

# Leading the Implementation of Ontario's Revised Language Curriculum

Professional Learning Resource

Winter 2024



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## Introduction

This resource has been developed to support principals and vice-principals in leading the implementation of the 2023 Ontario Language curriculum (Grades 1 to 8). The document was collaboratively developed with the support of the Ontario Ministry of Education by the Catholic Principals' Leadership Development Ontario and Principal Association Projects, the service partners for Catholic Principals' Council of Ontario (CPCO) and the Ontario Principals' Council (OPC).

This resource is explored in a three-part recorded webinar series.

- Webinar 1: A Leader’s Introduction to the Revised Language Curriculum
- Webinar 2: Supporting Diverse Learners
- Webinar 3: Assessment and Evaluation

This resource has been aligned to the Ministry of Education [Key Changes - Language, Grades 1 to 8](#) document and offers suggestions for

- principal/vice-principal moves/leadership actions
- inquiry questions and
- evidence of impact indicators.

## Key Content Areas

- [Introduction](#)
- [Vision and Goals](#)
- [Program in Language \(Strands\)](#)
- [Instructional Approaches in Language](#)
- [Cross-curricular and Integrated Learning](#)
- [Program Planning Considerations for Students with Special Education Needs](#)
- [Program Planning for English Language Learners](#)
- [The Role of the Learning Commons](#)
- [Assessment and Evaluation](#)

A selection of potential leadership moves, inquiry learning questions and evidence of impact indicators has been provided to support school leaders. Recognizing that schools and school districts are unique and diverse, leaders will want to reflect on which of these examples would best support their school planning and school team. It is important to engage in a collaborative process with staff and families to arrive at shared solutions for school communities.

A culturally responsive and relevant leadership approach

- nurtures respect for diversity, inclusive environments and affirms identities
- ensures this work is collaborative and aligns with board and school learning plan requirements
- engages staff in a critical inquiry process that is iterative and responsive to educator and student learning
- moves back and forth between inquiry questions and leadership moves in response to evidence of impact and professional reflection and educator feedback.

The suggestions for “Evidence of Impact” are intended to support collaborative discussions and planning and to help educators and leaders monitor the impact of their work.

The evidence of impact examples are not intended to be used as a “checklist,” but are offered as suggestions and can be refined and adapted to meet individual school improvement plans.



# Key Changes – Introduction

- The curriculum emphasizes the foundational knowledge and skills in both oral and written language that are necessary to support more complex skills such as critical thinking and problem solving.
- The curriculum provides educators with a comprehensive guide to supporting the development and growth of these essential knowledge and skills for every student.



## Leadership Moves

- Provide guidance on how to navigate the online curriculum site and how/where to access information (e.g., grade references, resources, glossary and available downloads).
- Engage staff in reading and reviewing the 'Program Planning' section of the curriculum (Planning Considerations, Cross-curricular and Integrated Learning, Transferable Skills).
- Gather feedback on confirmed knowledge, new learning and questions/wonderings.
- Review the curriculum [Key Changes chart \(Ministry of Education\)](#) with staff. Collect feedback to inform your next steps (areas that align with current practice and those that require new learning/a shift in practice).
- Create a literacy leadership team and co-construct an initial plan of action. Ensure the team includes voices from each division, special education, English Language Learners and Kindergarten. Leverage current teacher leadership and expertise, including the Teacher-librarian. Ensure the plan includes a cross-curricular approach to literacy.
- Consider how your current professional learning structures (e.g., staff meetings) could be maximized to support curriculum learning and implementation.
- Incorporate literacy-focused goals (student centered) in your School Learning Plan.
- Take time to review and discuss the [Effective early reading instruction: a guide for teachers \(gov.on.ca\)](#) with all primary educators.
- With the leadership team, review [Language, Grades 1 to 8: a guide for parents \(gov.on.ca\)](#) and determine initial steps to engage parents/guardians/school community.

## Sample Questions for Staff Inquiry

- Where does the new curriculum introduce the most new learning for our team? How might we **prioritize** professional learning goals within achievable steps, allowing time to reflect on shifts in practice through student learning outcomes and student feedback? What will success 'look like' and 'sound like' for our students?
- What types of learning opportunities would be most helpful for our school team to support implementation of the new curriculum?
- In what ways could we offer educator collaborative learning opportunities? What could these opportunities look like?
- How might we differentiate content and utilize principles of universal design for learning and culturally responsive and relevant practices to support/advance educator learning?
- How will we leverage the diverse expertise and knowledge of our staff to offer varied and responsive professional learning opportunities? Who else (e.g., central team) could support our school-based learning and planning?
- How will we ensure equitable and inclusive access to educator learning? How will we identify and address barriers to learning?
- How will we gather feedback from our staff to ensure the professional learning content, supports and structures are responsive to educators and their students?
- How will we ensure that parents/guardians are informed of the new curriculum changes and have opportunities to work collaboratively with our school staff as valued partners in their child's education?

## Examples of Evidence of Impact in School/Classrooms

- Collaborative structures (e.g., Literacy Lead team, divisional and grade teams) are organized.
- Educators have been provided with opportunities to share input to inform school planning and professional learning goals.
- Initial school/classroom goals are centered on improving student experiences and learning outcomes.
- Professional learning opportunities (e.g., staff meeting sessions) are scheduled with initial learning goals and success criteria determined.
- Expertise of current staff has been determined. Other supporting central staff have been contacted for consultation/support.
- **A collaborative culture of learning is emerging whereby educators are**
  - seeking opportunities to co-plan and co-learn
  - demonstrating a learning stance by asking questions, beginning to reflect on initial shifts in programming/assessment, challenging one another to consider diverse and divergent perspectives.
- Schools engage with parents/guardians throughout the new curriculum implementation.

# Key Changes – Vision and Goals

- The curriculum is designed to support students in developing the language and literacy knowledge and skills they need to succeed in education and in life and to encourage students to experience the joy and possibility that literacy learning can ignite.
- The curriculum emphasizes evidence-based, systematic and explicit instruction of foundational knowledge and skills, including oral language, word-level reading and spelling, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.
- This curriculum was informed by recommendations in the [Ontario Human Rights Commission's Right to Read inquiry report](#).



## Leadership Moves

- Engage staff in discussions that link the curriculum Vision and Goals to the recommendations from the *Right to Read* inquiry report and to your board's policies and procedures. Emphasize that learning to read is a human right while the rationale for the revised curriculum is discussed.
- Begin with a focus on "getting to know your students." With the leadership team/staff, determine what student assessment/information is available, and what further data/information is needed.
- Engage staff in a discussion of the characteristics of successful and confident language learners as detailed in the Vision and Goals. Co-construct criteria for classroom environments that will foster and support these characteristics.
- Begin an audit of current literacy resources to determine which resources align to grade level content/skills (including digital media literacy/technologies), are relevant to the interests and experiences of students and reflect the diversity of students in the classroom and Canadian and world cultures, including First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultures. Take note of any "gaps" in resources and utilize knowledge of staff/central staff to determine next steps.
- Lead staff in reviewing and discussing key research references regarding oral language and literacy learning. Provide time for educators to explore overall expectation B1 within their grade and/or divisional teams. Discuss how other strands/expectations are strongly linked to oral language skills/learning.
- Offer opportunities for educators to co-plan their literacy blocks so that instruction aligns with newly introduced requirements/content (e.g., Strand B Foundations of Language, oral language opportunities) and includes ongoing cross-curricular, integrated learning opportunities.

## Sample Questions for Staff Inquiry

- What do we know about our students that will help to inform our literacy programming and assessment? What do we need to find out? How will we gather more information and data?
- What barriers might be/are preventing our students from succeeding? How do we identify these barriers? How might we overcome/dismantle these barriers?
- What does a safe, engaging, joyful and inclusive literacy learning environment 'look like,' 'sound like' and 'feel like' for our students?
- What resources can be utilized to support identity-affirming classrooms?
- Which resources will help students develop a sense of "self" and their unique and shared identities?
- Which resources will help to foster a deeper appreciation of the diversity of the human experience and expression?
- How do our current classroom resources align to newer curriculum content (e.g., Strand B)? What is needed/missing in our currently available options?
- How will we ensure that students have opportunities to self-select materials and topics (e.g., book topics/genres)?
- How do our current instruction and assessment practices support oral language as a foundation to literacy learning? What do we need to change, modify and/or add to ensure oral language development is an intentional focus for our students?
- How will we facilitate translanguaging (students' use of their full linguistic repertoires) to enhance learning opportunities? How are first language considerations and knowledge used to advance literacy?
- How will we ensure that our literacy learning "blocks" and cross-curricular and integrated learning maximize opportunities for student learning?

## Examples of Evidence of Impact in School/Classrooms

- Educators are able to draw connections between the curriculum, *Right to Read* inquiry report and board policies and procedures specific to human rights and equity.
- An asset-based approach is evident when discussing student progress/goal setting (e.g., student strengths are being leveraged to determine instructional next steps).
- Educators are gathering a range of assessment data, both quantitative and qualitative, and using this data to inform planning decisions.
- Existing and potential barriers to student learning are recognized. Plans/strategies to remove and/or prevent barriers are in place.
- Classroom literacy learning environments are engaging and reflect a commitment to high expectations for all students.
- Literacy resources 'in use' are culturally relevant and responsive to the curriculum content, lived experiences, strengths and interests of the students.
- Students are provided with ongoing opportunities to select topics/materials that are identity-affirming and that foster their sense of self and appreciation for the diversity of human experience and expression.
- Classroom scheduling/routines include a strong emphasis on oral language instruction and assessment.
- Classroom learning goals, success criteria and descriptive feedback include a focus on oral language knowledge and skills.
- Oral, reading and writing lessons/tasks engage students in higher order thinking skills.
- Classroom literacy blocks are organized in a manner that supports the integration of the four curriculum strands.
- Students have opportunities to use their linguistic repertoire to advance learning.

# Key Changes – The Program in Language

The new strand structure is as follows:

**Strand A.** Literacy Connections and Applications

**Strand B.** Foundations of Language

This strand includes two associated learning continua; one that provides an elaboration of the mandatory learning associated with Overall Expectation B2 from Grades 1 to 4, and another that describes the progression of mandatory learning associated with Overall Expectation B3 from Grades 1 to 9

**Strand C.** Comprehension: Understanding and Responding to Texts

**Strand D.** Composition: Expressing Ideas and Creating Texts



## Examples of Evidence of Impact in School/Classrooms

### Leadership Moves

- Engage staff in reading and discussing new strands/strand structure and learning continua for Strand B. Use the glossary to support discussions about new terminology and content. Gather feedback from staff to inform next steps. Use this feedback to determine which professional learning resources/supports will be most helpful for staff learning and programming implementation.
- Review [PPM 168](#) and discuss the implications and requirements of the memorandum on teaching and learning in every grade from 1 to 8. It may be helpful to work with staff in divisional teams and include Kindergarten teams in the primary group.
- Engage staff in a discussion about the focus on explicit and systematic instruction in Strand B. Refer back to the continua for Strand B and discuss the ways in which classroom practices will need to change/evolve to reflect the focus on explicit and systematic instruction.
- Explore any centrally developed or centrally purchased resources to specifically address Strand B.
- Provide opportunities for staff to engage in co-planning to explore the development of learning units/clusters that integrate the language strands effectively.
- When discussing a specific skill/concept, engage staff in curriculum mapping to explore how the skill/concept 'in focus' extends across grades/divisions and is connected within and across language curriculum strands. \*Refer educators to the "Compare Grades" charts found in each grade for every overall expectation.
- Engage staff in co-construction of success criteria, specific to curriculum strands/expectations (e.g., unpacking an overall or specific expectation across grades/divisions).

### Sample Questions for Staff Inquiry

- What content, skills and approaches from the new curriculum connect to our current understanding and practice? In what ways will we need to refine and extend our practice?
- How will the shift in strand structure, with a focus on the interconnectedness of the strands, change our approach to short-term and long-term planning? Assessment? Evaluation?
- How will we offer literacy learning throughout the day?
- How will we ensure that Strand A takes place in the context of learning related to Strands B, C and D and be assessed and evaluated within these contexts?
- How will we use centrally purchased resources to support explicit and systematic instruction in Strand B? What additional resources and professional learning will we need?
- How will we ensure our instruction in reading includes teaching the comprehension strategies as detailed in Strand C, including drawing on prior knowledge, making and confirming predictions, monitoring comprehension and summarizing? How can these skills be integrated in other disciplines and in learning throughout the day?
- How will we ensure our instruction in reading includes critical literacy expectations as outlined in Strand C, including a focus on analyzing varying and diverse perspectives and topics? How can these skills be integrated in other disciplines and in learning throughout the day?
- What resources do we currently use in our classrooms that contribute to students' development of their sense of self and their unique shared identities? What resources do we need to enhance this work?

- Time is provided in classroom timetables for explicit, systematic instruction of foundational skills as outlined in [PPM 168](#).
- Classroom charts, displays, etc. reflect learning in foundational skills (e.g., sound walls, anchor charts, phoneme/grapheme displays).
- Classroom instruction includes ongoing opportunities for students to develop their vocabulary and increase background knowledge.
- Educators collaborate to ensure Strand A is embedded in language lessons/activities and in cross-curricular and integrated learning. This includes the use of transferable skills, digital media literacy and applications, connections and contributions.
- Students have an opportunity to develop an understanding of the contributions, lived experiences and perspectives of a diversity of individuals and communities including those in Canada by exploring the concepts of identity, self and sense of belonging through the use of culturally responsive and relevant texts.
- Students have an opportunity to identify themes explored in diverse First Nations, Metis and Inuit cultures to demonstrate an understanding of the varied identities, perspectives, relationships, legacies and ways of knowing and being and doing.
- Students learn about their rights and responsibilities when interacting online and about navigating online environments safely while managing privacy and personal data in a way that supports their well being and helps them become critical consumers of online content.
- Educators share student work that reflects a focus on reading for meaning and the application of comprehension skills/strategies and critical thinking when responding to reading.

- Explore Strands C and D and consider the ways in which instructional practice, classroom resources, planning and assessment will need to evolve in light of the changes to the curriculum for reading and writing.
- Unpack Strands C and D with a focus on oral communication, ensuring staff see the priority given to oral communication by highlighting the research related to oral language and literacy.
- Engage staff in a discussion about the ways in which printing, handwriting and word processing will be included in language instruction as outlined in the curriculum.

- How does our current approach to writing instruction need to evolve/change to help us address all the elements in Strand D Composition: Expressing Ideas and Creating Texts: Developing Ideas and Organizing Content, Creating Texts and Publishing, Presenting and Reflecting?

- Time is provided in classroom schedules for instruction in printing, handwriting and word processing as outlined in Strand D of the curriculum.
- Students use the writing process while composing and creating a variety of authentic and relevant texts that support student agency.
- Professional learning includes ongoing opportunities to moderate/discuss student thinking/tasks.
- Professional learning sessions include ongoing opportunities to share student voice throughout the learning process (e.g., literacy responses, feedback on their learning, student goal setting).

# Key Changes – Instructional Approaches in Language that Honour the Lived Experiences of Students

- Evidence-based systematic and explicit instruction
- Multimodal literacy instruction
- Oral communication instructional practices
- Universal Design for Learning and differentiated instruction
- The tiered approach to language and literacy instruction

## Leadership Moves

- Work with staff to ensure a common and aligned understanding of the instructional approaches that are at the heart of the curriculum. This includes differentiated instruction, universal design for learning, a tiered approach to instruction and Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy (CRRP). Organize professional learning opportunities to help staff develop an understanding of these instructional approaches if needed.
- Engage divisional teams in considering what oral communication instructional practice and multimodal learning ‘look like’ and ‘sound like’ in the classroom.
- Organize a professional learning session focused on multimodal learning. Help staff understand the principles of multimodal learning and the ways in which this approach can engage and enhance student learning.
- With the entire staff, consider the emphasis on CRRP in this curriculum. Discuss the definition of CRRP and ensure staff have a common understanding of this pedagogical practice.
- Plan for professional learning focused on CRRP for all staff and leaders. Focus on the imperative of relevant and responsive cultural pedagogies informing instructional planning and programming.



## Sample Questions for Staff Inquiry

- How will we leverage our students’ prior knowledge, lived experiences and languages to create engaging and authentic literacy learning opportunities? What will it ‘look like’ to integrate student voice and choice?
- How will we intentionally differentiate instruction in language, ensuring tasks are respectful and that all students have access to the tools and technology they need?
- What current practices support differentiated instruction and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) in our classrooms? What practices do we need to refine/adapt? What practices do we need to adopt?
- How do we currently employ oral communication instructional practice and multimodal learning? What practices do we need to refine/adapt? What practices do we need to adopt? What practices do we need to abandon?
- What are the available supports in our school to ensure a tiered approach to instruction? What supports do we need to refine/adapt or need to adopt? What supports are no longer proving to be successful or in keeping with the new language curriculum?
- What texts and resources will support our efforts to provide culturally responsive and relevant pedagogy in all our classrooms? How might we share resources? What additional resources need to be added to our classroom and school library?

## Examples of Evidence of Impact in School/Classrooms

- Instruction is differentiated: e.g. guided reading groups, literacy tasks and activities are differentiated by content/skills, classroom library is identity-affirming and reflects strengths, instructional needs and interests of students.
- Classroom tasks offer choice and graduated levels of challenge.
- Student progress is frequently monitored, and early and ongoing assessment data is used to identify skill gaps and determine the appropriate level and intensity of instruction.
- Assessment data is used in school team discussions to inform decisions about tiered support.
- The school provides Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 instruction to ensure the needs of all students are met.
- Students have opportunities to use and develop their oral communication skills throughout the day and across strands in language and in various disciplines.
- Students have access to multimodal literacy learning opportunities.
- Students see themselves in the learning and have opportunities to learn in ways that are connected to their diverse identities, histories and backgrounds.
- Instruction includes opportunities for students to build on their own ideas, questions and interests.
- Students have access to enjoy reading a wide variety of texts and learning about diverse identities, abilities, experiences, families, cultures and communities.

# Key Changes – Cross-Curricular and Integrated Learning

Updated cross-curricular learning examples to align with recently released curricula, including mathematics and science and technology.



## Leadership Moves

- Take time to define and discuss each term (cross-curricular and integrated learning) with staff.
- Provide time for grade/divisional teams to generate ideas/plans for culturally responsive and relevant pedagogical (CRRP) approaches to cross-curricular and integrated learning.
- Invite educators to share and discuss examples of classroom lessons/tasks that reflect CRRP and cross-curricular and/or integrated learning.
- Discuss and/or co-construct samples of learning goals and success criteria that reflect integrated learning.
- Provide time for educators to share and discuss examples of culturally responsive and relevant assessment tasks or approaches specific to integrated learning.

## Sample Questions for Staff Inquiry

- How can we offer ongoing opportunities for students to build literacy within cross-curricular and integrated learning approaches?
- What opportunities can we provide within and across subjects that honour students' diverse experiences and background knowledge to increase students' vocabulary skills?
- Based on our current student assessment data, which language skills require further practice and support through cross-curricular and integrated learning?
- How will we embed a focus on transferable skills within both cross-curricular and integrated learning?
- How will we ensure fair, transparent and equitable assessment and evaluation practices for each student and particularly those historically disadvantaged?

## Examples of Evidence of Impact in School/Classrooms

- Classroom lessons, tasks and units include both cross-curricular and integrated learning opportunities.
- Learning goals, success criteria and descriptive feedback reflect each subject when integrated learning is being implemented.
- Lessons across all subjects/grades provide culturally responsive and relevant opportunities for students to develop new vocabulary and to deepen knowledge.
- Transferable skills are embedded within both cross-curricular and integrated learning opportunities.
- Culturally responsive and relevant assessment tasks for integrated learning provide students with varied and ongoing opportunities to demonstrate learning across all selected curricular expectations/subjects.



# Key Changes – Program Planning for Students with Special Education Needs

Added guiding principles and subject-specific instructional strategies for students with special education needs.

## Leadership Moves

- Review and discuss the programming considerations specific to [students with special education needs and human rights, equity and inclusive education](#). With staff, review the research-based beliefs that should guide all program planning and assessment decisions.
- Plan opportunities for early and ongoing parent/guardian engagement in decisions specific to their child’s individualized literacy programming considerations.
- Take time to review key terms specific to programming considerations including universal design for learning, CRRP, principles of inclusive education, *accommodations, modifications and alternative expectations*.
- Take time to review the elements of an effective language and literacy environment and program as outlined in the curriculum. Develop a shared understanding of the importance of both critical thinking and executive functioning.
- Using the link provided within the curriculum section of **Considerations for Program Planning**, engage staff in reviewing key sections of [Learning for all: a guide to effective assessment and instruction for all students, kindergarten to Grade 12 | ontario.ca](#). Pay attention to section 2 (Instructional Approaches).
- Revisit the curriculum section specific to the tiered approaches [Language \(gov.on.ca\)](#). Emphasize the importance of implementing evidence-informed instruction within tier one to decrease the need for tier two and three supports. Make connections to the OHRC *Right to Read Inquiry report* recommendations to help guide this discussion.
- Create structures/opportunities for educators who share responsibilities for specific student’s programming and assessment to collaborate with central staff to develop, review and discuss Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals specific to literacy.

## Sample Questions for Staff Inquiry

- What literacy assessment information/data is available for our students with special education needs? What further information is needed? How will we gather this information?
- How will we ensure an asset-based approach to literacy instruction and assessment/evaluation?
- How will we ensure that literacy instruction and assessment is intentionally anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory and takes a student’s intersectionality of identities into account?
- Are our current tools and strategies culturally relevant and appropriate? What tools are we employing to identify, address and eliminate biases in current text selection and assessment tools?
- How will we enhance our approach to building critical thinking and executive functioning to ensure both are supported in our planning for students with special education needs?
- How will the ongoing assessment of foundational knowledge and skills of students with special education needs inform precise instruction and responsive tiered support?
- How will we leverage differentiated instruction, universal design for learning and tiered support to create inclusive classroom environments for students with special education needs?
- What will it ‘look like’ and ‘sound like’ to provide instruction that draws on the valuable funds of knowledge and the various identities, abilities, resources and experiences that all students bring to their language and literacy learning?

## Examples of Evidence of Impact in School/Classrooms

- Educators are utilizing evidence-based assessment strategies and tools to deepen their understanding of individual student strengths, interests and needs.
- Ongoing assessment data is informing classroom programming and the development of IEPs.
- School structures are ‘in place’ to facilitate ongoing collaborative planning and discussions specific to students with special education needs.
- Classroom literacy programming reflects accommodations, modifications and/or alternative expectations, as noted within each student’s IEP.
- Strong tier one literacy instruction, aligned to evidence-based foundational skills, is evident in all classroom programs.
- All students have access to tier two or three instruction as needed, including students who are not currently Identified and do not have an IEP.
- Classroom and individualized learning goals, success criteria and descriptive feedback reflect a culture of high expectations for each and every student.
- Classroom lessons/tasks incorporate opportunities for student use of varying language and communication modalities.



- With staff, explore available assessment tools and strategies to guide decisions specific to literacy accommodations, modifications and/or alternative expectations. Gather feedback on what further assessment tools or strategies are needed.
- Gather data (grade, divisional, whole school) specific to students with special education needs. Examine this data to determine patterns that may support next steps for educator professional learning and/or resource selections.
- Engage staff in identifying existing and potentially discriminatory and oppressive practices that must be removed/prevented to ensure all students have access to high quality literacy learning opportunities.

- How will we leverage the varying language and communication modalities of our students (e.g., Braille, American Sign Language)?
- What tools/resources are helping our students (e.g., augmentative and alternative communications systems, assistive technology, etc.)? What is needed/missing?
- What professional learning and/or resources are needed to support educators in planning and implementing universal design strategies, differentiated instruction, classroom literacy accommodations, modifications and/or alternative expectations?
- How can we maximize available school and/or central staff to support students requiring tier two and three literacy instruction?
- How can we create opportunities for staff to collaborate on the development, implementation and monitoring of IEP goals/strategies specific to literacy learning?
- How will we build upon family and community partnerships to ensure that what the student is learning at school is relevant and can be practised and reinforced beyond the classroom? What new community partnerships may be needed to support/enhance student learning?

- Students have access to the tools and strategies needed to support their literacy learning (e.g., assistive devices, computer options, large-size font, sound walls, visual dictionaries, etc.).
- Student data and staff feedback is informing professional learning opportunities specific to supporting literacy learning for students with special education needs.
- School and central staff expertise has been maximized to support educators and students.
- Ongoing opportunities have been established/implemented to build partnerships with parents/guardians of students with special education needs.
- Ongoing needs assessments have been established to support new community partnership developments to enhance learning for students with special education needs.

# Key Changes – Program for English Language Learners (ELLs) and English Literacy Development (ELD) Programs



Added key considerations for research-informed pedagogy to support students who are culturally and linguistically diverse.



## Leadership Moves

## Sample Questions for Staff Inquiry

## Examples of Evidence of Impact in School/Classrooms

- Engage staff in reviewing and discussing the programming considerations specific to English Language Learners [Program Planning \(gov.on.ca\)](#). Take time to clarify the different designations (ELL and ELD) and the information on program adaptations.
- Review new/unknown vocabulary specific to this section of the curriculum. Take time to access the glossary and/or built in links to unpack key terms (e.g., transanguaging, metalinguistic awareness, cross-linguistic learning).
- Work with staff to audit current school and classroom literacy resources. Ensure all resources/texts 'in use' are culturally responsive and relevant.
- Ask staff to explore the list of strategies that help scaffold learning for ELLs [Language \(gov.on.ca\)](#). Gather feedback on new learning and questions/next steps. Use this feedback to guide upcoming professional learning.
- Depending on the knowledge and experience of staff, you may wish to explore other Ministry of Education resources to build educator knowledge and practice specific to ELLs. Within Considerations for Program Planning, access links as needed. [Program Planning \(gov.on.ca\)](#).
- Revisit the curriculum section for Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy [Program Planning \(gov.on.ca\)](#). Discuss how CRRP supports all students, including ELLs.
- Gather data (grade, divisional, whole school) specific to ELLs. Examine this data to determine patterns which may support next steps for educator professional learning and/or resource selections.

- What literacy assessment information/data is available to guide programming decisions for ELLs? What additional information is needed? How will this information inform decisions regarding program accommodations and/or modifications?
- How will students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds support their English-language development and literacy learning and become a cultural asset in the classroom/school? School community?
- What will it 'look like' and 'sound like' to employ literacy pedagogy and practice that is multimodal and facilitates transanguaging?
- Which differentiated instructional and assessment strategies are positively impacting English-language development/literacy learning for ELLs? Which additional approaches do we need to adopt?
- How will we ensure that our instruction, assessment and resource/text selections are culturally relevant and responsive?
- Which curriculum-identified scaffolding approaches will be implemented in our classroom instruction? Which current practices will need to be refined? Abandoned?
- How will cross-curricular and integrated learning opportunities further support students' vocabulary development (everyday, academic and domain-specific)?
- What professional learning and/or resources are needed to support educators in planning and implementing literacy programming for ELLs? Identifying gaps and needs in programming?

- Educators are utilizing evidence-based assessment strategies and tools that reflect identity-affirming pedagogies; these tools and strategies deepen educator understanding of individual student strengths, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, interests and learning needs and uphold a commitment to affirming each students' diverse identities, inclusive of the intersectionality across student identities.
- Assessment data (including, but not limited to, an initial assessment for newcomers) is informing classroom programming.
- Classroom programming incorporates multimodal learning opportunities (including oral, visual, aural, spatial, gestural).
- Classroom instruction facilitates transanguaging and incorporates oral language use/practice in strategically planned activities (e.g., think-pair-share, turn-and-talk).
- The languages multilingual students bring into the classroom are seen/used as assets and supportive contributors to English literacy and language development.
- Vocabulary development (everyday, academic, subject-specific domain) is prioritized within literacy programming and in other cross-curricular and integrated learning opportunities.
- Students are offered a range of differentiated tools and resources to support their language development and literacy learning (e.g., visuals, digital tools, identity texts).
- Classroom instruction, assessment and resource selection/use is culturally responsive and relevant.
- Classroom instruction is designed to scaffold students' language development and literacy learning through responsive and differentiated approaches.

- Provide opportunities for educators to collaborate with English as a Second Language (ESL) and ELD teachers and central support staff, as available, to discuss/monitor language development and literacy programming and assessment approaches/next steps.
- Plan opportunities for parent/guardian engagement specific to supporting students' literacy development. Consider how to ensure opportunities are accessible to all parents/guardians. Seek support from central staff as needed to offer multilingual resources and support.

- How can we maximize available school and/or central staff to support language development and literacy learning for ELLs?
- How will we build upon family and community partnerships to help support students' English-language proficiency/literacy learning?

- School structures are 'in place' to facilitate ongoing collaborative planning and discussions specific to ELLs.
- Student data and staff feedback is informing professional learning opportunities specific to supporting ELLs.
- School and central staff expertise has been maximized to support educators and their students.
- Ongoing opportunities have been established/implemented to build partnerships with parents/guardians of ELLs.
- Ongoing needs assessments have been established to support new community partnership developments (e.g. school settlement workers, local newcomer organizations, etc.) to enhance learning for ELLs.

# Key Changes – The Role of the Learning Commons

Updated language to reflect the importance of the library learning commons and teacher-librarians.



## Leadership Moves

- Review and discuss programming considerations specific to the role of the learning commons [Program Planning \(gov.on.ca\)](http://www.gov.on.ca) with staff, keeping in mind students who have been historically disadvantaged or advantaged.
- Consider how to maximize timetabling opportunities to ensure each student/class has access to the learning commons and teacher-librarian (where available).
- Reflect on the current set-up/structure of the learning commons with teacher-librarian and/or literacy leads. Consider further strategies, as needed, to increase accessibility and use (e.g., increasing smaller group working/meeting areas, varying furniture options/set-ups).
- Review current programs, resources and integrated technologies available in the learning commons and determine alignment to the revised curriculum. Gather feedback on what is missing/needed to support student learning through a lens of CRRP.
- Create opportunities for co-planning (educators and teacher-librarian). Emphasize the importance of cross-curricular and integrated learning, and the development of information literacy, transferable skills and research skills.
- Initiate/share a review process for current learning commons resources, including available text selections. Refer to board policies and procedures and the guiding questions in “Selecting Texts and Resources” found in the Program Planning section of the language curriculum to guide this process/review.
- Build opportunities to facilitate and support collaboration in accessing funds of knowledge across diverse communities.

## Sample Questions for Staff Inquiry

- How will the school timetable maximize opportunities for educators and the teacher-librarian to co-plan and co-teach to provide rich literacy experiences for students?
- How will the lessons/opportunities within the learning commons connect to and extend the learning in the classrooms?
- When collaboratively planning literacy-focused learning opportunities in the learning commons, how will universal design for learning, differentiated instruction and culturally relevant and responsive pedagogy inform instruction and assessment?
- How can we support students to become independent, thoughtful and critical researchers? Which tools, resources and approaches are working? What next steps are needed?
- Which tools and resources are needed in the learning commons to support language and literacy learning?
- To what extent are the current learning commons collections/resources culturally responsive and relevant, accessible, diverse, inclusive and rich in Canadian content; as well as Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, Inuit) content? What needs to be added? Removed?
- How will we support all students in developing a love of reading for learning and pleasure?
- What tools and resources are needed to further develop students’ digital literacy skills and transferable skills?
- How can we maximize opportunities for cross-curricular and integrated learning through partnerships between educators and the teacher-librarian?

## Examples of Evidence of Impact in School/Classrooms

- Teacher-librarian (where available) collaborates with classroom and subject-specific educators to co-plan and co-teach to provide rich literacy experiences for students, including lessons/tasks that offer students authentic learning opportunities and promote the development of research skills.
- Opportunities provided within the learning commons support equitable access of information for all students. Students develop information literacy skills including the ability to evaluate the relevance, quality and credibility of information and to use it with responsibility and imagination.
- Teacher-librarian works in collaboration with other staff and students to help nurture and develop students’ love of reading for learning and for pleasure.
- Teacher-librarian assists students in accessing information and selecting relevant and appropriate texts and media resources that connect to their interests.
- Teacher-librarian works in collaboration with others (e.g., school literacy lead team, central staff, students, parents/guardians) to develop learning commons collections/resources that are culturally responsive and relevant, accessible, diverse, inclusive and rich in Canadian content.
- Technology is incorporated into the learning commons to assist students in accessing information (e.g., credible web-based content), building communication and collaboration skills (e.g., working with peers in collaborative documents) and developing critical thinking skills.
- Community partnerships are built between teacher-librarian and the school community (e.g., families, Indigenous communities, community organizations and affinities) to access community funds of knowledge in a variety of traditions (oral, story-telling, music, etc.)

# Key Changes – Assessment and Evaluation

Revised the achievement chart to reflect new learning areas in this curriculum.  
Evaluation is reflected in one overall mark/grade.

## Leadership Moves

- Review [Growing success: assessment, evaluation, and reporting in Ontario's schools, kindergarten to Grade 12 | ontario.ca](#) focusing on sections specific to culturally responsive and relevant assessment and evaluation and the fundamental principles [Assessment and Evaluation \(gov.on.ca\)](#). Discuss how the seven fundamental principles will be reflected in classroom and school practices.
- Review language curriculum section *Assessment and Evaluation of Student Achievement Language (gov.on.ca)*. Discuss updates to the achievement chart. Unpack the terms/information specific to criteria, descriptors, four categories of knowledge and skills and the four levels of achievement. Examine current classroom assessments to determine (and increase as needed) alignment with the four categories of achievement.
- Review the Language addendum, grades 1 to 8, 2023 [Growing success: assessment, evaluation, and reporting in Ontario's schools, kindergarten to Grade 12 | ontario.ca](#). Discuss necessary shifts in classroom and school practices in response to one overall reporting mark/grade. Gather staff questions to inform upcoming professional learning opportunities.
- Refer to [Language \(gov.on.ca\)](#), focusing on the information specific to curriculum expectations. Review/discuss:
  - organizational features (e.g., subheadings/numbered headings)
  - structure/purpose of specific and overall expectations, consistency in overall expectations across grades and
  - progression in knowledge and skill development.
- Revisit the language program (integrated approach for strands A to D). Discuss the implications for assessment and evaluation. Provide time for educators to co-plan learning goals, success criteria and assessment tasks/opportunities that prioritize integration across language strands and/or other integrated subjects.

## Sample Questions for Staff Inquiry

- How will we ensure that assessment and evaluation practices are fair, transparent, culturally responsive and relevant?
- What will it 'look like' and 'sound like' to incorporate ongoing opportunities for student voice and choice within assessment? How will this approach foster student agency?
- How will we engage students in co-constructing the whole class and individualized learning goals and success criteria? How will we support students to act upon descriptive feedback?
- How will we ensure that literacy assessment and evaluation is intentionally anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory and takes a student's intersectionality of identities into account?
- How will our literacy assessment and evaluation practices reflect and affirm students' lived experiences, strengths and knowledge of concepts and skills?
- How will literacy assessment and evaluation effectively encompass all four categories of the achievement chart?
- What will it 'look like' and 'sound like' to co-construct learning goals and success criteria that integrate expectations from the four language strands and/or integrate other subjects?
- When and how will descriptive feedback be incorporated into assessment practices? What processes/approaches will support each student to understand, reflect upon and apply descriptive feedback so that there is improved learning and engagement?
- How will students be engaged in the process of setting goals for learning?
- How will we ensure an asset-based approach to literacy assessment and evaluation?

## Examples of Evidence of Impact in School/Classrooms

- Learning goals and success criteria are co-created on a regular basis, are visible and clearly articulate curriculum-focused concepts and skills in 'student-friendly' language.
- Educators use a balance of approaches for assessment including "for," "as" and "of" learning. Assessment incorporates ongoing opportunities for student voice and choice and builds student agency.
- Classroom and individualized learning goals, success criteria and descriptive feedback reflect a culture of high expectations for each and every student.
- Students receive ongoing and individualized descriptive feedback to inform their learning/goal setting. Teacher-led and peer feedback are part of ongoing classroom practices.
- Classroom assessment and evaluation is varied in nature, provides multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate their learning and offers opportunities for students to self-select strategies and tools (including conversations, observations and products).
- Educators are utilizing evidence-based assessment and evaluation strategies that reflect identity-affirming pedagogies; these strategies deepen educator understanding of individual student strengths, linguistic and cultural backgrounds, interests and learning needs and uphold a commitment to affirming each students' diverse identities.
- Classroom assessment and evaluation includes student access to/use of multiple modalities (e.g. assistive devices, computer options, visual dictionaries, oral discussion).



- Plan/organize school structures that provide ongoing opportunities for educators to discuss student assessment data (as appropriate) to determine next steps for classroom programming, including decisions specific to tiered approaches for instruction. Leverage the expertise of special education teachers/central staff to help guide decisions/next steps.
- Discuss differentiated assessment strategies/approaches, including the triangulation of conversations, observations and products. Engage staff in co-planning differentiated classroom assessments designed to build student agency through student voice and choice.
- Review the overall programming section specific to culturally responsive and relevant assessment and evaluation [Assessment and Evaluation \(gov.on.ca\)](#). Discuss (and model as lead learner) the need for ongoing self-examination of biases regarding classroom assessment and evaluation practices. Use the guiding questions from this section of the curriculum to lead staff learning, reflection and planning/next steps.
- Emphasize the importance of having a deep knowledge of every student, as a foundation for culturally responsive assessment and evaluation practices. Determine what is known that will guide assessment decisions, and what further information/data is needed.
- Review human rights, equity and inclusive education curriculum guidelines [Program Planning \(gov.on.ca\)](#). Lead conversations specific to identifying current and potential barriers within assessment and evaluation practices. Determine next steps to remove and/or prevent barriers that limit student learning/achievement. Consider how to prioritize universal design for learning principles and differentiated instruction.
- Engage staff in reviewing current assessment tools and resources. Determine suitability of current tools and resources and areas of need. Gather feedback to inform next steps. Consult with board staff regarding tools and resources for new curriculum content (including Strand B).
- With the leadership team, determine initial steps to provide parents/guardians and the school community with information specific to language assessment and evaluation changes.
- Are all classroom assessment tasks accessible to, and inclusive of, all learners? How do we know?
- What next steps are needed to differentiate assessment (including conversations, observations and products) and increase student voice and choice?
- What classroom tools/resources are needed to ensure all students can connect to prior learning and integrate new concepts and skills?
- How will ongoing assessment of foundational knowledge inform precise instruction and responsive tiered support?
- What professional learning and/or resources are needed to support educators in planning and implementing differentiated, culturally responsive and relevant literacy assessment and evaluation?
- What available information/data is meaningful and will inform instructional decisions, promote student engagement and improve student learning?
- How do educator biases influence decisions about what tasks or activities are chosen for assessment and evaluation purposes? What steps need to be taken to build critical consciousness and mitigate negative impacts of educator bias?
- What do we know (or think we know) about each student's language and literacy skills and development? What do we need to find out? How will we gather this information? What new learning is needed for educators to support this data/information gathering process?
- What needs to be 'in practice' in both school and classroom communities to ensure each student feels safe and supported to take risks and share their learning?
- How could we maximize opportunities to share and discuss student assessment data? What processes/approaches will support educators to deepen their understanding of student strengths and assets to support next steps specific to language and literacy learning?
- How will we ensure that parents/guardians are informed of the changes to assessment and evaluation for language and have opportunities to work collaboratively with school staff as valued partners in their child's education?
- Classroom assessment and evaluation reflects and affirms students' lived experiences, strengths and knowledge of concepts and skills.
- Existing and potential barriers to student assessment and evaluation are recognized. Plans/strategies to remove and/or prevent barriers.
- Assessment and evaluation reflects the integration of the four language strands along with connections to the four categories of achievement.
- Evaluation of student learning reflects the most consistent level of achievement connected to overall expectations and the achievement chart categories. Comments for language include significant strengths and next steps for each student and reference foundational skills for reading and writing. Comments may describe growth in learning and reference specific language strands.
- School structures facilitate ongoing collaborative team discussions specific to students' literacy assessment/learning and next steps for instruction (including decisions specific to tiered approaches).
- Educators are using assessment data to monitor student progress, provide timely and specific feedback, determine next steps/scaffolds in response to student learning needs.
- Educators engage in ongoing text selection and assessment and evaluation task reviews using an anti-oppressive, culturally responsive approach, actively co-reflecting on educator biases.
- Student data and staff moderation and feedback is informing professional learning opportunities specific to culturally responsive assessment and evaluation practices.
- School and central staff expertise, student and parent/guardian voice/input has been maximized to support educator learning/implementation of strategies and approaches specific to assessment and evaluation practices.
- School engages with parents/guardians in discussions specific to language curriculum assessment and evaluation to gain insights and learn from families.