

Nanjing International School

PYP Grades 1-5,

English Language Learning Support Program Explained:

The WIDA [10 Guiding Principles of Language Development](#) are what we know about how English language learners best develop language, and are therefore what we refer to when working towards the best possible way to support students.

1. Students' languages and cultures are valuable resources to be tapped and incorporated into schooling.
2. Students' home, school, and community experiences influence their language development.
3. Students draw on their metacognitive, metalinguistic, and metacultural awareness to develop proficiency in additional languages.
4. Students' academic language development in their native language facilitates their academic language development in English. Conversely, students' academic language development in English informs their academic language development in their native language.
5. Students learn language and culture through meaningful use and interaction.
6. Students use language in functional and communicative ways that vary according to context.
7. Students develop language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing interdependently, but at different rates and in different ways.
8. Students' development of academic language and academic content knowledge are inter-related processes.
9. Students' development of social, instructional, and academic language, a complex and long-term process, is the foundation for their success in school.
10. Students' access to instructional tasks requiring complex thinking is enhanced when linguistic complexity and instructional support match their levels of language proficiency.

Who is our ELL population?

By definition, *all* of our students are English language learners. Even native English speakers are still learning new vocabulary and new ways to use English. It is helpful to have terms to talk about the stages of language development though, so that we might consider what type of support students may need. It is important to note that students can, and may well be, at different stages in different domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing (ref GP 7).



*Stage 6 is NATIVE

In Grades 1-5 at NIS, students who are assessed as *Entering* and *Emerging*, in the domains of listening and/or speaking, are supported in the Beginner ELL Program. This means that they have a separate speaking and listening class, for approximately 30 minutes every day, whilst the other students attend Mandarin classes.

What is the goal of the Beginner ELL Class?

The goal of this beginner speaking and listening class (commonly known as ELL), is to strengthen the students' understanding and oral use of language, for academic purposes; known as Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Therefore, the content of the class will be determined by what the students will be, or are currently, learning in the general classroom. (ref GP 5, 6, 8, 9, 10). Students use the classroom content to build skills in listening for understanding and speaking English.

This class is typically a smaller group of students, who are all at a similar stage in their language acquisition for speaking and listening; the desired effect of this is that students will feel more comfortable taking risks speaking English, and will grow in confidence using the language.

Why does the Beginner ELL class focus on speaking and listening?

"Reading and writing float on a sea of talk"

Wilkinson, 1965

"Oral language is the foundation of literacy, and as such, it requires focused attention in planning. Altering the ratio of teacher to student talk doesn't just happen. Rather, it occurs through both believing in the importance of student talk and planning with a clear purpose and expectations."

Fisher D et al, 2008

Listening and speaking are also the major ways that we understand, communicate and relate to each other; this is known as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). BICS is how we form and build relationships, which is the foundation for cooperative learning in school. (ref GD 9)

Reading and Writing

Academic success relies on reading and writing. Literacy skill development is supported in the general classroom for *all* students, who have differentiated learning goals. The ELL teacher is available to support students' literacy goals, as required, for the different stages of language development in these domains.

How do ELL teachers support language development in Grades 1-5?

ELL teachers work with homeroom teachers to plan and/or deliver targeted instruction to support the development of CALP. (ref GP 1,5,6, 8,9,10)

Planning:

- ELL teachers co-plan the units of inquiry, with a focus on tiered vocabulary and academic sentence structures to support the curriculum content.
- ELL teachers provide strategies and resources to homeroom teachers, as well as the Literacy and Maths Coaches, respectively.

Teaching:

- ELL teachers teach targeted language instruction to whole classes or small groups.
- ELL teachers work on language skills with whole classes, small groups, or individuals.
- ELL teachers teach the general classroom, in order that homeroom teachers may have time to work with specific groups or individuals; and observe other classes for purposes of professional development.

Community:

- ELL teachers enjoy being part of Morning Meetings, assemblies, performances, house events, trips, grade level events, and community events. (ref GP 2)

Assessment:

Why do we assess students?

Assessment is used to inform our teaching practice. It tells us where the students are at in their language development so that we can effectively support them.

Assessment also helps us to “track” students, so that we can see if our instruction is effective.

How do we assess students?

The WIDA MODEL (Measure of Developing English Language) is our main source of data collection for all four domains; listening, speaking, reading and writing.

WIDA MODEL is a standardized, adaptive, and grade level appropriate assessment, that is popular in international schools. NIS is a member of the WIDA International Schools’ Consortium, and our ELL teachers are trained users of this assessment.

The assessment is administered twice a year to students who are in the Beginner ELL class, or who have left the Beginner ELL class within 6 months.

The assessment may be administered at any point in the year to see if individual students are ready to exit the Beginner program, or if teachers need more information about a child’s language proficiency.

Assessment is also used to determine students’ placement coming through from K2 to Grade 1 at the end of the K2 academic year.

A screener assessment is used to determine placement for new students coming to NIS.

PM benchmarks for reading, formative assessments, observations, writing samples, and classroom performance are also noted.

The use of home language (ref GP 1,2,4) :

We encourage parents and guardians to use the home language to discuss what their children are learning at school, and to talk about what their children are reading. Parents and guardians should be encouraged to look at Atlas, SeeSaw and class newsletters to help do this.

We encourage students use their home language to access their prior knowledge, and build on their understanding. All languages are valued at NIS.

Students have access to, and should be encouraged to seek out books in the library in other languages they use and are learning.