaying pictures, books, labels, and other information from various cultures; encouraging all students to learn languages commonly spoken by their EL peers).

ELs thrive in [classrooms that are safe and welcoming](#). Effective teachers create classrooms where ELs' cultures are central, visible, valued, and integral to instruction. They provide ELs with meaningful learning environments with many opportunities to learn from each other and their non-EL peers. They also feature [classroom materials and curriculum reflect and respect various cultures and backgrounds](#) of their students. In addition, effective educators collaborate with students to co-construct culturally responsive classrooms where ELs can have voice, agency (the ability to choose and act), a critical stance (the ability to analyze ideas in content and instruction), and appreciation for multiple perspectives, languages, cultures and experiences within the classroom. These culturally sustaining environments can support ELs in taking academic and linguistic risks because students feel valued and supported. Moreover, effective educators reflect on their own practice to assess whether it is culturally responsive to the ELs they serve. They pursue [professional learning opportunities](#) about [culturally responsive instruction](#) and collaborate with other educators to share and implement best practices to improve their effectiveness with ELs.

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

Effective Educators: What can educators at the classroom level do?

- Leverage culturally responsive instructional practices to advance content area learning and language development
- Collect and analyze multiple sources of data, such as student work samples, learning and interest inventories, and observational data to inform and evaluate instruction
- Implement specific content and pedagogical knowledge learned in EL-related professional learning
- Reflect on instructional practices and view instruction as part of the continuous improvement cycle
- Engage in on-going, intentional professional learning opportunities focused on areas identified as supporting ELs or in which they need to improve as educators (such as Sheltered English Immersion Endorsement course strategies, strategies for using the Collaboration Tool, curricular considerations based on the Next Generation ESL curriculum project, etc.)
- Celebrate the value of biculturalism and bilingualism and encourage all students to learn languages commonly spoken by their EL peers
- Select a variety of instructional materials that reflect and respect a variety of cultures
- Create a linguistically and culturally rich classroom by displaying pictures, books, labels, and other information from various cultures and languages
- Leverage common planning time to improve instructional practice and EL learning with other educators of ELs

Planning Resources

DESE Practical Tools and Resources

[Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation: Classroom Teacher Rubric](#) Standards 2 and 4 focus on professional practice and educating all learners, including ELs, and can be used as self-reflection tools for identifying areas of improvement and professional learning.

[SEI Smart Card](#) is an observation tool that can be used as a list of sample practices for culturally responsive classroom cultures.

[Equitable access to excellent educators: Using data and ESE Resources to Close the Gap](#) describes characteristics of effective educators and can support self-reflection.

[The Collaboration Tool](#) Thinking Space 2 can be used to collect evidence of student progress and inform next steps for educators and students.

[Extending the Learning](#) and [Professional Development](#) contain information about professional learning opportunities focused on research-based practices for effective EL instruction.

DESE Guidance

[Next Generation ESL Curriculum Project: ESL Curriculum Resource Guide](#) provides guidance and resources for developing next generation ESL curriculum and other instructional considerations for supporting ELs (see Theory of Action and Key Characteristics on p. 10-12, and exploration of language as action and learner assets).

[Standards of Effective Teaching Practice](#) Standards 2 and 4 speak set expectations for all educators regarding culturally responsive instruction, teaching all students, and professional responsibilities. They can be used to guide educator self-reflection on instructional practice.

Federal Resources

[Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures](#) provides recommendations and describe effective practices for supporting EL success in content and language classrooms.

Other Featured Resources

[The UDL Guidelines](#) provide research backed guidelines for providing multiple means of representation, engagement, and action and expression, including suggestions and resources to use in classroom instruction.

[Diversity and Cultural Literacy Toolkit](#) provides resources to inform culturally responsive instruction and self-reflection.

[Creating a Welcoming Classroom](#) provides resources for creating and promoting a welcoming classroom environment for ELs.

[Differentiated Instruction for English Language Learners](#) explores effective differentiation strategies for ELs, including videos that explore planning differentiated lessons.

[Using a “Can Do” Approach to Ensure Differentiated Instruction Intentionally Supports the Needs of Language Learners](#) explores how to adopt a “Can Do” approach when planning differentiated curriculum, instruction, and assessments for ELs with disabilities that capitalizes on their strengths.

[Focus on Differentiation Part 1](#) provides guidance for differentiating instruction for ELs based on their English language proficiency levels.

[Focus on Differentiation Part 2](#) explores differentiation for ELs, including ways to leverage home language for instruction.

[Students Matter: 3 Steps for Effective Differentiated Instruction](#) highlights the importance of involving students in decision-making when differentiating instruction.

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

[Culturally Responsive Education](#) provides resources for educators working on creating culturally responsive classrooms.

[Culturally Relevant Books in the ELL Classroom](#) highlights the use of culturally relevant books for EL instruction and includes a link to resources for finding culturally relevant books.