



There are many approaches to delivering language assistance to English learners (ELs). Under federal law, EL programs must be: (1) based on a sound educational theory; (2) adequately supported so that the program has a realistic chance of success; and (3) periodically evaluated and revised, if necessary. In the District of Columbia, five EL program models are commonly used, each of which is considered effective by experts in the field. These models have been designed to meet the varying needs and grade levels of students across English proficiency levels.

All EL program models provide instruction that:

- Recognizes ELs' unique needs as second-language learners, regardless of whether it is content-based or language-focused
- Includes a specific focus on literacy development
- Includes a specific focus on oral language development.

Content-based English as a Second Language (ESL) Instruction is one type of EL program model. Read this brief overview to learn about characteristics of the Content-based ESL instruction model.

### Key Features

In the content-based ESL instruction model, the ESL-certified teacher provides language instruction that uses content as a medium for building language skills. The goal of this model is for students to be prepared to meet academic achievement standards while gaining proficiency in English.

### Delivery

Content is used as a means of instruction concurrent with English language development. Lessons integrate language and content goals and objectives. To advance English language development goals, students may:

- Have a dedicated "ESL class" in the school day, or
- Receive pull-out ESL instruction to work with a specialist for short periods of time during other classes.

### Distinctions

Content-based ESL instruction does not:

- Teach English for social interaction only,
- Segregate ELs from the general education or special education classroom for long periods of the day, or
- Focus only on oral or written English.



### Benefits

- ELs can learn academic content and academic language while also making growth in the English language.

### Staffing and Scheduling

When implementing content-based ESL instruction, it is recommended to:

- Create schedules that align ESL classes and/or pull-out ESL instruction with other classes to ensure students do not miss out on enrichment or other academic classes
- Avoid segregating ELs from their non-EL peers.

### Dually-identified students

ELs with disabilities are also known as dually-identified students. The student's individualized education program (IEP) must address their language development needs. The IEP team for a dually-identified student should include staff with specialized knowledge of second language acquisition. Dually-identified students must receive services through **both** the EL program and specialized education program.

### References and Resources

- Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)  
<https://osse.dc.gov/page/english-learners-els>
- U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition  
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/resources.html>
- iColorin Colorado! <https://www.colorincolorado.org/>

For question or more information on English language acquisition professional development and technical assistance, please contact Anika Harris at [Anika.Harris@dc.gov](mailto:Anika.Harris@dc.gov).