



Alternate Assessment Update: Arizona's Alternate English Language Proficiency Assessment

**ESS Director Check-In
September 15, 2022**



Objectives

Participants will

- Become familiar with the Alt ELPA
- Review and apply the approved Alternate ELP Standards
- Evaluate existing practices within your PEA that support English learners with the most significant cognitive disabilities (ELSCDs)



Purpose

The purpose of state assessments is to provide an opportunity for students to show what they know and can do in relation to grade level standards.

What state assessments are:

- Opportunities
- Aligned to grade level standards
- Summative assessments
- Used along with other data to monitor trends and provide professional development

What state assessments are not:

- Designed to be used for teacher evaluations
- An isolated piece of data to use for making instructional or administrative decisions
- A test that students must “pass”



Alt ELPA Vision

Our vision is to embrace the language capabilities and full potential of ELs with the most significant cognitive disabilities through a fair and accurate alternate assessment.

The “hows”

- Developed proficiency descriptors at three levels as part of the [standards document](#)
- Allow many universal features and accommodations to support students at varying ranges of communication
- Requested feedback from teachers of ELSCD throughout development
- Conducted a pilot study with a cognitive lab



The Students

Who takes alternate assessments?

Meet eligibility criteria as determined by the IEP Team:

- Have a significant cognitive disability characterized by a disability or multiple disabilities that impact intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior
- Is learning content linked to state content standards
- Requires extensive direct individualized instruction and substantial supports to achieve measurable gains

Who takes Alt ELPA?

- Meet eligibility criteria above
- Has an EL status based on AZELLA Placement test



Accessibility

What about students with alternate modes of communication or a sensory impairment?

Optimal Testing Conditions

Universal Features*

Accommodations

Embedded

Non-embedded

*Universal features and accommodations are determined by domain.
Refer to the [Accessibility Manual](#) for details.



Optimal Testing Conditions

For all students and all domains

Assistive Technology (AT) device

Breaks and flexible scheduling

Directions adjusted

Focusing prompts and materials

Lighting

Magnification

Medical device

Navigation assistance by test administrator

Noise buffer

Object representations

Positioning

Preferred communication mode

Scratch paper and other note taking devices

Scribe

Tactile graphics

Verbal encouragement



Universal Features

Domain Dependent: Some universal features may also be accommodations

Amplification

Color adjustment

Disable universal features

Keyboard navigation

Online tools: highlighter, mark items, masking, strikethrough

Replay audio

Re-record

Text-to-speech

Writing tools

Zoom



Accommodations

Domain Dependent

Print on demand (paper test)
Text-to-speech
Word prediction
Read aloud
Sign language presentation
Verbal description of graphics

Remember: all accommodations must be documented in the IEP!



Application of Accessibility

Reflect

- Are your IEP teams prepared to make these decisions?
- Who should be involved in these conversations?
- Are there practices that might need adjusting?



Logistics

Alternate Assessment Test Coordinators will register students October 3 – November 30, 2022.

Test administrator and test coordinator training available in the fall.

No accommodations requests are required.

One on one administration with an observer required for scoring items on the speaking test.

Test administration window February 1 – March 17, 2023.

Operational field test: All ELs must take either AZELLA or Alt ELPA.



Standards

Were developed to

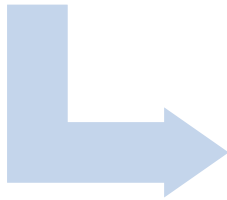
- Meet federal requirements
- Support instruction
- Reflect an understanding of the learner



Organization

6 grade levels/grade bands

- Kindergarten; grade 1; and grade bands 2–3, 4–5, 6–8, and 9–12



10 standards

- common across the grade levels/grade bands



3 proficiency levels

- low, mid, and high
- reflecting end targets
- reflecting a progression K–12

ELP Standards for ELSCD

1	construct meaning from oral presentations and literary and informational text through grade-appropriate listening, reading, and viewing
2	participate in grade-appropriate oral and written exchanges of information, ideas, and analyses, responding to peer, audience, or reader comments and questions
3	speak and write about grade-appropriate complex literary and information texts and topics
4	construct grade appropriate oral and written claims
5	conduct research and evaluate and communicate findings to answer questions or solve problems
6	analyze and critique the arguments of others orally and in writing
7	adapt language choices to purpose, task, and audience when speaking and writing
8	determine the meaning of words and phrases in oral presentations and literary and informational text
9	create clear and coherent grade-appropriate speech and text
10	make accurate use of standard English to communicate in grade-appropriate speech and writing

Standards 1 through 7 involve the language necessary for ELSCDs to engage in the central content specific practices associated with ELA and literacy, mathematics, and science. They begin with a focus on extracting meaning and then progress to engagement in these practices.

Standards 8 through 10 focus on some micro-level linguistic features and serve the other seven standards.



Domain Definitions

Speaking: the action of conveying information or expressing thoughts and feelings, or a response in a conversation.

Writing: process of using symbols to communicate thoughts and ideas or to convey or record information in a readable form to a particular audience and for a particular purpose.

Listening: receiving of language with thoughtful attention and processing sounds to understand their meaning or intent.

Reading: process of recognizing and understanding or making meaning from symbols, letters, or words.



Domains and Modalities

Modalities	Domains	Standards
Receptive	Listening and Reading	1, 8
Productive	Speaking and Writing	3, 4, 7
Interactive	Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing	2, 5, 6

The Alt ELPA will report out by modalities. Why is that helpful for this group of students?



Receptive Modalities: Standards 1 and 8

This mode refers to the learner as a reader or listener/viewer working with “text” whose author or deliverer is not present or accessible.

It presumes that the interaction is with authentic written or oral documents where language input is meaningful and content laden.

The learner brings background knowledge, experience, and appropriate interpretive strategies to the task to promote understanding of language and content to develop a personal reaction.



Productive Modalities: Standards 3, 4, and 7

This mode places the learner as speaker and writer for a “distant” audience, one with whom interaction is not possible or limited.

The communication is set for a specified audience, has purpose, and generally abides by rules of genre or style.

It is a planned or formalized speech act or written document, and the learner has an opportunity to draft, get feedback, and revise, before publication or broadcast.



Interactive Modalities: Standards 2, 5, and 6

This mode refers to the learner as a speaker/listener, where negotiation of meaning may be observed.

The exchange will provide evidence of awareness of the socio-cultural aspects of communication as language proficiency develops.

How does the modality organization of the standards inform curricular planning?



Proficiency Descriptors

The ten standards are common across every grade level/grade band.

Additional details about language are provided in the proficiency descriptors (low, mid, high) for each standard and grade level/grade band.

The proficiency descriptors articulate the English language proficiency knowledge, skills, and abilities expected of students at each level (low, mid, high) for a given standard and grade/grade band.



Example

Questions for teachers to consider

- What modalities does this standard address?
- What domains does this standard address?
- What instructional strategy might I use to move a 2nd or 3rd-grade student from a low English language proficiency (ELP) level toward a higher ELP level?

ELP Standard 2-3.6: An English learner with significant cognitive disabilities can analyze and critique the arguments of others orally and in writing.

ELP Level	Proficiency Descriptors An English learner with significant cognitive disabilities can:	Example(s)
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• analyze and critique the arguments of others orally and in writing	A student may <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the main idea of a presentation.
Mid	with prompting and support <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify a reason an author or a speaker gives to support the main point of a familiar topic.	A student may <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respond to questions such as, “Show me how you know this?”• Point to a frequently occurring word/phrase that supports the main idea.• Determine why the speaker/author likes or dislikes their main point.
High	with prompting and support: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tell how one or two reasons support the specific points an author or a speaker makes on a familiar topic.	A student may <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respond to simple wh- questions (e.g., What does the speaker/author want to happen? Why does the speaker/author want ...?)• Respond to questions such as, Why was Joe sad? Why are fire drills important?



Compare-Standard 5 (Interactive)

An English learner with significant cognitive disabilities can conduct research and evaluate and communicate findings to answer questions or solve problems.

Kindergarten/Mid

With prompting and support:

- recall information from experience or from a provided source to answer a question showing developing control.

Middle School/Mid

With prompting and support:

- gather information from some provided sources.
- record some information from provided sources.
- retell information, using labeled illustrations, diagrams, or other graphics, as appropriate.

What are some content-based activities that align with this standard for each grade level?



Best Practices

Build a community of practice within your PEA. Members should include teachers of ELSCDs and EL support personnel.

AZELLA and Alternate Assessment Test Coordinator should develop communication methods with each other and support for teachers.

EL specialist should be part of the IEP team.

What else are you doing, or would you like to start doing to support language acquisition for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities?





Questions?

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