

# ESOL

In Higher Ed

## Teaching English Learners in the P - 12 Classroom

5th  
Edition



[Kendall Hunt Publishing](http://www.kendallhunt.com)

**Making the Connection to Literacy:  
ELs with Learning Disabilities**





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

The Individuals (alphabetize) with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) defines a specific learning disability (SLD) as “a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations.” In each category, list anticipated challenges when working with an EL with a specific learning disorder.

**READING (DYSLEXIA)**

**WRITING (DYSGRAPHIA)**

**LISTENING**

**SPEAKING**

**REASONING**

**MATH (DYSCALCULIA)**

- **Educators must focus on strengths rather than learning disabilities.**
- Expose ELs to relevant curriculum.
- Reading materials should be engaging and relevant.
- Integrate language, content knowledge, and literacy learning objectives.
- Distinguish between language differences and language disorders.



<b>Behaviors Associated With Acquiring a Second Language</b>	<b>Behaviors Associated With Learning Disabilities</b>
Difficulty following directions	Difficulty following directions
Difficulty distinguishing between sounds not in L1	Difficulty with phonological awareness
Confusion with sound-symbol correspondence when different than L1; Difficulty pronouncing sounds not in L1	Slow to learn sound-symbol correspondence
Difficulty remembering sight words when word meanings not understood	Difficulty remembering sight words
May understand more than can convey in L2	Difficulty retelling a story in sequence
Confused by figurative language	Confused by figurative language
Slow to process challenging language	Slow to process challenging language
May have poor auditory memory	May have poor auditory memory
May have difficulty concentrating	May have difficulty concentrating
May seem easily frustrated	May seem easily frustrated

- Make connections between ideas in reading passages to students' personal experiences.
- Teach basic reading skills.
- **Learn the life stories (biographies) of ELs.**
- ELs with learning disabilities may have difficulty in:
  - decoding skills
  - fluency
  - comprehension
  - showing an appreciation of learning to read

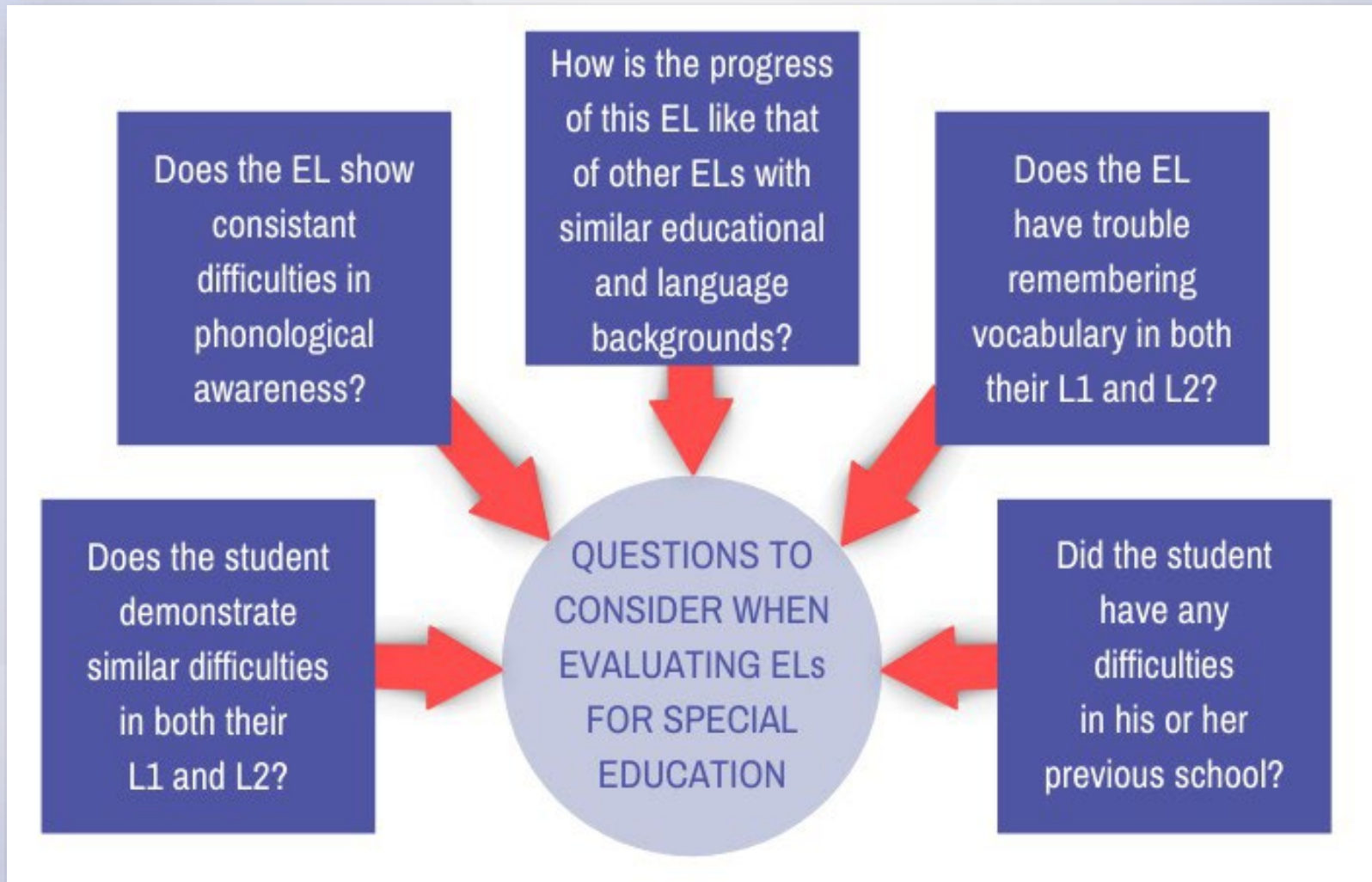


## Common understandings that frequently transfer from an EL's L1 to L2:

- knowledge
- literacy as symbolic
- literacy as communicative
- phonological awareness
- alphabetic and orthographic awareness
- concepts about print
- habits and attitudes
- self-esteem



## Similarities Between ELs and Learning Disabilities Behaviors





- *Differentiation*: This provides scaffolds that meets students' needs and prevents falling behind academically.
- *Assess L1 abilities*: Provide direct and explicit instruction to draw on background knowledge, schema, and language.
- *Schema theory*: A reader's level of comprehension of a text is dependent upon the interaction between the reader's background knowledge and the information presented.



## Strategies to Improve Reading Skills of ELs With Learning Disabilities (cont.)

- *3 Dimensions of language proficiency:* They are conversational fluency, discrete language skills, and academic language proficiency (can be concurrent, interdependent, and independent).
  - **Conversational fluency** takes 1-2 years.
  - **Discrete language skills** include phonemic awareness and decoding ability.
  - **Academic language proficiency** means ELs encounter more low-frequency words, complex syntactic structures, and abstract language. They navigate more complex academic language and content texts and to apply their language skills to sophisticated writing tasks.
- *Scaffold literacy skills:* Scaffold L1 skills to L2.
- *Use cognates:* When possible, build on L1 and L2 cognates (e.g., family/familia).



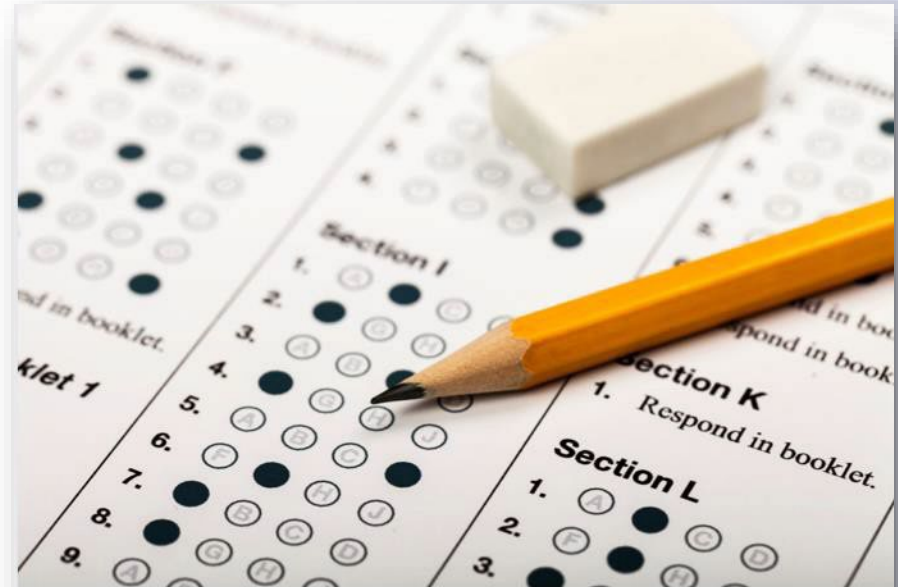
- *Scaffolding*: mediated scaffolds, task scaffolds, and material scaffolds
- *Choose appropriate literature*: Consider genre, vocabulary, story structure, relevance, etc.
- *Plan individual adaptations*: Be aware that multiple instructional objectives are essential in providing supportive learning environments.
- *Plan diverse tasks*: Create opportunities to discuss reading; provide expressive activities related to readings.



- *Storytelling*: Communicate enthusiasm.
- *Book reports*: Provide practice in speaking and writing.
- *Illustrating*: These can be freehand or with an app.
- *Poetry*: Provides a unique way to express feelings and ideas.
- *Direct instruction*: Use specific and measurable objectives and activate prior knowledge.
- *Scaffold literacy development*: Support oral language proficiency.
- *Read aloud*: This is one of the most effective strategies of all.

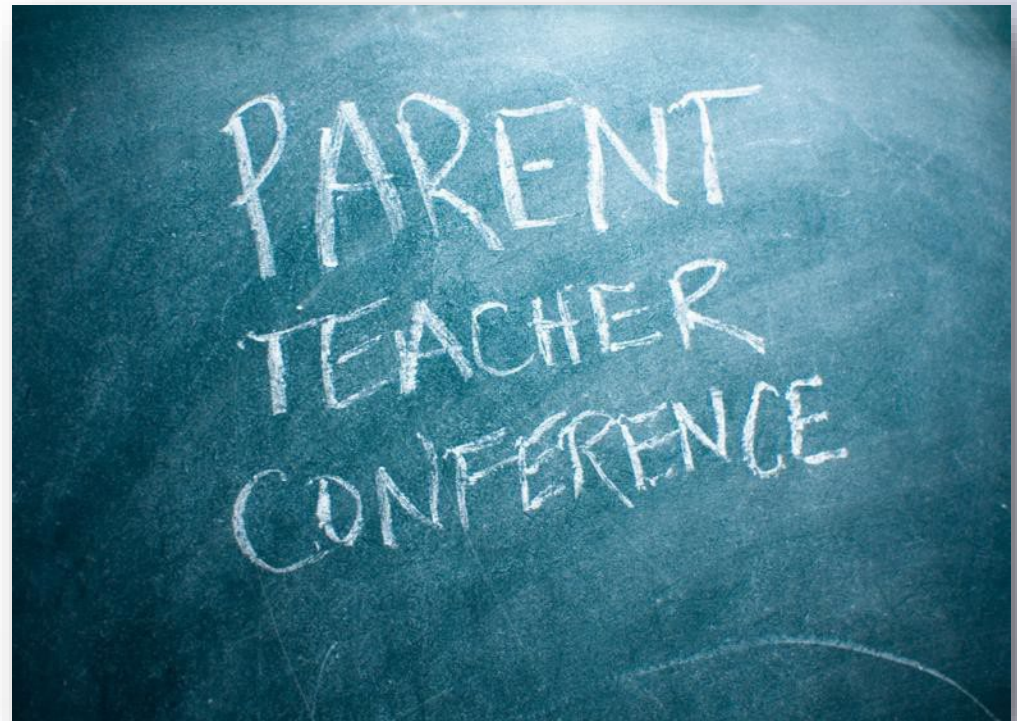


- *Assessments should:*
  - determine where students are on a developmental skills continuum
  - provide feedback for personal growth
  - be used to determine the effectiveness of instructional strategies and interventions
- *Authentic assessment:* provides information on academic growth and overall strengths of students
- *Student progress data:* should be collected multiple times a year



**Traditional assessment is not sufficient.**

If certain ELs remain unable to make progress, teachers should then decide if that student is to be referred to special education using formative data from screening and progress monitoring.



# Review these resources:

IDEA

Culturally Linguistically Diverse Student Biography Cards

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