Meeting the Needs of English Learners
in the Upper Elementary Grades

Teacher Toolkit
for Increasing Student Engagement
and Accountable Talk

elite²

English Learner Institute for
Teaching and Excellence²

The Meadows Center
FOR PREVENTING EDUCATIONAL RISK

Introduction for Educators

All students, particularly English learners (ELs), benefit from high-quality, meaningful opportunities to use and practice the language(s) they are learning. To ensure these opportunities occur, effective teachers design lessons that systematically integrate practice in all four language domains: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Effective teachers also understand that language acquisition is enhanced when students are highly engaged and held accountable for rigorous reasoning and accurate knowledge.

Project ELITE² designed and collaboratively developed this toolkit and implementation guide with teachers. The goal is to enhance instruction to advance students' language development and guide teachers' use of the various tools presented as part of the "Increasing Student Engagement and Accountable Talk" teacher training. This guide offers practical guidance and tips for implementing each of the tools systematically. It also includes tools for developing a culture of "accountable talk" through low-risk response, feedback, and assessment techniques.

Visit **www.elitetexas.org** to explore additional professional learning and teacher tools related to increasing student engagement and accountable talk.

IDEAs
that Work
Office of Special Education Programs
U.S. Department of Education

Support

The Toolkit

Organizing Pair and Group Interaction

Whole-Class, Low-Risk Response and Feedback Techniques

Scaffolds for Academic Language Development

Assessment Tools

Appendix: The Tools

Appointment Cards

Tips for Getting Started

Decide how many different partner options you would like each student to have (three to five are recommended):

Create time slots for each partner option (e.g., 9 a.m., 10 a.m., 12 p.m., 2 p.m.).

Tips for balancing strategic pairing of students with student choice:

- Choose partners for the first two time slots. Pair students strategically based on review of data and knowledge of students' language proficiency. For example, select partners for students to enter in the 10 a.m. slot based on language proficiency levels and for the 12 p.m. slot based on reading fluency levels.

- Allow students to choose their own partners for the remaining time slots.

Make this a language development activity!

Don't allow students to merely point to time slots and write classmates' names in them. Challenge them to use their language to negotiate! Present and encourage students to use **sentence stems** and **idiomatic vocabulary**:

- "Are you available at [time]?"

- "Yes, I'm free. See you then!"

- "Sorry, I'm booked. What about [time]?"

Appointment Card	
Time	**Meet with:**
10:00 AM	_____
12:00 PM	_____
2:00 PM	_____

Appointment Cards

Additional Tips for Use

Match the type of partner activity with the optimal partner arrangement.

Decide whether strategic pairing will be needed or whether students' own choice of partner will be most appropriate for the lesson activity you have planned. Direct students to meet with the "time slot" partner that represents the type of pairing needed.

Use the "teacher-selected" time slots for different types of strategic grouping.

- For lesson activities that require heterogeneous grouping, in which students at different skill levels work together, call out the time that represents this type of grouping.

- For lesson activities that require homogeneous grouping, to target specific skills that both partners need, call out the time that represents this type of grouping.

Appointment Card

Time	Meet with:
10:00 AM	_____
12:00 PM	_____
2:00 PM	_____

Think-Write-Pair-Share Organizer

Tips for Use

Use a think-pair-share organizer at the beginning of a lesson to activate and prime background knowledge on a topic.

- Before students read a text, use an open-ended prompt that directly relates to a topic explored in the text. Example: "What are some reasons a person would leave their country, even if they could never come back?" (Text: *Esperanza Rising*)

- After discussion, make explicit connections for students between what they discussed and what concepts they will be learning in the lesson.

Use it to formatively assess student learning and/or comprehension.

- Assess students' comprehension of a text by using a prompt that requires them to recall information learned.

- Example: "What are two reasons that the United States passed the Voting Rights Act?"

Use it to practice specific expressive language skills.

- Use a prompt that will require students to use new grammar skills or new vocabulary concepts.

- Example: Practice using the vocabulary word *eligible*: "Tell your partner something you will be *eligible* for when you turn 18 years old."

QUESTION (OPEN-ENDED)	
WHAT I THINK	It seems to me that…
WHAT MY PARTNER THINKS	I hear you saying that…
WHAT WE THOUGHT	We both thought that…

Pinch Cards:
True, Not True, True With Conditions

Tips for Use

Use pinch cards at the beginning of a lesson to quickly assess students' prior knowledge.

Grammar/writing example: "Use your pinch cards to show me your answer: An adjective describes a person, place, or thing. [pinch]. In English, we put the adjective before the noun. [pinch]"

Use pinch cards as an advance organizer to create interest in the topic and activate students' background knowledge.

Informational text-reading example: "Use your pinch cards to show me your answer: All people who want to become U.S. citizens should be able to." (Students will read an expository article on the 14th Amendment.)

Use pinch cards to promote meaningful, high-level class discussion.

- Choose prompts that provoke thinking and different opinions. For example, "You should never judge a book by its cover."

- When students select "true with conditions," use it as an opportunity for deeper discussion.

- Extend discourse by asking students to clarify their response: "Tell me more. What do you mean? Can you give me an example?"

true
not true
true with conditions

(The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk [MCPER], 2017)

Pinch Cards: 1, 2, 3

Tips for Use

Use pinch cards at the beginning of a lesson to quickly assess students' level of prior knowledge.

Present the new concept or skill, and ask students to rate their confidence level:

- 1 = This is new to me.
- 2 = This is familiar, but I need more information.
- 3 = I understand this and can teach it to my partner.

Use it to formatively assess student learning.

Check for understanding of a new vocabulary concept.

Example:

Read two example sentences using the word (one example and one nonexample):

"Students, pinch 1 if you think the first sentence is the correct use of the word. Pinch 2 if you think the second sentence is the correct use of the word."

Check for understanding of new content-specific ideas.

Example:

Each number corresponds to a concept or skill being learned (i.e., multiple choice).

Text types:

- 1 = Literary fiction
- 2 = Literary nonfiction
- 3 = Informational

"Students, pinch the number that describes the text we just read."

1
2
3

(MCPER, 2017)

Processing Tent

Tips for Use

Provide a durable processing tent to partners or groups during discussion tasks and collaborative projects.

- Have pairs or groups indicate what stage of the discussion they are in by showing "Still deliberating" or "Ready to share."

- Scan the room to formatively assess students' progress on a specific collaborative task.

Expand students' expressive language and academic vocabulary skills by encouraging them to edit their processing tents over the year.

Once students are familiar with how to use the processing tents, challenge them to think of different phrases and vocabulary that can be used to express their discussion status. You may start simple and progress toward more advanced vocabulary:

We are reflecting	We want to share
Still talking	Ready to share
Still deliberating	Ready to report
Still debating	Ready to present
Currently discussing	Prepared to present

Recognize and give credit to the most creative phrases students come up with!

STILL DELIBERATING

READY TO REPORT

White Boards / "Overhead" Accountability

Tips for Use

Provide students with white boards as a low-risk participation option.

Have students write responses to a whole-class prompt on their white board and display them, minimizing the pressure to perform in front of the entire class.

Use white boards to formatively assess student learning and/or comprehension.

- Assess students' comprehension of a text by using a prompt that requires them to recall information learned.

- Example: "What does the word *protest* mean?"

Use "overhead" accountability as a way to amplify students' ideas and contributions while minimizing pressure to speak in front of the whole class. Follow these steps:

1. As students discuss in pairs or groups, circulate and listen to students' interactions.

2. Record a student's idea on a white board, using quotes and the student's name.

3. Display students' ideas on the document camera, giving credit to the students.

Exit Tickets and Gallery Walk

Introduction and Tips for Use

Exit tickets can be used as a low-risk participation and feedback technique. Because they can be used anonymously, students can respond to tasks and elaborate without pressure of performing in front of the whole class. Exit tickets add accountability because they are required to "exit" an activity. Teachers can formatively assess students' learning of a particular skill or concept by reviewing exit tickets.

The following are examples of prompts that can be used for exit tickets:

- Define a new vocabulary concept in your own words with a visual.

- Summarize a reading.

- Use a specific grammatical structure in a sentence correctly and creatively.

- Agree or disagree with a statement about a reading and provide text evidence to support the position.

Conduct a **gallery walk** to extend the exit ticket activity. Ask students to display their responses (e.g., sticky notes on a poster). Then, instruct students to visit the "gallery" of responses and read their classmates' ideas and examples. By reading and analyzing others' responses, students deepen their comprehension of a specific skill or concept.

Sentence Stems and Frames

Introduction and Tips for Use

Sentence stems and **frames** facilitate oral language development. Sentence stems and frames can scaffold students' expressive language skills (speaking and writing) and help expand students' grammatical knowledge.

Provide and display sentence stems and explicitly teach students how to use them in their speaking and writing. When students advance to higher levels of language proficiency, adjust the sentence stems, or as with all scaffolds, remove them when no longer needed as a support.

Sentence stems can scaffold students' knowledge of vocabulary and broader academic language structures and functions.

EXPRESSING YOUR IDEAS

I believe _____.

I think _____.

In my opinion _____.

After thinking about it, I believe that _____.

SEGMENTOS DE ORACIÓN

Nosotros nos **comunicamos** cuando _____.

Si tengo una **herida**, debo _____.

Me quede **maravillado** cuando _____.

(MCPER, 2015)

Shoot-Rebound Cards
Tips for Use

Provide a durable set of shoot-rebound cards to partners or groups during discussion tasks and collaborative projects.

- Challenge students to "rebound" during partner interactions. After one group member "shoots" and gives their idea or opinion, the other group members use the sentence stems on the card to respond to their classmates' opinions and "keep the ball in play."

- Explicitly teach any new vocabulary on the cards (e.g., *clarify*, *partially*) and model the correct usage of the phrases.

Use the "fishbowl technique."

- As students develop specific skills, have the whole class observe one group conducting their discussions using the shoot-rebound cards.

- Prompt the student observers to notice the ways in which the model group is using language successfully <u>to keep the discussion going</u>.

SHOOT-REBOUND DISCUSSION PROMPTS

EXPRESSING YOUR IDEA	RESPONDING TO YOUR CLASSMATE'S IDEA	ASKING FOR CLARIFICATION
I believe _____. I think _____. In my opinion _____. After thinking about it, I believe that _____.	I agree with _____. I agree with _____, but I want to add _____. What you are saying reminds me of _____.	Can you clarify what you said? Could you repeat that part again? I hear you. I would like to know what evidence you have. I have a question.

EXPRESANDO TU IDEA	RESPONDIENDO A LA IDEA DE TU COMPAÑERO	PIDIENDO UNA ACLARACIÓN
Yo creo _____. Yo pienso _____. En mi opinion _____. Despues de pensar, yo creo que _____.	Yo estoy de acuerdo porque _____. Yo estoy de acuerdo con _____, pero quiero agregar _____. Lo que estas diciendo me recuerda de _____.	¿Puedes aclarar lo que dijiste? ¿Podrías repetir esa parte otra vez? Te escucho. Me gustaría saber qué pruebas tienes. Tengo una pregunta.

Advance Organizers

Introduction and Tips for Use

Advance organizers

- are statements, activities, or graphic organizers that help the learner anticipate and organize new information;

- are used at the beginning of lessons in which new information is to be learned;

- often call on prior knowledge to connect new learning to an existing cognitive structure;

- indicate to the learner what information from a lesson will be important; and

- can be simple or complex to be effective.

One example of an advance organizer is an anticipation-reaction guide:

BEFORE READING	STATEMENT	AFTER READING
Agree or Disagree?	**Schools are responsible for protecting students from cyberbullying**	Agree or Disagree?

Other activities can be used as advance organizers, such as using a K-W-L chart or preteaching vocabulary to students at the beginning of a lesson.

(Hill & Björk, 2008)

Checklist:
Successful Collaborative Discussions

Tips for Use

Use each category on the rubric to deliver a focused mini-lesson.

- Example mini-lessons: Being Prepared for Discussion, Using Evidence to Support My Ideas, and Responding to My Classmates' Ideas.

- Create an **anchor chart** students can refer to as they practice the new skills.

Use the "fishbowl technique."

- As students develop specific skills, have the whole class observe one group conducting their discussions.

- Prompt the student observers to notice which criteria the model group is using successfully.

- Facilitate discussion about which student behaviors could improve the quality of the group discussion.

Have students use the rubric to self-assess after group discussions.

- Initial self-assessment: Modify the rubric to focus on the skills you have explicitly taught and students have practiced. Have students self-assess and set goals.

- Advanced self-assessment: Add criteria to the rubric as students master new expressive language skills.

This is one example of an anchor chart.

I am prepared and contribute to the discussion when I…

- ☐ Read the text to be discussed.
- ☐ Complete my readers' response.
- ☐ Come to the discussion with ideas about the reading.
- ☐ Stay on topic.
- ☐ Try to understand what my classmates are communicating about the topic/text.
- ☐ Ask questions, ask for assistance, and ask for clarification.

Further Reading and Resources

Hill, J. D., & Björk, C. L. (2008). *Classroom instruction that works with English language learners.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Himmele, P., & Himmele, W. (2017). *Total participation techniques: Making every student an active learner.* Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

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The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk. (2017). *Grade 5 reading to learn academy.* Austin, TX: Author.

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Michaels, S., O'Connor, C., & Resnick, L. (2008). Reasoned participation: Accountable talk in the classroom and in civic life. *Studies in Philosophy and Education, 27,* 283–297.

Soto, I. (2014). *Moving from spoken to written language with ELLs.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Appendix: The Tools
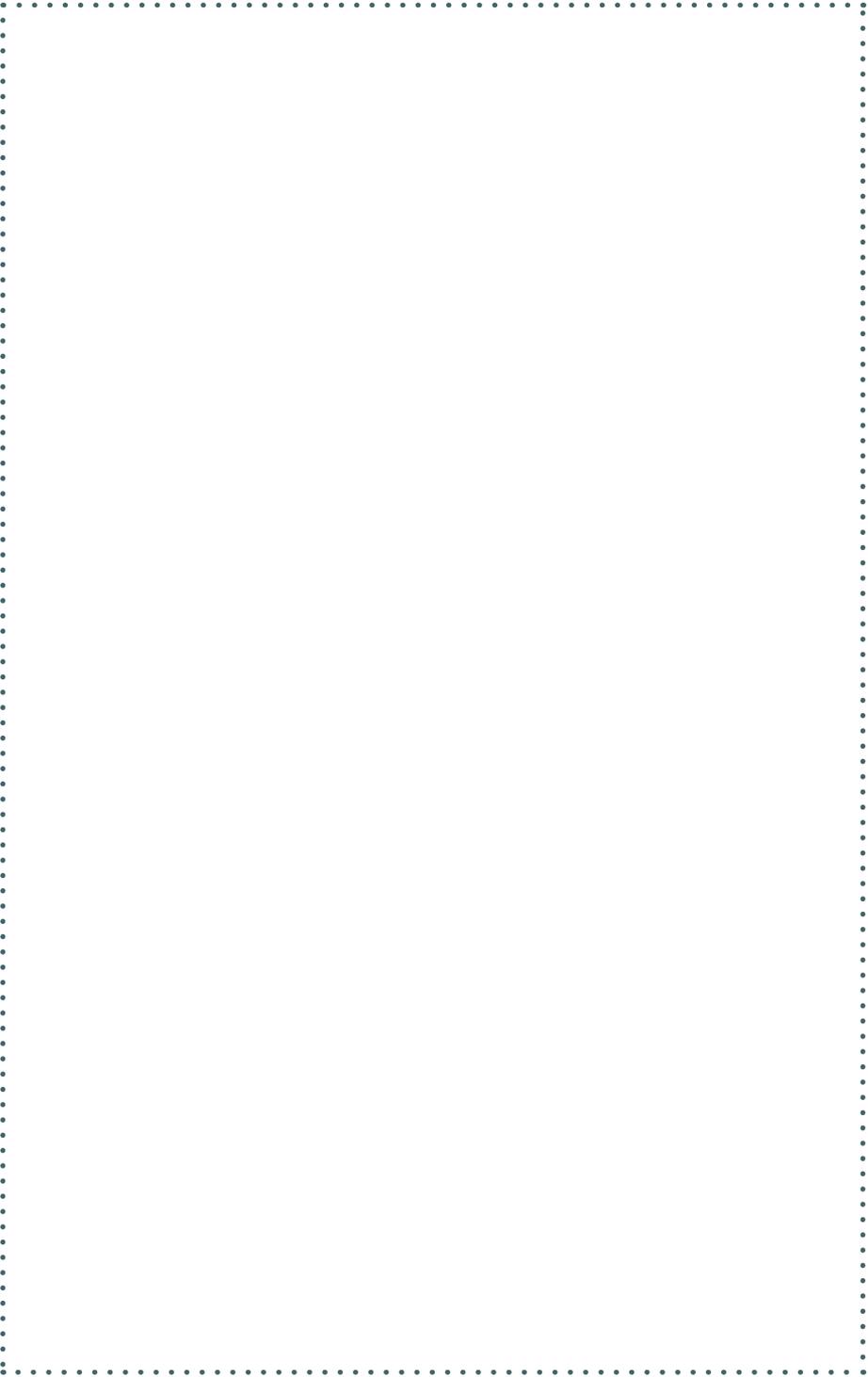
Appointment Cards

Appointment Card

Meet with:
_____

_____

_____

Time
_____

10:00 AM

12:00 PM

2:00 PM

Appointment Card

Meet with:
_____

_____

_____

Time
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10:00 AM

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Meet with:
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Time
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10:00 AM

12:00 PM

2:00 PM

Think-Write-Pair-Share Organizers

QUESTION (OPEN-ENDED)	
WHAT I THINK	It seems to me that…
WHAT MY PARTNER THINKS	I hear you saying that…
WHAT WE THOUGHT	We both thought that…

PREGUNTA	
LO QUE PIENSO	A mí me perece que…
LO QUE PIENSA MI COMPAÑERA/O	Te oigo decir que…
LO QUE PENSAMOS	Pensamos que…

Pinch Cards

true	**1**
not true	**2**
true with conditions	**3**

Processing Tent

STILL DELIBERATING

READY TO REPORT

Shoot-Rebound Cards

SHOOT-REBOUND DISCUSSION PROMPTS

EXPRESSING YOUR IDEA	RESPONDING TO YOUR CLASSMATE'S IDEA	ASKING FOR CLARIFICATION
I believe _____. I think _____. In my opinion _____. After thinking about it, I believe that _____.	I agree with _____. I agree with _____, but I want to add _____. What you are saying reminds me of _____.	Can you clarify what you said? Could you repeat that part again? I hear you. I would like to know what evidence you have. I have a question.
EXPRESANDO TU IDEA	**RESPONDIENDO A LA IDEA DE TU COMPAÑERO**	**PIDIENDO UNA ACLARACIÓN**
Yo creo _____. Yo pienso _____. En mi opinion _____. Despues de pensar, yo creo que	Yo estoy de acuerdo porque _____. Yo estoy de acuerdo con _____ pero quiero agregar _____. Lo que estas diciendo me recuerda de _____.	¿Puedes aclarar lo que dijiste? ¿Podrías repetir esa parte otra vez? Te escucho. Me gustaría saber qué pruebas tienes. Tengo una pregunta.

Checklist:
Successful Collaborative Discussions

I WAS SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE…

I WAS PREPARED AND CONTRIBUTED TO THE DISCUSSION	I REPLIED TO MY CLASSMATES' IDEAS, USING RESPONSIVE AND RESPECTFUL LANGUAGE	I USED CLEAR AND APPROPRIATE ACADEMIC LANGUAGE
☐ I read the text to be discussed. ☐ I completed my readers' response. ☐ I came to the discussion with ideas about the reading. ☐ I stayed on topic. ☐ I tried to understand what my classmates were communicating about the topic/text. ☐ I asked questions, asked for assistance, and asked for clarification.	☐ I waited for the speaker to complete his/her thoughts before I spoke. ☐ I referred to the previous speaker when I added to the discussion. For example, "I agree with _____ because_____." ☐ I used respectful language when challenging my classmates' ideas. ☐ I criticized the ideas, but never the person who said them.	☐ I spoke clearly and challenged myself to use vocabulary and language specific to the topic. ☐ I used my resources (e.g., sentence starters, bounce cards, word walls).

I USED EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT MY IDEAS	I STAYED FOCUSED ON THE TASK WITH MY GROUP	I REMEMBERED MY OWN GOALS AND CHALLENGE MYSELF
☐ I referred to the text or previous lessons to support my ideas. ☐ I provided reasons and examples to demonstrate my ideas.	☐ I kept in mind the goal of my group work and made sure my ideas were on topic and relevant. ☐ I guided my classmates back to the topic when needed: "You are making some important points, but what does it have to do with _____?" ☐ I responded when classmates asked for clarification or assistance.	☐ I self-assessed regularly. ☐ I set my own goals and challenged myself each time I worked with my group.

Spanish Checklist:
Successful Collaborative Discussions

TUVE ÉXITO POR QUE...

ESTUVE PREPARADO Y CONTRIBUÍ A LA DISCUSIÓN	RESPONDI A LAS IDEAS DE MIS COMPAÑEROS DE CLASE, Y UTILISE LENGUAJE SENSIBLE Y RESPETUOSO	USÉ LENGUAJE ACADÉMICO APROPIADO
☐ Leí el texto. ☐ Termine mis preguntas. ☐ Fui a la discusión con ideas sobre la lectura. ☐ Me mantuve en el tema. ☐ Trate de entender lo que mis compañeros de clase comunicaron sobre el tema/texto. ☐ Hice preguntas, pedí ayuda, pedí aclaración.	☐ Esperé a que el orador termino sus pensamientos antes de hablar. ☐ Consulté al orador anterior cuando agregué a la discusión. Por ejemplo, "Estoy de acuerdo con _____ porque_____". ☐ Usé un lenguaje respetuoso al questionar las ideas de mis compañeros. ☐ Critiqué las ideas, pero nunca a la persona que las dijo.	☐ Hablé claramente y hice el esfuerzo de usar vocabulario y lenguaje específico para el tema. ☐ Usé mis recursos (por ejemplo, iniciadores de oraciones, tarjetas de rebote).

USÉ EVIDENCIA PARA APOYAR MIS IDEAS	MANTUVE ENFOCADO EN LA TAREA CON MI GRUPO	RECORDÉ MIS PROPIOS OBJETIVOS Y ME DESAFIÉ A MÍ MISMO
☐ Consulté el texto o las lecciones anteriores para apoyar mis ideas ☐ Di razones y ejemplos que demuestran mis ideas.	☐ Tomé en cuenta el objetivo de mi trabajo grupal y aseguré de que mis ideas estuvieran relacionadas con el tema y que fueran relevantes. ☐ Guíe a mis compañeros de clase al tema cuando fue necesario: "Usted está haciendo algunos puntos importantes, pero ¿qué tiene que ver con _____?" ☐ Respondí cuando mis compañeros de clase pidieron una aclaración o ayuda.	☐ Me auto regulé. ☐ Establecí mis propias metas y desafiaos cada vez que trabajé con mi grupo.