

Strategies for English Language Learners (ESL/ELD students)

Young people whose first language is not standard Canadian English enter Ontario elementary schools with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Some may have experienced highly sophisticated educational systems while others may have had limited formal schooling. All of these students bring a wealth of background knowledge and experience to the classroom. Assisting them with their English-language development is a responsibility shared by teachers of all subject areas.

Teachers of mathematics need to incorporate appropriate instructional and assessment strategies into their programs to help ESL and ELD students succeed in their classrooms. These strategies include:

- modifying some or all of the **curriculum expectations**, based on students' levels of English proficiency
- using a **variety of instructional strategies**
 - extensive use of visual cues, manipulatives, pictures, diagrams, graphic organizers
 - attention to the clarity of instructions
 - modelling of preferred ways of working in mathematics; previewing of textbooks
 - pre-teaching of key specialized vocabulary
 - encouragement of peer tutoring and class discussion
 - strategic use of students' first languages
- using a **variety of learning resources**
 - visual material, simplified text, bilingual dictionaries, culturally diverse materials
- using **assessment accommodations**
 - granting of extra time
 - use of alternative forms of assessment, such as oral interviews, learning logs, or portfolios
 - simplification of language used in problems and instructions

See *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1–8: English As a Second Language and English Literacy Development – A Resource Guide, 2001* (available at www.edu.gov.on.ca) for detailed information about modifying expectations for ESL/ELD students and about assessing, evaluating, and reporting on student achievement.

Source: *The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 1-8, Mathematics, 2005*