

# Issues and Considerations for Vertical Articulation of ELP Performance Standards Under Title III

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We could all agree...

Setting performance standards requires

- meaningful, valid content standards
- appropriate articulation of content standards across educational programs
- appropriate definition of performance on those content standards

Less clear for English language proficiency (ELP) assessment programs

- links to academic achievement expectations
- how human and language development plays a role in grade level expectations
- critical characteristics of the student population must drive expectations



Led by Jamal Abedi, this report captured major findings, experiences, and lessons learned by the consortia of states that had organized around the development and assessment of ELP standards.

These consortia of states had each received federal Enhancement Grants to develop responses to Title III of No Child Left Behind of 2001.

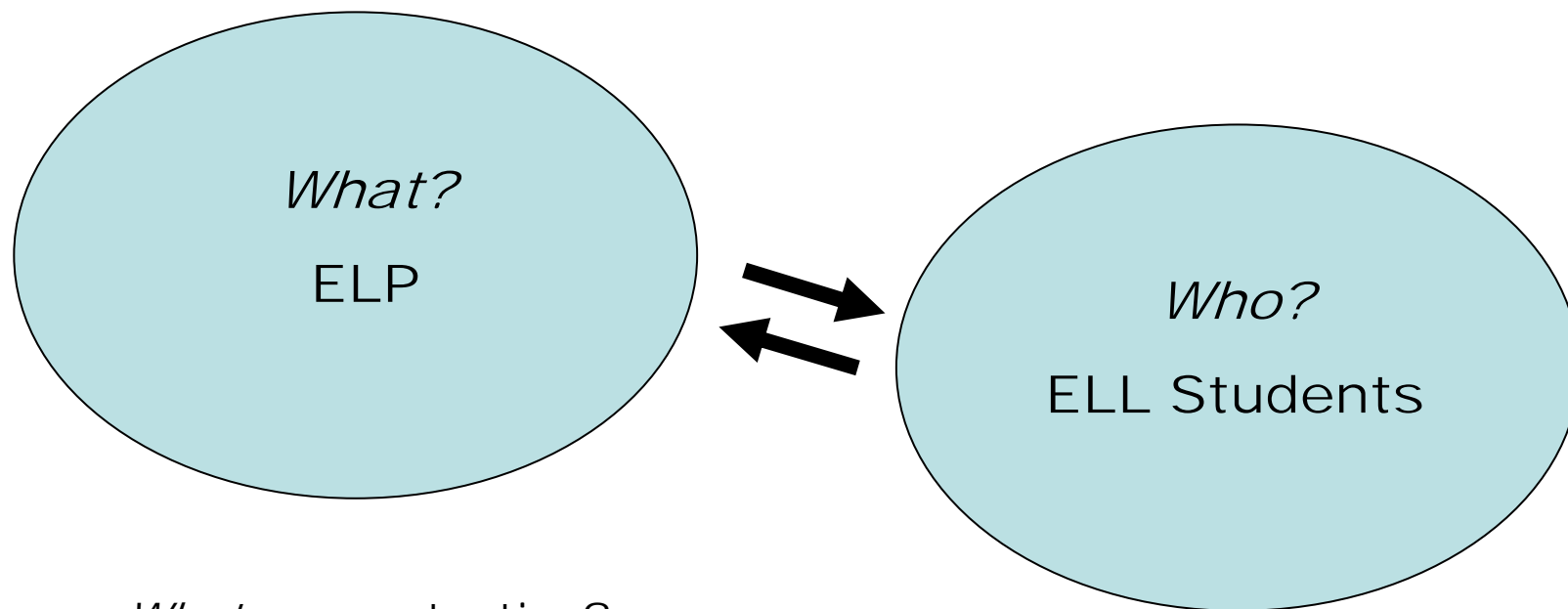
The report also summarizes all states' Title-III compliant programs that assess the proficiency of English language learners (ELL).

CTB/McGraw-Hill publishes the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) and LAS Links, currently used by more than seven states.

1. Use multiple measures for setting performance standards
2. Examine the comparability of the baseline assessment with any newly adopted ELP assessment
3. Examine the alignment of the assessment to state ELP content standards
4. Examine potential item bias across the subgroups within the ELL population
5. Use multiple criteria for assessing ELL students' level of English proficiency
6. Use ELP assessment results with multiple measures to make decisions about ELL student participation in the Title I assessment
7. Train staff to monitor ELP assessment issues
8. Incorporate a major measurement research component into programs



## Standards: Critical Categories of Considerations



- *What* are we testing?
- How do we operationalize broad expectations for ELL students?
- To what degree do our assessment systems align and link to these expectations?

- *Who* are we testing?
- How do characteristics of our ELL population relate to expectations operationalized in scores and performance levels?
- How do our policies impact who is classified?

## 1. Limited agreement on ELP definitions

- Depends on:
  - what the child brings to school every day
  - what the child's classroom experiences demand and inspire
  - what the rules for classification and program placement are
  - what people and programs are accessible to the ELL
  - what links instruction, standards, and assessment are
- As holistic development
- As the development of discrete skills (e.g., phonemic awareness)
- Importance of defining "ELP"
- Importance of vertical articulation

 **Assessments must be based on a model of language acquisition/ELP.**

## 2. ELP from Kindergarten to High School

- Psychological development
- Entry at any grade level
- Academic expectations
  - learn to read vs. read to learn
  - phonemic awareness vs. literary criticism
  - language of the disciplines/subjects
- Rules and regulations
  - classification/designation status
  - grade promotion
  - state and federal law and interpretations
- Community characteristics
- Trends in educational norms and practices

 **Changes in interpretations of ELP occur over a child's school career.**

## 3. Construct of overall ELP as multidimensional

- Language domains of listening, speaking, reading, writing plus comprehension
- Set standards by language domain or by overall proficiency score
- Second language acquisition (Cummins, 1981)
- Interactional (Bachman, 2002)
- Academic language as a medium of communication in the classroom (Gottlieb, 2002; Scarcella, 2003)
- Language at the nexus of the language used within the context of the various content areas (Bailey & Butler, 2003)
- Multidimensionality and vertical scaling (e.g., Wang, Karkee, Green, & Sykes, 2005)

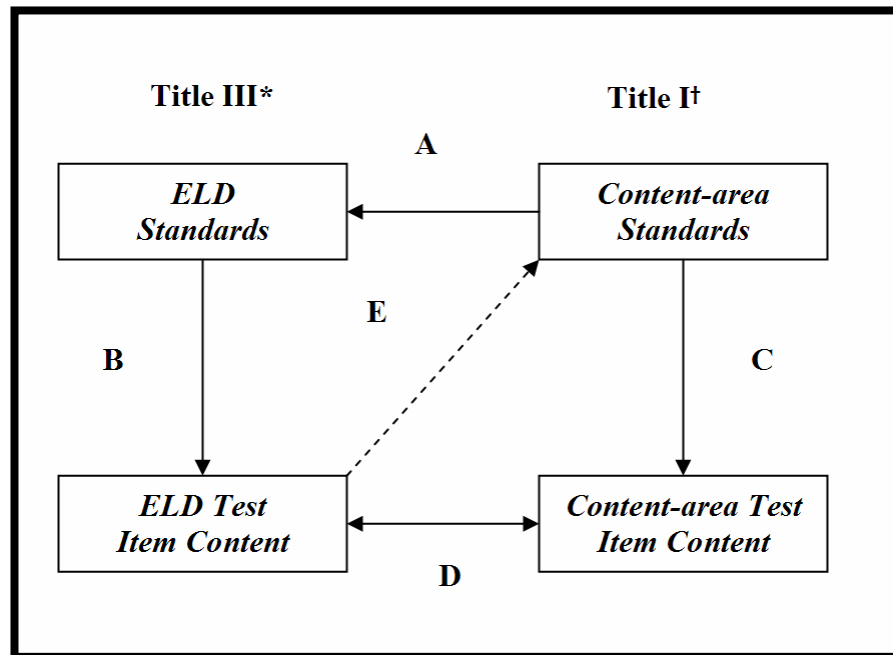
 **ELP is multidimensional *and* holistic.**

4. There may no *clear*, national consensus regarding the meaning of *academic language* and its operational implementation.

 **However, there is agreement that characteristics of language makes classroom learning accessible.**

- language used for learning academic subject matter in formal schooling contexts
- overlap between social language and language of the content areas
- strong association between literacy and academic achievement
  - specific academic terms
  - technical language
  - speech registers or discourse related to each field of study
- does not exist in a vacuum
- how well a person can apply his or her language knowledge in authentic, social and academic contexts

- Large-scale vs. formative assessments
  - The 50,000 foot view
  - On the ground
- Type of decision
  - Identification
  - Summative Assessment
  - Progress, attainment, achievement (AMAOs)
- Level of decision
  - Student
  - School or program
  - District or District Consortium
  - State



\*Title III: Language Instruction for Limited English Proficient and Immigrant Students (NCLB, 2001)

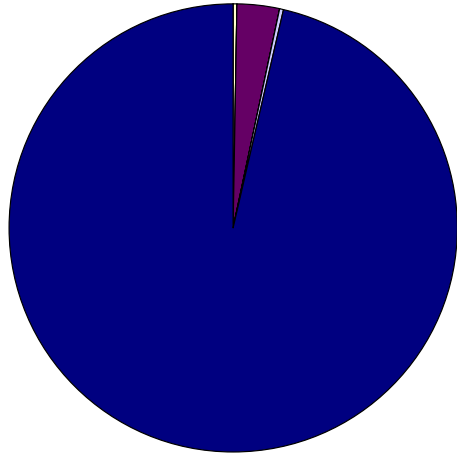
†Title I: Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged (NCLB, 2001)

Figure from *Linkage and Alignment Schema for Integration of Title III and Title I* (Bailey, Butler, & Sato, 2007.)

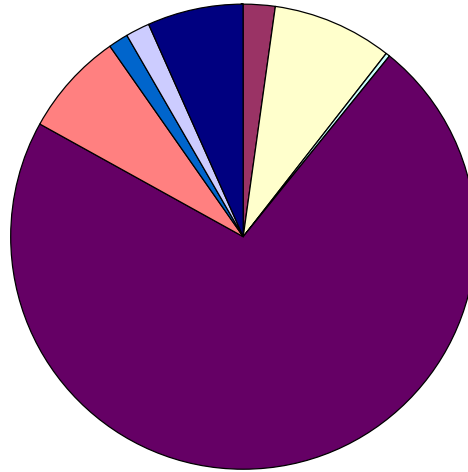
1. Subgroups within subgroups
  - Home language characteristics
  - Density of home language in the community
  - Time in the US
  - Time in the given school program
  - Socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, gender
  - other human variables...

# Example Comparison of 5 States' Reported ELL Subgroup Ethnicity Frequencies

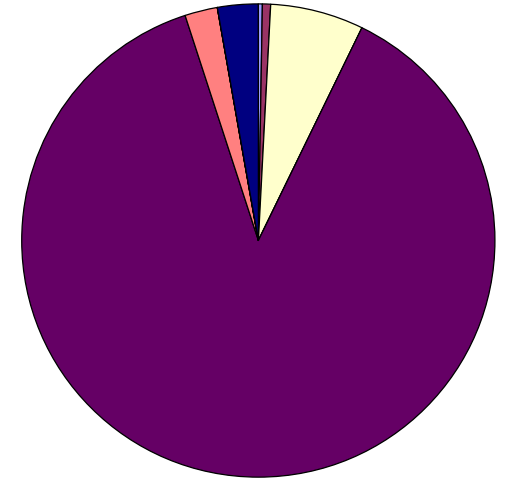
State A



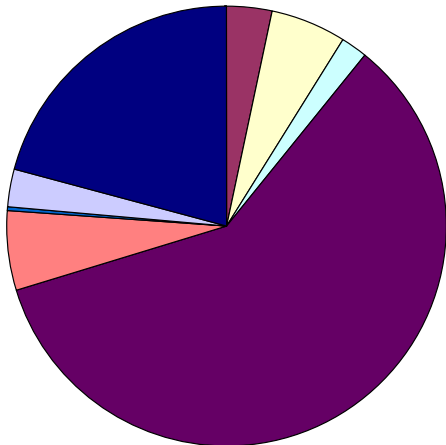
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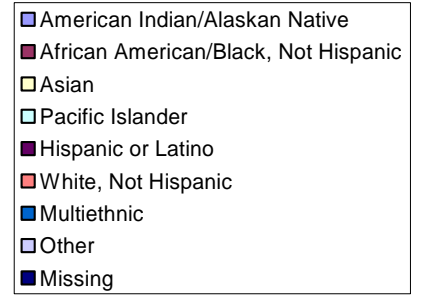
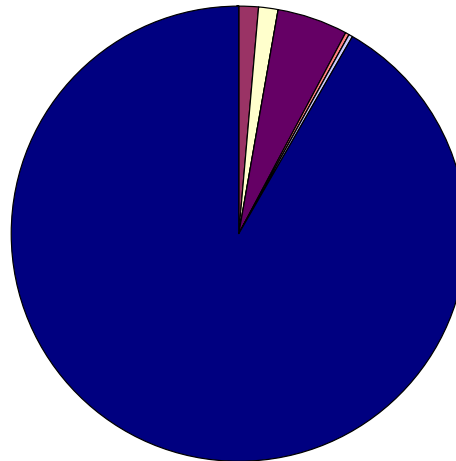
State E



State B



State D



## 2. Policy issues

- Temporary status
- EL, ELL, ESL, ESOL, LEP...
- Criteria for identification, classification, designation
- Criteria for program placement
- Status defined at the state level with variation state to state
- Federal policy and enforcement drive various state-level responses
- Dependent on policy definition
  - E.g., CA uses home language not English and ELP test score for **classification** and four criteria for **reclassification** from ELL to FEP status, including ELP test score, content area test scores, grades, and parent recommendation

## 2. Data issues

- Mobility of students and difficulty tracking their data
- Diversity of home languages and identities
- Measurement error
  - Self, teacher, parent reporting
  - Miscommunication with parents
  - Social pressures to hide status

- Alignment to ELP content standards
- Relation to academic achievement standards
- Definition of levels of performance in light of those standards (Performance level descriptors, PLD)
- Construct rationale for the type of standard setting methods used for Title-III compliant ELP assessments
- Considerations of developmental changes during language acquisition on vertical scaling and PLD
- Role of policy and definitions
- Role of impact results
- Guidance to data users regarding appropriate interpretations

1. Articulate the ELP construct clearly
2. Consider alignment of both Title I and Title III systems in setting expectations for ELP growth
3. Develop communication plans that include appropriate score and performance level interpretation guidelines
4. Be sensitive to the population characteristics of your state's students in any evaluation of growth



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