newsela Threads & Themes

ELD Typology Guide

Practical scaffolds and decision tools for differentiating ELD instruction across learner profiles and lesson moments

Table of Contents

Introduction **3**

Section Navigation 3

Core Design Principles 3

A Note on Reclassification and LTEL Prevention 3

Section 1: Before the Lesson: Know Your Learners **5**

1A—Introduction to Linguistically Diverse Profiles (Typologies) 5

1B—Typology Quick-ID 5

1C—Scaffold Selector 5

Section 2: Lesson Launch / Language Objective Launch (First 5-10 min) **7**

2A—Translanguaging Invitation by Typology 7

2B—Discussion Launch Frames (Think-Pair-Share) 7

Section 3: During Reading / Close Read & Annotation **8**

3A—Sentence Study Protocol 8

3B—Close Read & Annotation Frames 8

Section 4: During Discussion / Structured Oral Rehearsal **9**

4A—Structured Oral Rehearsal & Discussion Protocol 9

4B—Reciprocal Teaching Roles 9

4C—Frames for Building on Peer Ideas 9

Section 5: During Writing **11**

5A—Modeled Writing & Writing Frame Progression by Typology 11

5B—Introduce New Words Using Morphemes (Morphology Bridge) 11

5C—Exit Writing Check (Look Back) 11

Section 6: Formative Language Output / Progress Monitoring **12**

6A—Formative Language Output 12

6B—Language Reflection & Progress Tracking 12

6C—Reclassification Readiness Checklist 12

Section 7: When You're Unsure: Dialect vs. Disability **13**

7A—Dialect vs. Disability Diagnostic Matrix 13

7B—Contrastive Analysis Frame (Not Correction) 13

7C—When to Consider a Referral for Special Education Evaluation 13

Section 8: 120-Day Newcomer Pathway **14**

8A—Four-Phase Language Development Pathway 14

8B—Phase-by-Phase Language Benchmarks 14

8C—SIFE-Specific Considerations (Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education) 14

8D—Days 1-15 Intensive Launch Plan 15

8E—120-Day Tracking Rubric 15

Introduction

The Newsela *Threads & Themes* ELD Typology Guide provides just-in-time typology-based scaffolds, sentence frames, and decision tools – to help teachers differentiate instruction for every English learner profile across reading, discussion, writing, and formative assessment. This includes:

- Typology Quick-ID tables
- Scaffold selectors matched to typology and ELD proficiency level (Emerging, Expanding, Bridging)
- Printable sentence frames, protocols, and decision trees keyed to the program's named instructional routines (Sentence Study, Structured Oral Rehearsal, Formative Language Output, and others) across reading, discussion, writing, and formative assessment moments
- A 120-Day Newcomer Pathway with phase-by-phase language development benchmarks and SIFE-specific supports
- A Dialect vs. Disability Diagnostic Matrix

Section Navigation

Section	Lesson Moment	Focus
Section 1	Before the Lesson: Know Your Learners	Planning
Section 2	Lesson Launch (First 5-10 min)	Launch
Section 3	During Reading / Close Read & Annotation	Reading
Section 4	During Discussion / Structured Oral Rehearsal	Discussion
Section 5	During Writing	Writing
Section 6	Formative Language Output / Progress Monitoring	Exit
Section 7	When You're Unsure: Dialect vs. Disability	Diagnostic
Section 8	120-Day Newcomer Pathway	Newcomer

Core Design Principles

1. **Linguistic assets, not deficits.** Every typology is framed as a set of linguistic assets that instruction should build from, not correct away.
2. **Equity in identification.** The guide provides explicit tools for distinguishing between dialect features, L1 (first or native language) transfer patterns, and indicators of potential language or learning disabilities.
3. **Designated and Integrated ELD, clearly distinguished.** Maintains a clear distinction between Designated and Integrated ELD. The Designated ELD Core Rule: if students cannot produce longer, clearer, or more academic sentences at the end of the lesson than at the beginning, the lesson does not meet the threshold.

A Note on Reclassification and LTEL Prevention

California law requires four reclassification criteria: ELPAC Overall Advanced, Classroom Teacher Evaluation, Curriculum Assessment, and Parent Opinion. This guide supports reclassification readiness by providing typology-differentiated instruction that accelerates academic language development, particularly for LTEL students. Regular progress monitoring (Section 6) tracks movement toward reclassification benchmarks.

Section 1: Before the Lesson: Know Your Learners

1A—Introduction to Linguistically Diverse Profiles (Typologies)

Newcomer (0-3 years in U.S. schools)

Silent period is normal. Primary moves: visual anchoring, home language support, partner scaffolding, protected access to grade-level content.

LTEL (6–7+ years in U.S. schools)

Stronger conversational than academic written English. Primary moves: oral-to-written bridging, explicit clause-building, metalinguistic focus, gradual release.

Dually Identified

Requires coordination between the language development plan and disability support plan. Primary moves: multimodal entry, extended processing time.

SEL (Standard English Learner)

Home language is a recognized variety of English (African American English (AAE), Chicano English, etc.). Primary moves: contrastive analysis (not correction), code-switching as a skill, asset-based recasting. Under no circumstances should home variety be treated as an error.

1B—Typology Quick-ID

Signal You Observe	Likely Typology	What It Means	First Move
Very limited oral output; copying/pointing in response; silent period	Newcomer	0-3 years in U.S. schools; may have strong L1 (first or native language) skills	Pair with proficient peer; use visual anchors; honor home language
Conversational fluency but struggles with complex syntax; avoids writing	LTEL	6-7+ years in U.S. schools; oral >> written; academic gap	Oral rehearsal before writing; explicit grammar focus; partner reading
Decoding struggles; inconsistent across tasks; processing delays	EL + IEP	Language development + disability support needed; both plans matter	Coordinate with special ed; reduced input demand; extended time
Confident conversational English; features of AAE, Chicano English, etc.	SEL (Standard English Learner)	Home variety is a rule-governed variety of English; not an error	Contrastive analysis; celebrate code-switching; asset-based frames

1C—Scaffold Selector

EL Typologies			
	NEWCOMER	**LTEL**	**EL+IEP**
EMERGING	Total Physical Response; visual aids; one-word + gesture responses	Sentence frames with controlled syntax; speech + writing models	Oral language first; multimodal input; simplified directions
EXPANDING	Sentence stems; partner talk; short paragraph models; home language bridges	Mentor sentences; clause-building; independent → guided writing	Reduced language load on input; check understanding frequently; allow L1 (first or native language) response
BRIDGING	Grade-level texts with minimal adaptation; peer teaching; independent reading	Academic word lists; complex text annotation; independent writing with peer review	Grade-level content; extended time; alternative assessment formats
SEL (Standard English Learner)			
Contrastive examples; "In school, we say…" without judgment Style-shifting practice; comparative sentence frames; peer feedback Author's craft analysis; comparing varieties; independent analysis			

Section 2: Lesson Launch / Language Objective Launch (First 5-10 min)

2A—Translanguaging Invitation by Typology

Typology	Opening Invitation	Student Frame	Why This Works
Newcomer	Show images of the topic. Ask: "What do you see?" Accept any language including L1 (first or native language).	Student points; says word in L1 (first or native language) or English; partner translates	Honors silent period; activates prior knowledge without producing English pressure
LTEL	Ask: "Think-pair-share: What's one time you experienced this?" Allow 1 min alone, 1 min with partner in ANY language.	[Partner supports with question in L1 (first or native language) or English as needed.] Student thinks in L1 (first or native language), speaks mixed.	Gives time for deeper thinking; reduces pressure to produce in English only; builds fluency bridge
EL+IEP	Show 2 visual options. Ask: "Which one?" or allow nonverbal response. No time pressure.	Student points; nods; says single word; teacher expands without expecting repetition	Respects processing time; reduces language demand on input; protects against failure
SEL (Standard English Learner)	Ask: "In your community/family, how do people talk about this?" Welcome varieties.	Student shares feature of AAE, Chicano English, etc.; teacher notes and celebrates	Validates home variety as an asset; positions school variety as an additional tool

2B—Discussion Launch Frames (Think-Pair-Share)

Level	Claim/Opinion	Evidence/Reasoning	Respond to Peer
Emerging	I think _____. My choice is _____.	Because _____. I see _____. (pointing to evidence)	I agree. Me too.
Expanding	I believe _____ because _____. My opinion is _____.	The text shows _____. This example proves _____. According to _____, _____.	I agree with _____ because _____. I have a different idea: _____.
Bridging	I argue that _____ because _____. The evidence suggests _____.	This demonstrates _____. The author's word choice (_____) implies _____. Furthermore, _____.	I concur; however, _____. Your point supports the idea that _____. Let me extend that: _____.

Schema Activation Steps (Language Objective Launch)

1. Show visual; ask "What do you notice?"
2. Chart student responses in any language; translate as a group.
3. Connect to lesson topic: "Today we're reading about [topic]. These ideas will help us."
4. Build sentence: "Last time we learned ___. Today we're learning ___."

Section 3: During Reading / Close Read & Annotation

3A—Sentence Study Protocol

#	Step Name	What Students Do	Frame/Prompt
1	**Copy**	Students select a rich sentence from the text and copy it word-for-word.	"Find one sentence that surprises you, confuses you, or is beautiful. Copy it here."
2	**Deconstruct**	Students underline the verb, circle the subject, box prepositional phrases, mark punctuation.	"What is this sentence doing? Who/what is acting? Where/when is it happening?"
3	**Morphology Bridge**	Students identify and discuss root words, affixes, related words. (E.g., "persist" → "persistent" → "persistence")	"What root word do you see? What does this prefix/suffix do? What other words are in this word family?"
4	**Reconstruct**	Students imitate the sentence structure with different content or grade-level content. (Emerging: copy structure; Bridging: adapt.)	"Now write your own sentence using the same structure but about [new topic]."

3B—Close Read & Annotation Frames

Level	Mark It	Annotation Frame	Discuss
Emerging	★ circle new words; ✓ mark main idea; ! mark surprising parts	This word means _____. The main idea is _____. This is surprising because _____.	Turn to a partner: Which marking is yours?
Expanding	★ underline author's word choice; ◇ mark cause/effect; ✓ mark evidence	The author said _____ instead of _____. This shows _____. The evidence is _____.	Why do you think the author chose that word?
Bridging	[bracket] rhetorical devices; → infer implications; ◇ analyze complex relationships	The parallel structure creates _____. This implies _____. In contrast, _____.	How does this technique advance the author's argument?

Monitoring Student Understanding (Formative Check)

- Are students successfully decoding academic vocabulary?
- Can they locate evidence from the text?
- Are annotations connected to meaning, or mechanical?
- Immediate adjustment: Pair; reduce text length; add visual aids.

Section 4: During Discussion / Structured Oral Rehearsal

4A—Structured Oral Rehearsal & Discussion Protocol

Typology	Talk Format	Sentence Frames	Teacher Role
Newcomer	Partner talk + nonverbal response; one student talks, one partner listens	"I think ___." Partner: "Me too." or "You mean _____?"	Circulate; accept any language; expand without correction
LTEL	Structured Oral Rehearsal (2 min) → partner discussion → small group share	"I think _____ because _____. What do you think?"	Provide oral models; accept code-switching; ask follow-up questions
EL+IEP	Reduced group size; allow L1 (first or native language) support; extended response time	"Do you agree or disagree?" Student responds; teacher recasts.	Scaffold heavily; validate participation; reduce language demand
SEL (Standard English Learner)	Celebrate code-switching; invite comparisons across varieties	"In AAE, people might say _____. In school English, we say _____."	Position as bilingual advantage; model contrastive analysis

4B—Reciprocal Teaching Roles

Role	Definition	Sentence Frame	All Levels
Questioner	Asks a question to deepen understanding of the text	"Why did _____? What would happen if _____?"	Rotate roles so all students practice all four
Clarifier	Points out confusing parts and offers explanations	"This part confuses me. I think it means _____."	Sentence frames reduce anxiety; allow L1 (first or native language) support
Predictor	Makes predictions about what comes next	"I predict _____. This will happen because _____."	All students, including Emerging, can use simple frames
Summarizer	Restates main ideas in condensed form	"The main idea is _____. Important details: 1) _____, 2) _____."	Match frame complexity to proficiency level

4C—Frames for Building on Peer Ideas

Scaffolded Response Options

Emerging: "I agree." "Me too." "Yes."

Expanding: "I agree with _____ because _____." "I have a different idea: _____."

Bridging: "I concur; furthermore, _____." "While I agree that _____, I would add _____."

SEL (Standard English Learner): Highlight when code-switching shows sophistication: "You switched to [variety] to show [meaning]. That's brilliant code-switching!"

Section 5: During Writing

5A—Modeled Writing & Writing Frame Progression by Typology

Task	Newcomer	LTEL	EL+IEP	SEL (Standard English Learner)
Label/Copy	Point and write labels; copy short phrases	Copy a sentence model; label parts	Simplified model; extended time; verbal support	Contrasting pair of labels
Sentence Combine	Two words → two-word phrase; teacher models	Two short sentences → one complex sentence	One word at a time; clear expectations	Same structures, different registers
Paragraph Build	Dictate to partner (Modeled Writing); partner writes; copy	T-chart: claim | evidence. Then write full paragraph with frames	Graphic organizer → writing; reduce output demand	Style-shift practice between registers

5B—Introduce New Words Using Morphemes (Morphology Bridge)

Introduce New Words Using Morphemes: Root + Prefix/Suffix Transformation

Step 1: Introduce root word in context: "We read this word [root]."

Step 2: Add suffix and compare: "persist" vs. "persistent" vs. "persistence"

Step 3: Use in sentences: "The character was persistent. That's persistence."

Step 4: Apply: "What other words use this root? persistence, persist, persistent, persisted..."

5C—Exit Writing Check (Look Back)

What to Listen For	Immediate Support (In-Lesson)	Next-Lesson Follow-Up
Simple subject-verb only; no clauses	Provide a dependent clause frame: "Because ___, ___."	Begin next lesson with clause-building routine
Mixed language; code-switching to L1 (first or native language) in writing	Accept code-switching; rephrase in English without judgment	One-on-one support; provide written model
Correct syntax but vocabulary limited to single register	Introduce academic synonym: "You said [conversational]. In ELA, we say [academic]."	Word family expansion activity

Section 6: Formative Language Output / Progress Monitoring

6A—Formative Language Output

Observation	What It Tells You	Next Step
Student copies question verbatim; no answer written	Likely Emerging or EL+IEP; not yet ready for independent written production	Oral exit ticket; teacher scribe; nonverbal response acceptable
Answer is conversational and choppy	Language is present but lacks academic structure	Structured Oral Rehearsal BEFORE writing; provide a frame for next lesson
Answer switches between home variety and school English	Student is code-switching strategically (SEL (Standard English Learner)) or trying to access academic English (any type)	Celebrate code-switching; teach contrastive features if needed (SEL (Standard English Learner)); recast model if needed (others)
Answer shows strong clause and complex syntax	Student has achieved Bridging-level production for this task	Next lesson: increase cognitive demand while maintaining linguistic support

6B—Language Reflection & Progress Tracking

Weekly Language Reflection Log (5-Min Notes)

Student: ___ | Date: ___ | Task: ___

Output: [What did the student produce?]

Observation: [Syntax? Vocabulary range? Code-switching? Strategy use?]

Trend: [Improvement since last week? Plateau? Regression?]

Adjustment: [What do they need next?]

6C—Reclassification Readiness Checklist

By Mid-Year, Bridging Students Should Show:

- ☐ Can independently read grade-level text with minimal support
- ☐ Can produce grade-level sentences with complex syntax
- ☐ Can participate in academic discussion without sentence frames
- ☐ Can write a paragraph with clear main idea and supporting details
- ☐ Curriculum assessment score at or above proficient

Section 7: When You're Unsure: Dialect vs. Disability

7A—Dialect vs. Disability Diagnostic Matrix

Feature	Typical Dialect Pattern (AAE, Chicano English, etc.)	Possible Disability Indicator	Action
Subject-verb agreement	"She go" (*s*-deletion)	Inconsistent across all contexts; no pattern; age-inappropriate	Consult Speech Language Pathologist; continue EL support
Final consonants	"test" → "tes" (AAE final consonant deletion) - PREDICTABLE	"dog" → "duh" (inconsistent; context-dependent; age-inappropriate)	Monitor in EL context; refer if suspected delay
Past tense marking	"We was" (rule-governed subject-verb variation in vernacular)	Cannot mark past at all (across all contexts; nonstandard + no auxiliary)	Speech Language Pathologist evaluation; not EL issue alone
Vocabulary range	Uses words that differ from Standard English but with robust variety: "homie," "hype," "bet"	Severely limited across ALL contexts; difficulty retrieving common words	Speech Language Pathologist assessment; possible language disorder

7B—Contrastive Analysis Frame (Not Correction)

Dialogue Model for SEL (Standard English Learner) & EL+IEP Students

Student says: "He go to the store."

Teacher (no correction): "In our home community, we might say that. In school English, we say 'he goes.' Both are real languages."

Write both: [Home: 'He go'] [School: 'He goes']

Student picks one to recast and say aloud.

NEVER say: "That's wrong." SAY: "That's one way. Another way is..."

7C—When to Consider a Referral for Special Education Evaluation

RED FLAGS: Refer if you observe:

- Severe difficulty understanding grade-level speech (beyond language barrier)
- Cannot complete simple, multi-step directions even with repetition
- Significant decoding difficulty NOT explained by oral language or phonological awareness teaching
- Speech sounds unintelligible to unfamiliar listeners (beyond accent/dialect)
- Inconsistent language pattern across contexts (e.g., verb tense sometimes marked, sometimes not, without rule)
- Family reports language difficulty in L1 (first or native language) as well as English
- No progress after 6+ weeks of targeted EL + Designated ELD instruction

Section 8: 120-Day Newcomer Pathway

8A—Four-Phase Language Development Pathway

Phase	Timeline	Primary Language Mode	Key Supports
Phase 1: SILENT PERIOD	Days 1-15	Receptive; minimal oral output; gesture/pointing	Visual anchors; buddy support; protected time to listen
Phase 2: EARLY PRODUCTION	Days 16-45	Single words, short phrases; early yes/no	Sentence stems; partner scaffolding; L1 (first or native language) use welcomed
Phase 3: SPEECH EMERGENCE	Days 46-90	Simple sentences; short oral production; more independence	Structured talk activities; minimal frames; peer teaching
Phase 4: BRIDGE TO FLUENCY	Days 91-120+	Complex sentences; grade-level participation in English; academic English emergence	Grade-level content access; academic language focus; reclassification trajectory

8B—Phase-by-Phase Language Benchmarks

By End of Each Phase, Newcomers Can Typically:

- **Phase 1 (Day 15):** Respond nonverbally to familiar questions; point to labeled pictures; understand 1-2-word directives in context
- **Phase 2 (Day 45)**: Say 1-3 words in response to direct questions; use phrases like "me," "no," "hello"; name familiar objects with support
- **Phase 3 (Day 90):** Produce simple sentences ("I like ___"); ask simple yes/no questions; retell simple events in order with frames
- **Phase 4 (Day 120):** Produce complex sentences; ask and answer open-ended questions; begin to use academic language with support; engage in small-group discussion

8C—SIFE-Specific Considerations (Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education)

Challenge	Why It Matters	Adaptation
Weak L1 (first or native language) literacy	Cannot rely on transliteration strategies; L1 (first or native language) translation not effective	Extend silent period; focus on oral/visual input; introduce visual-phonetic support (not L1 (first or native language) print)
Interrupted schooling	May lack grade-level foundational skills (phonological awareness, number sense)	Assess foundational skills in L1 (first or native language); backfill gaps alongside EL support; acceleration + scaffolding

Limited/no English print exposure	Cannot yet "read to learn"; requires oral scaffolding longer	Extend Phase 2 language building; heavy use of read-alouds + visual supports; delayed independent reading

8D—Days 1-15 Intensive Launch Plan

Daily Routine for Phase 1 (Silent Period)

- **Morning Ritual (5 min):** Greeting + pointing to calendar + yes/no question with visuals
- **Story Circle (10 min):** Read-aloud with heavy visual support, repetitive language; student points/gestures
- **Buddy Time (15 min):** Partner sits with student; models language; accepts any response
- **Hands-On Activity (10 min):** Matching, sorting, labeling with visuals (no reading yet)
- **Closing Ritual (5 min):** Repeat greeting + tomorrow preview with visuals

8E—120-Day Tracking Rubric

Skill	Day 30	Day 60	Day 90	Day 120
Responds to name	Yes / No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Understands 1-2-word directives	With gesture	With gesture	Yes, mostly	Yes
Produces 1-3 words on demand	Emerging	Yes	Consistently	Fluently
Participates in partner talk	Gestures only	Words + gestures	Simple phrases	Short sentences
Engages with grade-level content	Via visual only	Via visual + supported talk	Via story + questions	Grade-level access