

**English Learner Professional Learning:  
Improving Learning Experiences for English Learners and Their Teachers**

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## A. Significance

**Need for the Project.** English Learner Professional Learning (ELPL) addresses Absolute Priority 4, Improving Academic Outcomes for English Learners (ELs), subpart (a). The project is designed to build the knowledge and skills of 1) elementary teachers to implement effective EL instruction that addresses the language demands of complex texts and tasks, and 2) instructional coaches to support teachers in improving ELs' abilities to excel with the kind of academically and linguistically challenging content reflected in 21<sup>st</sup> century college and career readiness (CCR) standards, such as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Participating *educators will be able to support* ELs in achieving positive elementary and secondary school outcomes.

ELPL targets elementary school teachers and the instructional coaches who support them because 1) early childhood (Transitional Kindergarten [TK]–grade 3 in our project) is an ideal time for ELs to establish strong foundational competencies in English academic language and literacy; and 2) late elementary (grades 4–6) is a critical time for ensuring that ELs are ready for the increasingly challenging content and language demands of secondary school. Teachers must be able to meet the academic and linguistic needs of all ELs, whether students arrive in kindergarten or in fifth grade, enter with a strong educational background or a disrupted one, or speak conversational English or none at all. ELPL's approach attends to these and other factors that influence EL achievement so that *all* elementary school ELs are able to engage in intellectually and linguistically rich school tasks and are ready for rigorous middle school coursework.

California, where ELPL would initially be implemented under this grant, has more ELs than any other state, accounting for nearly 25 percent of the state's K–12 student population and one third of ELs nationwide (California Department of Education [CDE], 2014; Kena et al., 2014).

The nationwide number continues to grow, with multiple states recently experiencing dramatic increases (Kena et al., 2014). Yet current instructional practices are not meeting the needs of these students. They consistently score lower than their non-EL counterparts on state and national measures of reading proficiency, and their performance has not significantly changed over the past several years (National Assessment of Educational Progress [NAEP], 2013). Many districts find that ELs “stall” in their English language development and have difficulty progressing beyond intermediate levels of proficiency (Linguanti, Crane, & Huang, 2010). Both personal and societal consequences are profound: ELs who fail to master English language and literacy skills in elementary school are at severe risk of dropping out of high school (Hernandez, 2011). Without steadily developing the academic and English literacy capacities needed for college and careers, EL students, particularly from high-poverty backgrounds, are significantly less likely to realize their economic and civic potential. With CCR standards raising expectations for all students, professional learning opportunities are urgently needed if teachers are to effectively educate ELs—opportunities that fit into available time and provide the ongoing support adult learners need to implement and sustain new practices.

**Novel Approach.** ELPL aims to *improve the learning experiences of ELs and their teachers* through a blended (face-to-face and online) professional learning model that integrates 1) instructional strategies designed to support EL learning; 2) effective professional learning for teachers and instructional coaches; and 3) support for district leaders to make necessary systemic change to improve instruction for ELs. The combination yields a coherent, effective, and scalable approach to improving EL education, one that is novel in both content and process.

*Instructional strategies for ELs:* EL-focused instruction, when provided, typically addresses students’ English language development (ELD) and content learning as separate domains, with

ELD taught by different teachers in a pull-out situation. Often, ELD instruction is not provided at all. A growing body of research indicates that effective EL instruction across the disciplines is interactive and intellectually rich; provides appropriate scaffolding to support increasing independence; focuses on the development of both academic content knowledge and academic English; and values and respectfully builds on students' home languages and cultures (see, for example, Anstrom et al., 2010; August & Shanahan 2006; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, K., Saunders, & Christian 2006). Our approach builds on this research base by infusing understandings from Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and, more specifically, from the applied research stemming from this theory that focuses on pedagogy that supports ELs to develop *academic English in all disciplines* and *metalinguistic awareness* that enables them to be intentional language users (Christie, 2012; Derewianka & Jones, 2012; Halliday, 1993; Schleppegrell, 2004). ELPL is based on the understanding that far from being separate domains, content and language are inextricably linked—a linkage that must be reflected in a teacher's instructional practice (Schleppegrell, 2012). ELPL will focus on effective instruction for grades TK–6 ELs in *academic language and literacy, content knowledge, and discourse practices* across the disciplines. This effective instruction ensures that ELs interact meaningfully with complex texts and with others in dialogue about academic content and that they apply their knowledge of English to comprehending and producing texts. Teachers will learn how to *integrate* ELD into all content areas and to strategically differentiate ELs' English language development instruction during a *designated* time to support content learning.

This dual focus on *integrated* and *designated* ELD instruction—one novel aspect of our project—is explained and illustrated with concrete examples in three recently developed EL resources that will provide ELPL's foundational content: (1) the *English Language Arts/English*

*Language Development Framework for California Public Schools: Transitional Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve (CA ELA/ELD Framework)*, which provides explicit instructional guidance for implementing the Common Core State Standards for ELA/Literacy and California English Language Development Standards; (2) the *California English Language Development Standards (CA ELD Standards)*, which guides teachers to plan differentiated instruction for and monitor the ELD progress of ELs; and (3) the *California English Language Development Standards Online Professional Learning Modules (CA ELD Standards Online PLMs)*, two self-paced modules with videos and other media, structured tasks, and reflection prompts to provide ideas for improving EL instruction in all content areas. Though California-specific, the resources can easily be adapted for national implementation. ELPL's Project Director was a lead writer and content expert for the resources; other personnel were also instrumental in their development.

*Effective professional learning for teachers and instructional coaches:* ELPL is anchored in the three EL resources mentioned above, which are free and accessible at any time. But experience has taught us that busy educators do not necessarily avail themselves of even the most useful resources without the dedicated time and structured support to do so. Despite an increasing number of teachers whose students include ELs, most professional learning does not focus on the particular learning needs of ELs (de Jong & Harper, 2011). California school districts, like many others across the nation, urgently need and are ready for effective support to help teachers of ELs implement the type of instruction called for in the new CCR standards and explained and illustrated in the three EL resources we will use.

ELPL is grounded in and innovates on the knowledge base on teacher professional learning, which reveals that, despite the allocation of billions of dollars every year, professional learning for teachers is often inadequate, rushed, superficial, fragmented, ignorant of teachers' day-to-day

practice, or irrelevant to the real problems of classroom practice (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2005; Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008). Yoon et al.'s (2007) meta-analysis showed that teachers who spent an average of 49 hours in professional learning were able to boost student achievement by 21 percentile points; yet, according to NCES (2009), only 12.5 percent of teachers have participated in more than 8 hours of training—ever—on how to work with ELs. In contrast to traditional, ineffective “one shot” and “sit and get” professional development, the ELPL approach not only provides teachers with powerful instructional strategies for ELs, it also provides ongoing support and fosters communities of practice, giving teachers opportunities to plan lessons together, implement the lessons with support, share and receive feedback on what they did, and engage in reflective dialogue about pedagogy for ELs.

Our approach to teacher professional learning draws on Desimone's work (2009), which itself draws on empirical research to define a core set of five features of high-quality professional learning: *content focus, active learning, coherence, sufficient duration, and collective participation*. A ***content focus*** that emphasizes teachers' understanding of and strategies they can use for teaching *academic subject knowledge* is critical for both improved teacher practice and improved student achievement (Lee, Deaktor, Enders, & Lambert, 2008; Penuel, Gallagher, & Moorthy, 2011; Vaughn et al., 2011). ***Active learning*** can take many forms, including giving or receiving feedback, analyzing student work, or collaboratively planning lessons (Borko, 2004; Lieberman & Pointer Mace, 2008; Wilson & Berne, 1999). ***Coherence*** refers to the extent to which professional learning is aligned with local and state reform initiatives (including standards and assessments), as well as with teachers' knowledge and beliefs. Professional learning should be of ***sufficient duration***, including both span of time and hours spent, to promote changes in thinking and behavior (Yoon et al., 2007). ***Collective participation*** occurs when teachers in the

same school, grade level, or department participate in professional learning together, which promotes collaboration and discussion (Darling-Hammond & Sykes, 1999; Lewis, Perry, & Murata, 2006; Stoll & Louis, 2007).

ELPL provides *whole-school professional learning*, with teachers learning alongside and strengthening their relationships with one another as they build collective knowledge. The districts' elementary school instructional coaches (and school principals) are included in the same professional learning sessions as teachers, so they, too, can learn the content, which is new for everyone, and engage with their teacher colleagues as members of the school community they serve. Although teachers and instructional coaches come to professional learning with knowledge and expertise (which we will acknowledge, validate, and leverage for new learning), much of the content of the three EL resources is novel for all educators. Thus, ELPL emphasizes that one aspect of communities of practice is a positive learning culture in which all members are both experts and learners. ELPL incorporates an online learning environment prepopulated with resources that will be augmented over the year by project staff and participants, who will be invited to share ideas and artifacts of their work and developing skills (e.g., lesson plans and student work) and to interact with other participants (e.g., in threaded discussions, posing questions, giving feedback on lessons). We include this online component because educators need to access support and resources in ways that fit their busy schedules.

*Effective professional learning (instructional coaches):* Another unique feature of the ELPL model is its provision of substantial, ongoing support to instructional coaches so they, in turn, can provide effective support to teachers. While coaches are found in schools throughout the country, their knowledge and skills do not always extend to teaching ELs. And, as is true for teachers, learning opportunities for coaches seldom focus on developing their EL expertise.

ELPL recognizes the potential power of instructional coaches as *key levers for change*. To that end, they need time and a supportive context for 1) extending their understanding of effective EL instruction in ways that enable them to better support teachers of ELs; 2) developing coaching expertise specifically as it relates to supporting to teachers of ELs; and 3) engaging in dialogue with peers to share experiences and ideas, give and get feedback, and build collective knowledge and resources.

In addition to learning side by side with teachers about effective instructional strategies for ELs, coaches will engage, for each of two years, in blended professional learning designed specifically for them. This blended learning model responds to coaches' need for timely, deep, and ongoing support in the face of limited time and resources. An added advantage of incorporating online learning is that it provides ways of interacting that are not feasible in face-to-face sessions. For example, in an online environment, coaches can share photos or videos of a powerful lesson they witnessed and provide a brief commentary about it, pose a problem of practice or a professional learning idea to their colleagues and receive feedback and support that is archived, or annotate a teacher's lesson collaboratively with others to provide teachers with the collective feedback of many coaches. They could also record themselves sharing a brief coaching or teaching tip (using technology such as Present.me) and post it for others to try out, or invite feedback or extension ideas. While such activities could take place face to face, an online environment enables participants to carry them out more efficiently and with broader reach. We will also develop an online facilitator's toolkit for coaches with ideas for professional learning and other resources they can use in their daily work. ELPL staff will prepopulate the toolkit with many resources and add more throughout the project; coaches will also be invited to share ideas and resources so the toolkit becomes a living resource relevant to the local context.

While participating teachers receive one year of face-to-face and online learning opportunities in ELPL, coaches receive two years of blended professional learning focused on their role as coaches, in recognition that they are central to sustaining learning when the project ends. In addition, coaches will participate in two years of ELPL with the two cohorts of teachers they support. In their first year, the coaches are new to ELPL content and process. In the second year, they deepen their content understanding about effective EL instruction, become more skilled at coaching teachers of ELs, and assume a greater facilitative role in ELPL activities.

*Support for district leaders to make necessary systemic change:* Our approach includes the critical component of collaborating with district leadership to ensure that a coherent professional learning system is in place, to help them refine it as needed, and to help plan for post-ELPL sustainability. A growing body of research suggests that districts that are the most successful at fostering ELs' linguistic and academic progress work deliberately to ensure implementation of high-quality academic and English language instruction for ELs; regularly evaluate and discuss student work; prioritize instructional areas for professional learning and improvement; and focus relentlessly on strengthening targeted areas of instructional practice (Parrish et al., 2006; Williams et al., 2007; Horwitz et al., 2009). High-functioning districts know who their ELs are, what instructional practices are being implemented, and how to determine next steps for improvement (Heritage, Jones, Tobiason, & Change, 2014; Schmoker, 2006). Educators within high-functioning districts also develop a culture of learning and shared responsibility, professional collaboration, and strong reciprocal and internal accountability (Dweck, 2010; Elmore, 2002; Newmann, King, & Rigdon, 1997). Our project will support participating districts to strengthen their policies, infrastructure, and norms to support a coherent

professional learning system focused on the needs of ELs. We will create, operationalize, and implement a collaborative approach to working with district leadership toward these aims.

**Contribution to Theory, Knowledge, and Practice.** This project will create and operationalize a professional learning model that brings together existing resources (i.e., the *CA ELA/ELD Framework*, *CA ELD Standards*, and *CA ELD Standards Online PLMs*) with a delivery mechanism designed to meet adult learner needs and with supportive system changes to improve the quality of instruction for ELs. By integrating content that specifically focuses on effective EL instruction, empirically based principles for professional learning, and what we know about online learning and the importance of capacity building for district leaders, our project innovates on current approaches. With this multi-layered, comprehensive, and coherent approach, ELPL has the potential to significantly improve outcomes for ELs across the nation.

California has been at the forefront of addressing the challenges faced by ELs and their teachers, and our project team—with its intimate involvement in the development of the three EL resources, a substantial record of successfully supporting schools to implement effective instruction for ELs and building district capacity to strengthen their systems, and a unique technology-enhanced approach—is poised to make a significant contribution to the field and to improve school outcomes for ELs. By drawing on the extant knowledge base and creating and operationalizing a coherent, comprehensive, and scalable approach that is specifically focused on the academic and linguistic learning needs of ELs, our unique project will contribute to theory, knowledge, and practice, and will serve as an exemplar that can be used nationwide.

### **B. Quality of the Project Design**

The proposed three-year project will develop, pilot, refine, and study a new blended professional learning model for elementary school teachers and the instructional coaches who

support them, with the aim of improving ELs' academic achievement and English language development. Principals in the participating schools will also participate in professional learning alongside their teachers. Over the course of the project, we will implement ELPL in six elementary schools in two school California districts, both with large populations of ELs and students living in poverty. The project will involve approximately 3,000 students, including an estimated 1,500 ELs.

**Project Goals:** Our project has four measurable goals, described below.

***Goal 1: ELs better understand complex texts, fully engage in complex tasks, understand and use academic English, and experience greater academic success, with more positive outcomes at the end of elementary and secondary school.*** This is our main goal. All activities will focus on ensuring that ELs make progress on measures of both academic content and ELD.

***Goal 2: Teachers, in a community of practice, increasingly implement effective academic content and English language development instruction for ELs.*** To achieve this goal, teachers—and the instructional coaches who support them—need to develop the knowledge and skills to translate new CCR and ELD standards into effective instructional practice. In ELPL, teachers will learn about, discuss, integrate into their existing practice, try out, and reflect on new practices focused on EL students' academic content and English language learning, thereby improving teachers' pedagogical skills. Through professional learning, and with ongoing support from coaches, WestEd experts, and peers, teachers will improve the instruction they provide to ELs. In turn, EL students will better understand and use academic English and successfully engage in academic learning.

***Goal 3: Instructional coaches, in a community of practice, support teachers to successfully implement effective EL instruction.*** To achieve this goal, instructional coaches not only need

deep understanding of effective EL instruction (Goal 2) so as to provide support as teachers' implement the new strategies, but they also need to know how to facilitate communities of practice in which teachers engage with their peers in ongoing learning, including dialogue about instructional practice for ELs. Throughout ELPL, instructional coaches will have multiple opportunities not only to extend their own understandings of effective EL instruction but also to refine and hone their coaching skills as they apply specifically to supporting teachers of ELs. Informally and in structured time, they will be able to work collaboratively, with teachers and fellow coaches, to develop professional learning activities, to discuss challenges, successes, and questions, and to collectively solve problems. Through blended professional learning and ongoing support from ELPL experts and their peers, coaches will provide effective support to teachers of ELs so teachers are able to implement effective instruction for ELs, resulting in increased EL student academic and linguistic achievement.

***Goal 4: District leaders strengthen professional learning systems to ensure coherence, sustainability of improvements, and strong focus on the needs of ELs.*** To achieve this goal, districts need to understand and commit to creating a coherent system for professional learning that is focused on the needs of ELs (and the teachers of ELs), one that is robust enough to help sustain learning once any targeted intervention, such as ELPL, has been completed, and one that all educators see as useful and relevant. Although partner districts have already been identified and have committed to undertaking this work, in our initial, formal meetings with the district leadership team, we will work to ensure that its members fully understand ELPL's intent and purpose. These initial meetings will also help deepen our understanding of the district's organizational culture and their current approaches to professional learning, other district initiatives that might compete with or support ELPL, and the district's existing capacity to

support ELPL goals. Subsequent meetings will focus on improving the quality of the district's professional learning system so the needs of ELs and their teachers are emphasized, and educators continue to experience relevant professional learning when the project ends. Through our support of district leaders, teachers and coaches will have the necessary district support to successfully implement new knowledge and skills to improve EL learning.

**Plan for Achieving the Goals.** Our logic model in Figure 1 (p. 14) illustrates our theory of action (evidence of strong theory). Instruction for ELs improves when educators engage in professional learning that: uses relevant, research-based EL resources; focuses on improving knowledge, practice, and collegial interactions; is sustained and intensive; and is supported by coherent district policies and systems that promote a learning culture. ELs' abilities to engage with academic content and understand and use academic English improve with effective instruction that is specifically focused on their academic and linguistic learning needs, resulting in higher achievement and better preparation for the rigorous content learning that awaits them in secondary school.

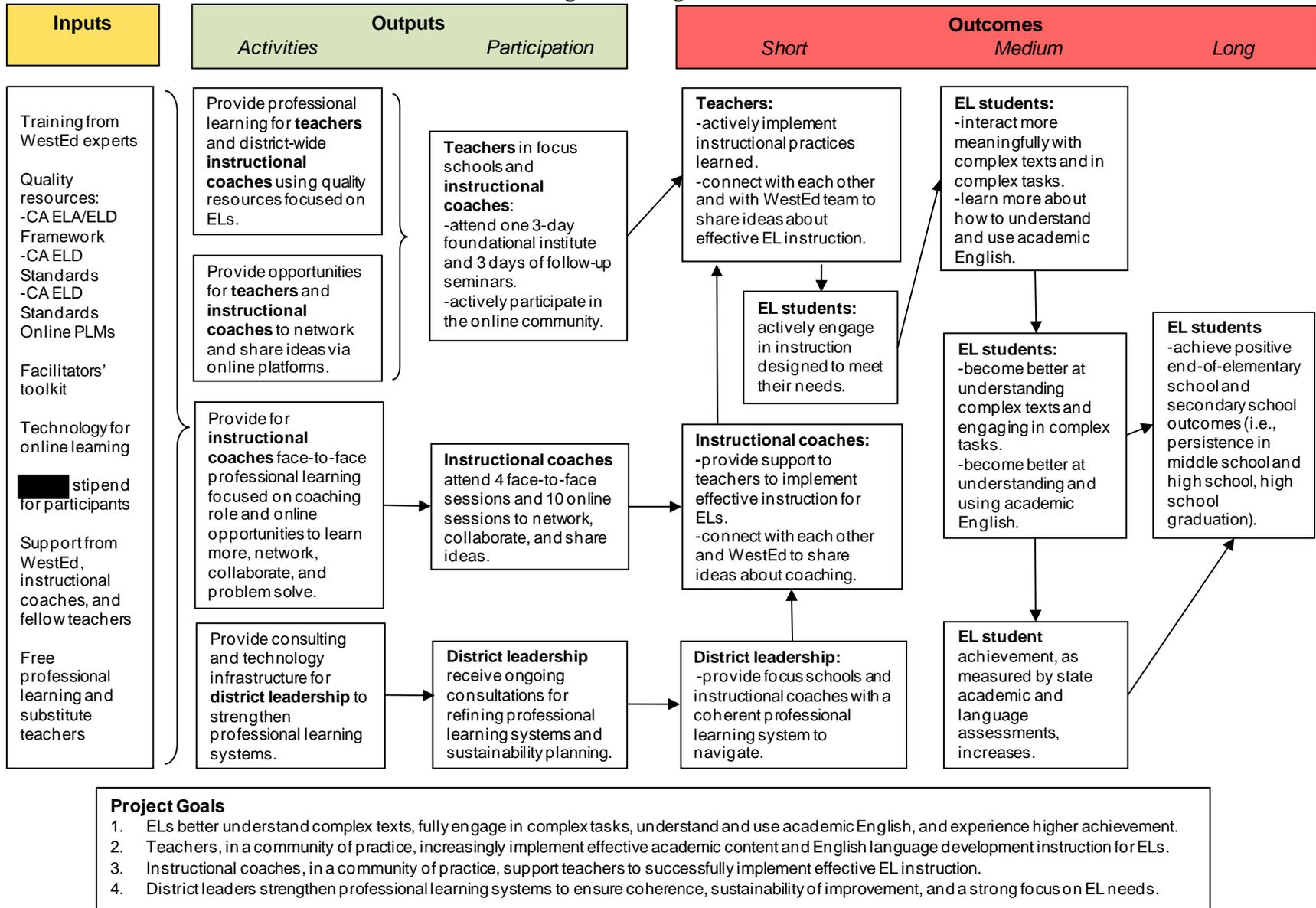
*ELPL content and activities:* Reflecting this theory of action, ELPL activities for teachers and coaches are focused on rich content learning and on fostering communities of practice to deepen and sustain new learning. Our implementation plan leverages the deep expertise reflected in the three new EL resources (the *CA ELD Standards*, *CA ELA-ELD Framework*, and *CA ELD Standards Online PLMs*) and the research on professional learning and district improvement. The three EL resources include multiple examples of effective instructional practices for ELs across the content areas and grade levels. Exemplars of *integrated* and *designated* ELD will be modeled and illustrated in both the face-to-face sessions and through video and other online media, and discussed in depth. For example, one face-to-face task will engage teachers in

reading, annotating, and discussing with colleagues a pair of grade-specific vignettes from the *CA ELA-ELD Framework*, the first providing an example of content instruction (e.g., ELA, science, social studies) with *integrated ELD*, and the second providing an example of *designated ELD* instruction that is connected to the content of the first vignette. In this way, teachers receive concrete models of effective ELD instruction and are given the time not only to discuss the elements embedded in the vignettes (e.g., instructional moves, scaffolding, attention to language and content, formative assessment, teacher collaboration, planning) but also to draw from the examples and discussions to plan new lessons and refine existing ones. These concrete examples will be complemented by critical readings and discussions about the theoretical foundations and research base that undergird the illustrative instructional examples so that educators internalize the fundamental principles that should inform all instructional planning and refinement. Figure 2 provides examples of specific instructional approaches for ELs that teachers will learn to apply.

**Figure 2: Examples of Effective Instruction for ELs**

<b>Examples of Effective Instruction for ELs</b> <i>(From the CA ELA/ELD Framework, CA ELD Standards, and CA ELD Standards Online PLMs)</i>	
<p><b>Discussing:</b> Structuring collaborative conversations to ensure equitable participation and to stretch language use and thinking (e.g., by using designated roles or open sentence frames, posing questions that promote extended discourse)</p>	<p><b>Reading:</b> Scaffolding comprehension of complex literary and informational texts (e.g., by modeling, providing guided practice on asking and answering text-dependent questions, using predictable routines for examining texts)</p>
<p><b>Academic Language:</b> Supporting students to develop academic English and metalinguistic awareness (e.g., by teaching general academic and domain-specific vocabulary explicitly; supporting students to analyze and discuss language in texts at the word, phrase, clause, text, and discourse levels)</p>	<p><b>Writing:</b> Scaffolding oral and written uses of academic English (e.g., by engaging students in examining, deconstructing, reconstructing, and co-constructing texts; supporting students to analyze and evaluate the organizational structures and language resources of different text types)</p>
<p><b>Formative Assessment:</b> Viewed as <i>a process</i> and an integral part of all instructional practice (e.g., by <i>planning ahead</i> for opportunities to observe students using language in conversations, analyzing writing for specific language features and providing immediate feedback and instructional support)</p>	

Figure 1: Logic Model



**Project Goals**

1. ELs better understand complex texts, fully engage in complex tasks, understand and use academic English, and experience higher achievement.
2. Teachers, in a community of practice, increasingly implement effective academic content and English language development instruction for ELs.
3. Instructional coaches, in a community of practice, support teachers to successfully implement effective EL instruction.
4. District leaders strengthen professional learning systems to ensure coherence, sustainability of improvement, and a strong focus on EL needs.

Teachers and principals at the six focus schools, with the district’s elementary instructional coaches, will participate together in one year of professional learning, consisting of face-to-face professional learning (a three-day summer foundational institute and three additional days during the school year), along with an asynchronous online component that will enable participants to find extension ideas and resources, share ideas (e.g., by posting to an online photo wall), give and receive feedback (e.g., by swapping lessons), and discuss problems of practice (e.g., via threaded discussions). Professional dialogue, trying out new strategies, and peer feedback will be emphasized as critical to successful implementation of new learning.

Instructional coaches will participate in *additional* blended learning during the school year (four face-to-face days and 10 monthly synchronous online sessions) focused on their roles as coaches. The online sessions will include brief tutorials (to extend content knowledge and respond to questions and challenges) and time to share successes and challenges and to collectively solve problems of practice (in “virtual breakout rooms” by grade span or topic). We will develop an online *facilitator’s toolkit* with resources for coaching and professional learning (e.g., tools for observing EL instruction, video viewing guides, tools for analyzing student work). In addition, we will develop a *facilitator’s guide* to support those responsible for facilitating professional learning after the project has ended.

At least three months before the ELPL summer institutes, we will meet with a team of district leaders (including directors of professional learning, EL services, and curriculum and instruction) to determine what the district’s professional learning system is, and how it supports educators to improve instruction for ELs. Subsequent meetings during the school year (at least five face-to-face and multiple by phone or online) will focus on strengthening the district’s professional learning system to ensure a strong focus on effective EL instruction and on planning

for sustainability. We will also provide the district with an online professional learning platform specifically for ELPL activities and facilitate the district's understanding of how to use it.

**Continuous Improvement of the Project.** We propose an iterative process of project development and refinement that incorporates participant feedback. To determine if the ELPL model is operating as intended, we plan to solicit feedback from teachers and instructional coaches (e.g., through participant evaluations of the summer institute, focus groups) and from district leaders (e.g., through dialogue, brief surveys). We will also examine student artifacts (e.g., writing samples) and data from district-administered interim/benchmark assessments to determine how to refine our model for optimal results. Using first-year (2015–16) feedback, we will refine the model and, in the second year (2016–17), will implement it in four additional elementary schools (two in each district). We will continue to collect formative data and modify accordingly throughout the project. An independent evaluation spanning all three years will be conducted by Rockman et al, which, as detailed in section D, will collect and analyze data and prepare reports with findings to be shared with the project team and our partner districts.

**Potential Risks.** Education is in an era of many changes. Implementation of new CCR standards, ELD standards, and statewide assessment systems, along with district initiatives to ensure successful assessment results, may converge to create challenging focus and time pressures for project participants. We anticipate these pressures being countered by a) the use of three powerful EL resources that educators will recognize as directly relevant to their work, the support instructional coaches will have in their essential role, and c) the blending of online and face-to-face learning opportunities to make the most of educators' limited time and resources. The challenge of keeping skilled teachers at low-performing schools with high numbers of students living in poverty is well known, and we recognize teacher attrition as a significant risk

in our project; however, we believe that as teachers see improved EL learning, professional satisfaction will lead them to stay engaged where they are, especially as they are able to count on support from the knowledgeable and skilled instructional coach at their school.

### C. Quality of the Management Plan and Personnel

Our project team has carefully considered how to achieve positive, sustainable results. We will work collaboratively with our two district partners to ensure frequent, substantive communication to promote coherence and quality. Letters of interest from two partner districts (Sacramento City Unified and Fairfield-Suisun Unified) are in Appendix A, and Fresno Unified School District has expressed interest in partnering with us.

**Management Plan and Key Responsibilities.** Our metrics for assessing progress, including successes and challenges, include participation rates (hours attending face-to-face and online sessions); participation type in the online space (e.g., type of activities/resources accessed, ideas posted); participants’ evaluations of professional learning sessions; pre- and post ELPL (yearly) surveys regarding knowledge and abilities to implement effective EL instruction and coaching; online coaching logs; observation tools used by coaches to provide feedback; lesson and unit plans; and student work. Our management plan for each year is outlined in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: ELPL Management Plan Outline**

	<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Phase 3</b>	<b>Phase 4</b>
<b>Time Line</b>	Jan.–June 2015	July 2015– June 2016	July 2016– June 2017	July–Dec. 2017
<b>Objectives</b>	Development, Preparation	Implementation, Year One	Implementation, Year Two	Evaluation, Dissemination
<b>Activities</b>	Develop ELPL materials and online spaces; meet with district and external	Summer institute and follow-up days with online learning for <b>2 schools/cohort 1</b> and <b>coaches</b> ; begin blended	Summer institute and follow-up days with online learning with <b>4 new schools/cohort 2</b> and <b>same coaches</b> ; continue blended learning	Analyze final data, prepare reports and publications to share with the field, meet with district leadership and external evaluator

	<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Phase 3</b>	<b>Phase 4</b>
	evaluator to prepare	learning with <b>coaches</b> ; begin work with <b>leadership team</b>	with same coaches; continue work with <b>same leadership team</b>	to debrief
<b>Annual Targets</b> (Phases 2 and 3)	1) increased EL student proficiency on the annual state ELA and ELD assessments and district-administered summative assessments; 2) increased teacher knowledge and skills on effective EL instruction (ELPL final evaluations); 3) increased coach knowledge and skills to support teachers of ELs, as indicated in post-project surveys; 4) strengthened district systems, as indicated by clear and coherent documents			

**Project Team.** The project will be overseen and directed by Dr. Pamela Spycher, with project leadership, coordination, and management support provided by Drs. Kim Austin and Rachel Lagunoff. Additional staff bring expertise in EL instruction, standards, and assessment; professional learning; district systems improvement focused on ELs, and EL data analysis. Our strategy for achieving our goals is based on successful work we have continuously refined over several years, our current work, and the planned rigorous evaluation. We are currently piloting an approach with elements of the proposed project in an urban district in California.

*Dr. Pamela Spycher*, Project Director and Lead Content Designer, is responsible for ensuring the project is carried out as proposed, serving as lead content designer, certifying that funding is appropriately allocated, and serving in a consultative role for delivery of professional learning. Spycher leads WestEd’s California Comprehensive Center work with the California Department of Education and regional service providers to support districts in implementing the Common Core and other CCR standards, and the state’s ELD standards. She was a lead designer/writer of California’s new *ELD Standards*, the *ELA/ELD Framework*, and *ELD Standards Online PLMs*. Her applied research has focused on EL instruction and has been published in peer-reviewed journals, including the *Journal of Second Language Writing* and the *Elementary School Journal*. Spycher was the editor and chapter author of the recently published

*The Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts for English Language Learners: Grades K-5* (TESOL Press). She has served as an external facilitator of districtwide reform focused on the needs of ELs, and she directed and managed a professional learning program, *English Language and Literacy Acceleration (ELLA)*, which served multiple districts across the nation. These roles have prepared her to lead a project of this scope.

*Dr. Kim Austin*, Project Design Coordinator and Internal Evaluation Manager, will coordinate content development, technology, and instructional design of the blended learning experience and manage internal evaluation of the project to ensure continuous improvement. Austin has over 10 years of experience designing, developing, and producing multimedia content for websites and creating online (facilitated and self-paced) courses for teachers focused on learning and literacy, including the *CA ELD Standards Online PLMs*. A qualitative researcher and educational psychologist by training, she brings experience in formative evaluation of CCR implementation efforts, as well as experience supporting and documenting school reform efforts.

*Dr. Rachel Lagunoff*, Project Manager and External Evaluation Liaison, will collaborate with the Project Director and other team members to manage day-to-day project operations, design and deliver professional learning activities, and serve as project liaison to the external evaluator. Lagunoff has over 10 years of experience leading projects related to development and alignment of English language proficiency standards and assessments. She supports schools, districts, and states in implementing content standards, including CCSS, other CCR standards, and the *CA ELD Standards*. She was a content lead for the development of the *CA ELD Standards* and the *CA ELD Standards Online PLMs*, and co-authored two guidebooks on making mathematics and science content accessible to ELs.

*Julie Duffield's* 30 years in education include working with ELs, using technology to support diverse learners, and organizing online professional learning to build and support communities of practice. She will help design and facilitate the online experience for coaches and teachers. *Tamaye Ota* and *Danielle Garegnani* provide professional learning and job-embedded coaching to teachers and coaches to support the implementation of CCR and ELD Standards and the *CA ELA/ELD Framework*. They will serve as content experts and professional learning facilitators. *Robert Linqunti* helps states and school districts strengthen systems to promote EL achievement. In collaboration with the Project Director, he will support district partners in refining a coherent, sustainable professional learning system. *Dr. Adam Moylan*, an educational psychologist and senior researcher at Rockman et al with almost 20 years of combined experience in education research, evaluation, and teaching, brings expertise in quantitative and qualitative methods, research design, assessment, and questionnaire and protocol development. He will lead the external evaluation. A core group of WestEd's senior leadership who are experts in research design, district improvement, and technology—*Nikola Filby*, *Jannelle Kubinec*, *Sylvie Hale*, and *Christian Holden*—will serve in an advisory role to the project. A support team—*Scott Sargent*, *Adam Keim*, and *Jan Agee*—will provide document and operational support, as well as quality control.

#### **D. Quality of the Project Evaluation**

The evaluation will consist of 1) an impact study of the effects on teacher learning and student outcomes and 2) a study of implementation fidelity and processes to inform the refinement of ELPL's blended model of professional learning. The studies will be conducted by an external evaluator, Rockman et al. (REA), an independent research firm with extensive experience studying innovations designed to improve teaching and learning in high-need schools.

**Impact Study.** Our impact study uses a quasi-experimental design with a matched comparison group to test the model’s effects on teacher and EL student outcomes at all six intervention schools. Because random assignment is not possible due to the constraints on the district partners, REA will compare outcomes at the ELPL model schools to those at similarly performing schools that have coaches but do not have access to ELPL’s professional learning opportunities or anything similar. All EL students and their teachers in both intervention and comparison schools will be included. The results will be generalizable to similar schools within the participating districts as well as districts with similar characteristics. The impact study research questions are:

- 1. Do EL students in intervention schools demonstrate significantly greater growth than similar peers in matched comparison schools on state assessments in attaining (a) grade-level proficiency in academic content areas, and (b) English language proficiency across reading, writing, listening, and speaking domains?*
- 2. Do EL students interact more frequently than comparison students do with complex texts in complex tasks, as measured by teacher report?*
- 3. Do EL students more frequently understand and use academic English than do comparison students, as measured by teacher report?*
- 4. Do teachers at intervention schools demonstrate significantly greater increases in knowledge and skills than do teachers at comparison schools about implementation of new practices to accelerate EL students’ understanding and use of academic language?*

**Matching Process.** At the start of the project, REA will identify a comparison school for each of the six intervention schools, finding within-district schools that are comparable on key baseline characteristics. To match, REA will use data derived from the same measures as our

student achievement outcomes, as well as key demographic variables for students (e.g., EL, free or reduced lunch eligibility, ethnicity/race, etc.) and educators (e.g., years teaching).

**Sample.** Combining data across the school years will yield six schools per condition, each with an estimated 30 teachers and 350 students (accounting for an estimated student-mobility rate of 30 percent). For student outcome analyses, this sample size will provide a minimum detectable effect size of 0.172 assuming power=0.80, pretests explaining 20 percent of outcome variance, and intraclass correlation coefficients of 0.15 at the school and teacher levels (Hedges & Hedberg, 2007; Spybrook, Raudenbush, Congdon, & Martinez, 2009).

**Measures and Procedures.** REA will use student-level scores from summative state tests to measure growth in achievement (Q #1a), measured by the Smarter Balanced assessments for grades 3–6; and English language proficiency (Q #1b), measured by the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) or its planned replacement, the English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) for grades K–6, which has an estimated start date of spring 2016. For teacher report data, REA will administer a teacher questionnaire at the baseline and at the end of each school year. The collaboratively developed questionnaire will assess teacher perceptions about changes in EL student classroom behaviors (Q #2 and Q #3); and changes in teacher knowledge and skills about implementing new EL practices (Q #4). The measures for knowledge about and skill in EL instruction will be adapted from existing instruments and aligned with the *CA ELA/ELD Framework* and *CA ELD Standards*. REA will pilot the measures before the study. Last, the project will work to acquire interim assessment data to conduct comparative analyses across teachers and schools.

**Analyses.** The outcome analyses will use hierarchical linear modeling (HLM; Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Given the small sample size of schools (n=12), the estimates of standard errors may

be biased at the school level, but it has been suggested that multilevel modeling can be suitable for groups as small as 10 (Snijders & Bosker, 1999). Following What Works Clearinghouse standards, the analytic samples will be limited to cases with non-missing values of the outcome and baseline measures. REA will conduct separate HLM analyses for each outcome measure.

**Implementation Study.** The implementation study will develop greater clarity about the key components of the ELPL model, their hypothesized relationships, and intervention effects. Our index of implementation fidelity (based on the ELPL logic model) focuses on teacher, coach, and administrator participation in each relevant ELPL professional learning component. Current thresholds and methods for scoring a single index are in a fidelity matrix in Appendix J.

**Research Questions.** Key questions for the implementation study are below.

**Figure 4: Research Questions and Data Sources**

Key Implementation Study Research Questions	Data Source (T=treatment, C=comparison)
1. <i>To what extent do the professional learning and coaching give teachers the skills and tools they needed to engage in collaborative reflection about practice, and how do the various PL elements and coaching vary in influence?</i>	Teacher Survey (T&C), Focus Group (T)
2. <i>How frequently do teachers and coaches meet, and what are the foci and outcomes of the meetings, as well as challenges?</i>	Logs (T), Focus Group (T), Teacher Survey (T&C), & Coach Survey (T)
3. <i>In what ways do coaches improve their knowledge and skills about implementing new practices to accelerate EL students' understanding and use of academic language?</i>	Coach Survey & Focus Group (T)
4. <i>How do coaches provide opportunities for teachers to participate in a community of practice?</i>	Coach Survey (T), Logs (T), Admin. Interviews (T&C)
5. <i>How do administrators create school conditions conducive to collaborative inquiry, and what challenges do they face?</i>	Admin. Interviews (T&C), Teacher Survey, & Focus Group
6. <i>To what extent do teachers routinely embed targeted EL practices into their teaching units, and how much does classroom implementation vary between and within schools?</i>	Observations, Logs, Teacher & Coach Surveys, Admin. Interviews
7. <i>Are changes in classroom routines and arrangements required to give students the time and space required to complete performance tasks?</i>	Teacher & Coach Survey, Focus Group

Key Implementation Study Research Questions	Data Source (T=treatment, C=comparison)
8. <i>What are the characteristics of professional learning, communities of practice, coaching, and teaching practices in the comparison schools?</i>	Observations, Teacher Surveys, Admin. Interviews
9. <i>How do variations of teacher professional learning participation predict targeted changes in teaching practices, knowledge, skills, and perceptions?</i>	Teacher Surveys, Observations
10. <i>To what extent does implementation of targeted EL practices mediate student outcomes for EL and non-EL students?</i>	Observations, State Summative Assessments, Interim Assessments

**Measures and Procedures.** The implementation study will assess levels of teacher collaboration about student learning and performance. Data will include lesson and unit plans, student artifacts, feedback attained at professional learning sessions, and online learning activity. REA will also assess growth in the capacity of instructional coaches, regarding both their knowledge of specific strategies for accelerating EL learning (e.g., content understanding and use of academic language) and their implementation of support for teachers’ use of effective EL instruction. Data sources include end-of-school-year questionnaires and interviews with coaches. Our reviews of process data will include program and attendance records, as well as analytics for tracking engagement with online modules and in discussion forums. REA will collaborate with WestEd on systems for monitoring coaching and instruction logs and student artifacts.

In intervention schools, coaches will conduct classroom observations to track teacher practices and student learning throughout the year. REA will collaborate with WestEd on the iterative development of an observation tool adapted from existing tools and guides that supports formative evaluation as well as the coaching process. REA will conduct classroom observations at the start, midpoint, and end of each school year, sampling classrooms at each school to span grades TK–6 and across academic content areas. The data will serve two main purposes: 1) to compare with teacher reports of practices gathered via questionnaires and administrator

perceptions gathered via interviews at treatment and comparison schools; and 2) to compare with coaches' observations at intervention schools.

At the end of each school year, REA will conduct focus groups with teachers at each intervention school (1–2 groups per school) and with intervention group coaches, and will conduct interviews with site and district administrators. These data will include insights about: (a) variations in implementation of coaching and teaching practices, including information about facilitators and challenges; (b) perceived impacts on practices and learning; (c) participation in professional learning and community of practice; and (d) suggestions for improvement.

**Reporting.** REA will provide timely feedback to WestEd in regularly scheduled calls and periodic memos summarizing findings from individual evaluation activities. The evaluators will work regularly with the NEi3 evaluation technical assistance, communicating at least monthly and submit required plans and reporting to the NEi3 Analysis and Reporting Team. REA will submit annual reports and a final report that help further the development and future scaling of the ELPL model. The final report will synthesize the evidence on implementation and impact, and describe how the program is working, for whom, and under what conditions.

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