

Understanding Proficiency Through Domain Performance



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Presenters



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Topics



Who We Are and What We Believe

Proficiency and Scores

Connecting Domains to Proficiency

Connecting Scores to Instruction

Resources and Q&A



Who We Are and What We Believe

What is ELPA21?



ELPA21 is a world class, innovative, and comprehensive English language proficiency assessment and instructional system. Eleven states use ELPA21's assessments.

ELPA21 Focuses on Language



Proficiency is not based on conversational English alone; it reflects the language needed to engage with grade-level content.



Students use academic language to interpret information, communicate reasoning, and collaborate around content.



These demands vary by subject and become more complex across grades; ELPA21 therefore uses grade-appropriate expectations.



ELPA21 assesses English used in content-related tasks—not mastery of the underlying subject matter.

ELPA21 is Student-Centered



All English learners can develop the language skills needed to participate successfully in grade-level instruction.



Students' linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds are invaluable assets.



ELP assessments should measure academic language and the effectiveness of students' communication.



All students, including students with disabilities, deserve a fair, valid, and accessible assessment experience.



Educators and state partners are essential collaborators in effectively supporting English learner growth.

Partnership with AZ Educators



Arizona educators bring essential knowledge of their students, classrooms, and local communities.



ELPA21 brings world-class expertise in English language proficiency assessment.

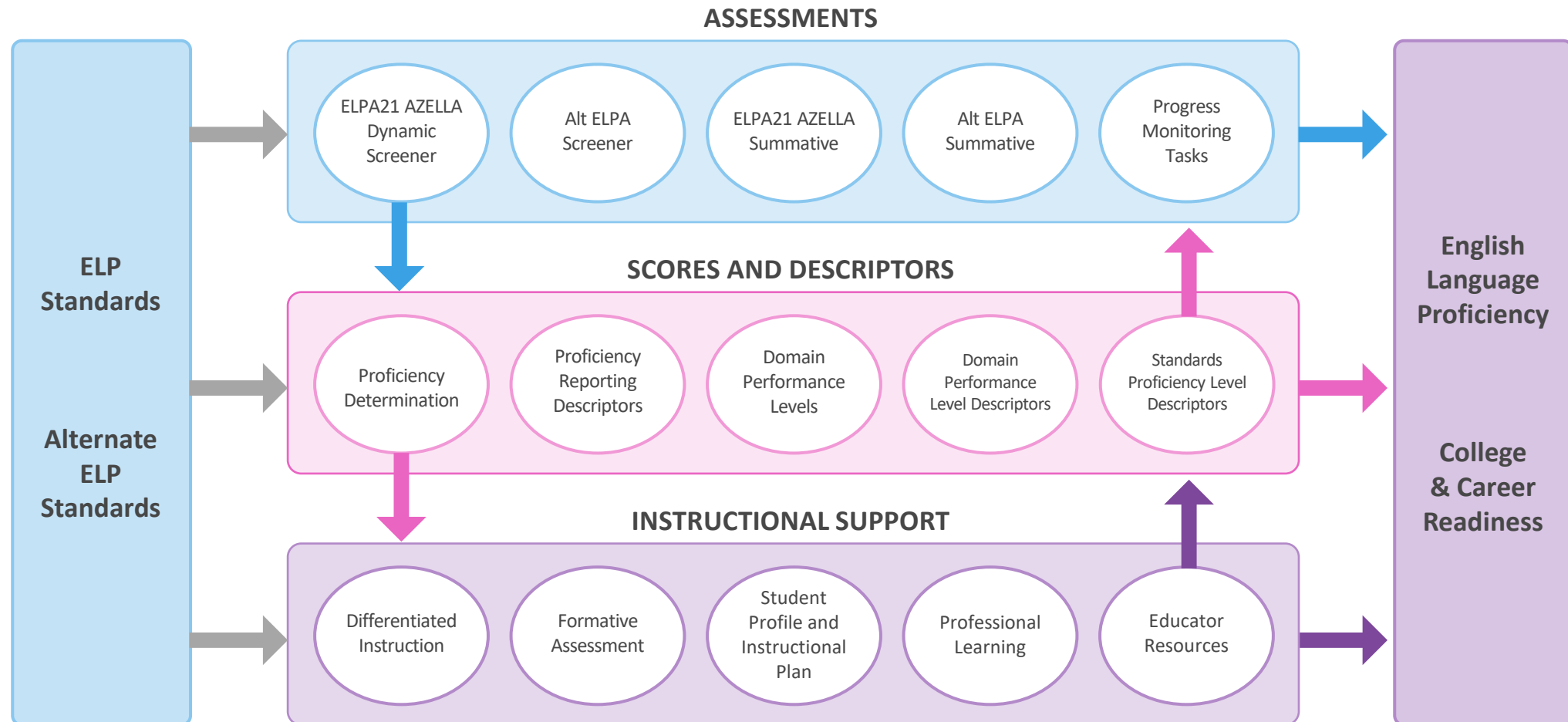


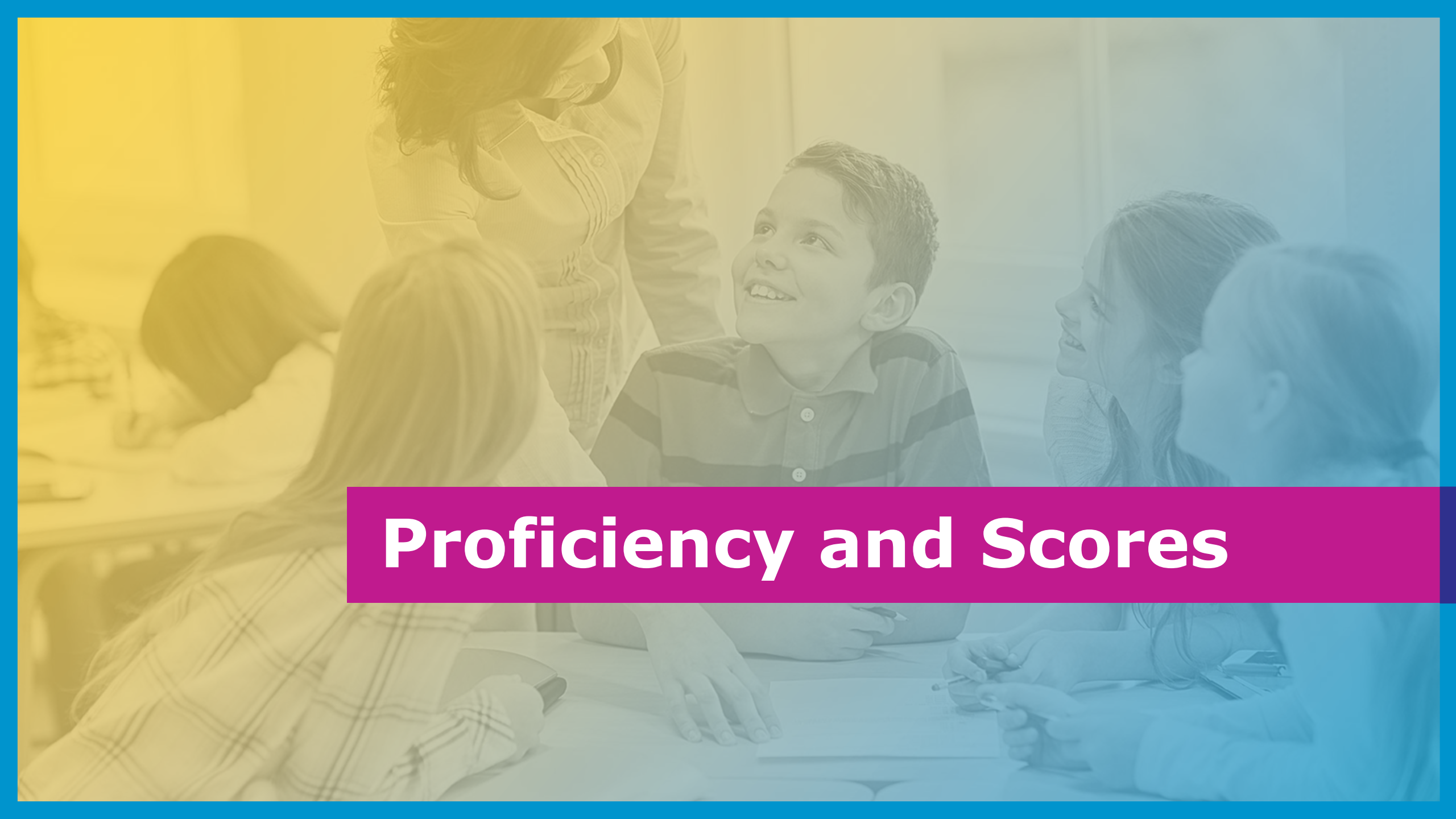
Assessment results provide evidence; educator expertise gives that evidence context and meaning.



Together, these perspectives support better-informed decisions about language instruction and services.

Assessment System Overview



A photograph of a classroom scene. A female teacher stands on the left, leaning over a desk and smiling at a young boy. The boy is sitting at the desk, looking up at the teacher with a smile. To his right, a girl is also sitting at the desk, looking towards the teacher. Another girl is partially visible in the foreground on the right. The background shows other students and classroom furniture. The image is overlaid with a yellow-to-blue gradient and a magenta banner at the bottom.

Proficiency and Scores

Same Fundamentals, New Scores



How you use scores remains the same:

- Guiding instruction and programmatic decisions
- Meeting federal and state accountability requirements
- Supporting student reclassification decisions



The assessments measure the four domains of language



“Proficiency” has the same meaning



The scores themselves are different

What We Measure (ELPA21)

Listening

Reading

Speaking

Writing

**English
Language
Proficiency**

Domain Score Overview





AZELLA Reporting

Individual Student Report

Demo, Student

Student ID: DEMO000001 | Student DOB: 5/23/2014 | Enrolled Grade: 6

Date Taken: 9/24/2025

Grade 6 AZELLA Placement (Dynamic Screener)

2026-2027

DEMO DISTRICT

DEMO SCHOOL

Proficiency Determination: Proficient

Proficiency Determination

Proficient - Students are Proficient when they demonstrate a level of English language skill necessary to independently produce, interpret, collaborate on, and succeed in grade-level academic tasks in English. This is indicated on the AZELLA Placement (Dynamic Screener) by scoring Level 4 or Level 5 in all domains. Student is not eligible for English Language (EL) Services.

Progressing - Students are Progressing when, with support, they are approaching a level of English language skill necessary to produce, interpret, and collaborate on grade-level academic tasks in English. This is indicated on the AZELLA Placement (Dynamic Screener) by scoring at least one domain score above Level 2 and at least one domain score below Level 4. These students are eligible for EL Services.

Emerging - Students are Emerging when they have not yet reached a level of English language skill necessary to produce, interpret, and collaborate on grade-level content-related academic tasks in English. This is indicated on the AZELLA Placement (Dynamic Screener) by scoring a Level 1 or Level 2 in listening, reading, writing, and speaking. These students are eligible for English language development services.

Proficiency Not Demonstrated - Students receive a status of Proficiency Not Demonstrated when testing is stopped due to the student not participating. Student is eligible for EL Services.

How Did Your Child Perform on Different Areas of the Test?

● Beginning ● Early Intermediate ● Intermediate ● Early Advanced ● Advanced

Domain	Performance	Performance Description
Listening	5	When listening, the student at Level 5 is working on: determining main idea or ideas and how each idea is supported with evidence; gathering information from multiple oral sources and evaluating the credibility of the information; quoting or citing examples while paraphrasing data and conclusions; determining the meaning of general academic, context specific, figurative and idiomatic phrases.
Reading	4	When reading grade-appropriate text, the student at Level 4 is working on: determining two or more central ideas and how they are supported by specific details; building on ideas of others, adding relevant and specific evidence; summarizing text; gathering information from multiple sources to summarize ideas, information and observations; analyzing the arguments and claims made in text, determining the sufficiency of supporting evidence; determining the meaning of content-specific words and phrases and some idiomatic expressions.
Speaking	5	When speaking, the student at Level 5 is working on: making predictions and drawing conclusions from a variety of sources; asking and answering questions, and stating opinions with appropriate grammatical structures and vocabulary; recounting a complex sequence of events; making a claim with simple, compound, and complex sentences.
Writing	4	When writing, the student at Level 4 is working on: participating in written exchanges on a variety of topics and texts; asking and answering relevant questions; paraphrasing to restate information; composing narrative and informational texts with specific details about a variety of topics; constructing a claim and providing sufficient reasons to support it; analyzing an argument or claim; using simple, compound and complex sentences with transitional words and phrases to connect events and ideas.

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Closer Look at Domain Scores

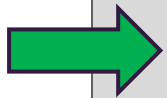
Beginning Early Intermediate 3 Intermediate 4 Early Advanced Advanced		
Domain	Performance	Performance Description
Listening	5	When listening, the student at Level 5 is working on: determining main idea or ideas and how each idea is supported with evidence; gathering information from multiple oral sources and evaluating the credibility of the information; quoting or citing examples while paraphrasing data and conclusions; determining the meaning of general academic, context specific, figurative and idiomatic phrases.
Reading	4	When reading grade-appropriate text, the student at Level 4 is working on: determining two or more central ideas and how they are supported by specific details; building on ideas of others, adding relevant and specific evidence; summarizing text; gathering information from multiple sources to summarize ideas, information and observations; analyzing the arguments and claims made in text, determining the sufficiency of supporting evidence; determining the meaning of content-specific words and phrases and some idiomatic expressions.
Speaking	5	When speaking, the student at Level 5 is working on: making predictions and drawing conclusions from a variety of sources; asking and answering questions, and stating opinions with appropriate grammatical structures and vocabulary; recounting a complex sequence of events; making a claim with simple, compound, and complex sentences.
Writing	4	When writing, the student at Level 4 is working on: participating in written exchanges on a variety of topics and texts; asking and answering relevant questions; paraphrasing to restate information; composing narrative and informational texts with specific details about a variety of topics; constructing a claim and providing sufficient reasons to support it; analyzing an argument or claim; using simple, compound and complex sentences with transitional words and phrases to connect events and ideas.

Domain Performance Levels & Labels

Domain Level	AZELLA Label	ELPA21 AZELLA Label
Level 1	Pre-Emergent / Emergent	Beginning
Level 2	Basic	Early Intermediate
Level 3	Intermediate	Intermediate
Level 4	Proficient	Early Advanced
Level 5	<i>Not Reported</i>	Advanced

Domain Performance Level Definitions

Performance Level	Descriptor	A Student at This Level ...
Level 1	Beginning	Displays few grade-level English language skills and will benefit from EL Program support.
Level 2	Early Intermediate	Presents evidence of developing grade-level English language skills and will benefit from EL Program support.
Level 3	Intermediate	Applies some grade-level English language skills and will benefit from EL Program support.
Level 4	Early Advanced	Demonstrates English language skills required for engagement with grade-level academic content instruction at a level comparable to non-ELs.
Level 5	Advanced	Exhibits superior English language skills, as measured by ELPA21.



The Benefits of Domain Scores



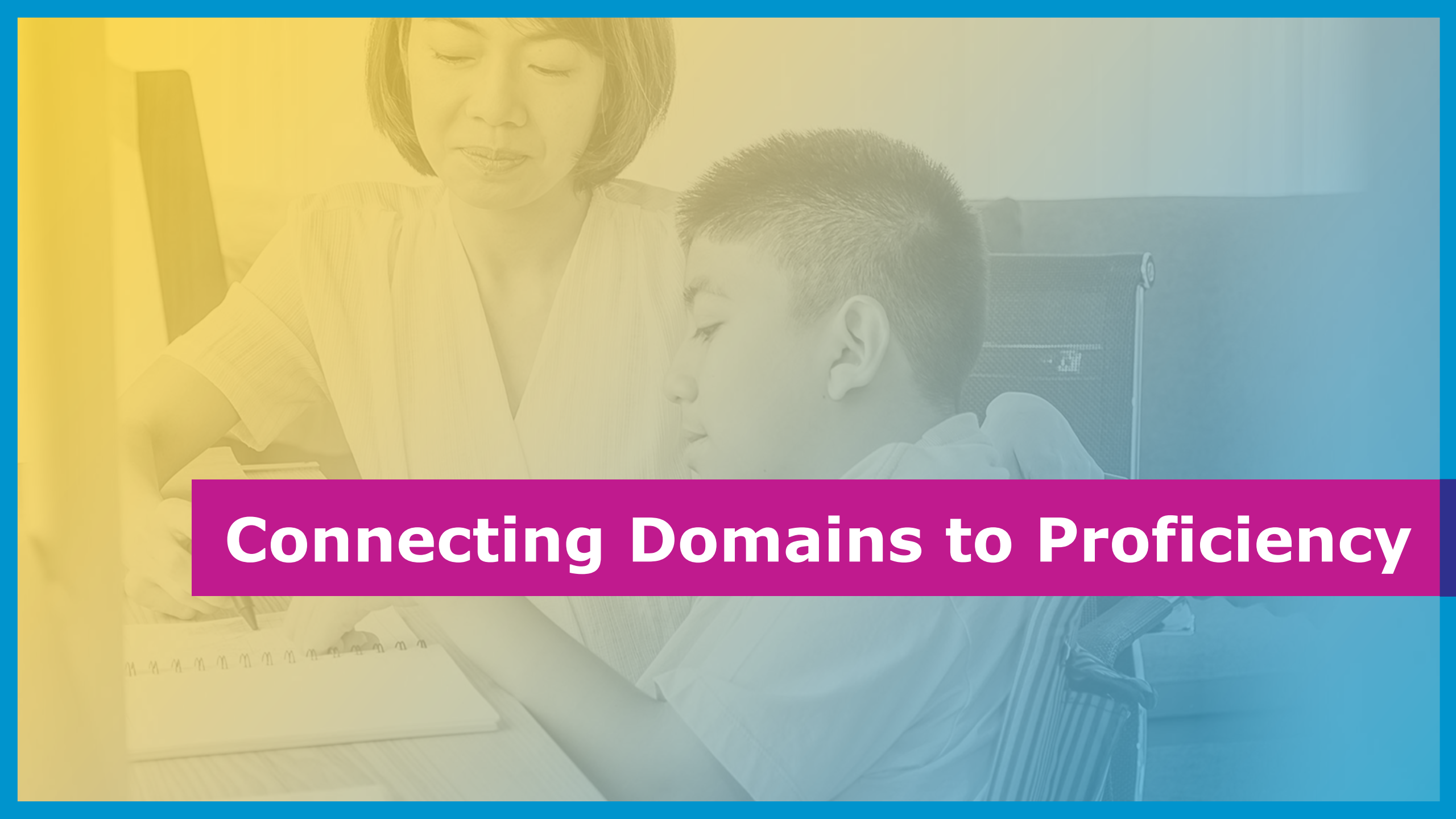
Provide a **richer picture** of student performance than an overall proficiency determination alone



Distinguish between students who may have the same overall score but who differ in skills and needs



Highlight the relationship between the domains in a way that the overall score does not

A woman and a young boy are looking at a notebook together. The woman is on the left, looking down at the notebook. The boy is on the right, looking at the notebook. The image has a yellow-to-blue gradient overlay. A purple banner with white text is at the bottom.

Connecting Domains to Proficiency

Policy Definition of Proficient

Proficient

Students are Proficient when they attain a level of English language skill necessary to **independently** produce, interpret, collaborate on, and succeed in grade-level content-related academic tasks in English. This is indicated on ELPA21 by attaining domain scores of Level 4 or higher in all domains.

Once Proficient on ELPA21, students are reclassified and no longer considered to be English learners.

Proficiency Levels

Proficient

Progressing

Emerging



Proficiency Determinations

Proficiency Determination	Domain Scores	EL Status
Emerging	All 1s and 2s	Student is eligible for EL Services
Progressing	Mix of 1–5 levels that is not all 1s/2s or all 4s/5s (e.g., 2233, 3333, 3443, 1234)	Student is eligible for EL Services
Proficient	All 4s and 5s	Student is NOT an English Learner
Proficiency Not Determined <i>(Screener only)</i>	Assessment not administered; no scores available	Student is eligible for EL Services

Proficiency Descriptors

Emerging

Students are **Emerging** when they have not yet attained a level of English language skill necessary to produce, interpret, and collaborate on grade-level, content-related academic tasks in English.

Progressing

Students are **Progressing** when, with support, they approach a level of English language skill necessary to produce, interpret, and collaborate, on grade-level, content-related academic tasks in English.

Proficient

Students are **Proficient** when they attain a level of English language skill necessary to independently produce, interpret, collaborate on, and succeed in grade-level, content-related academic tasks in English.

Proficiency Not Determined

Proficiency is Not Determined when a student did not engage with the test.

A background image showing two women in conversation. The woman on the left is in the foreground, wearing a dark polka-dot shirt, and is gesturing with her hand. The woman on the right is in the background, wearing a light blue shirt, and is looking towards the first woman. The image is overlaid with a yellow-to-blue gradient.

Connecting Scores to Instruction

Leveraging Domain Scores

Two students can share the same overall proficiency category while demonstrating different patterns across the domains.

Comparing domain levels reveals where performance is relatively stronger or still developing.

The proficiency determination answers how the student is classified; the domain scores tell us where the student is strong and where they need support in their growth.

This additional detail supports more accurate interpretation of the student's results and more effective instructional planning.

Examples of Domain Profiles

Domain	Performance
Listening	2
Reading	1
Speaking	1
Writing	1

Emerging

Students are Emerging when they have not yet attained a level of English language skill necessary to produce, interpret, and collaborate on grade-level content-related academic tasks in English. This is indicated on ELPA21 by attaining a profile of Levels 1 and 2 in all four domains.

Students scoring Emerging on ELPA21-AZELLA are identified for ongoing program support.

Examples of Domain Profiles

Domain	Performance
Listening	4
Reading	3
Speaking	4
Writing	3

Progressing

Students are Progressing when, with support, they approach a level of English language skill necessary to produce, interpret, and collaborate on grade-level content-related academic tasks in English. This is indicated on ELPA21 by attaining a profile with one or more domain scores above Level 2 that does not meet the requirements to be Proficient.

Students scoring Progressing on ELPA21 are identified for ongoing program support.

Examples of Domain Profiles

Domain	Performance
Listening	4
Reading	4
Speaking	5
Writing	4

Proficient

Students are Proficient when they attain a level of English language skill necessary to independently produce, interpret, collaborate on, and succeed in grade-level content-related academic tasks in English. This is indicated on ELPA21 by attaining domain scores of Level 4 or higher in all domains.

Once Proficient on ELPA21, students are reclassified and no longer considered to be English learners.

Impact of Domain-Level Information on Instruction



Identifies students' language strengths and needs within each domain, enabling more targeted instructional planning



Supports differentiation by informing the selection of language supports, tasks, and activities that address needs and build on strengths



Provides a basis for monitoring growth within individual domains over time



Supports more focused collaboration among educators when planning instruction, interventions, and language supports



Helps schools and districts identify domain-specific patterns that can inform professional learning and resource allocation

Two Progressing Students

Domain	Performance
Listening	3
Reading	3
Speaking	2
Writing	1

Domain	Performance
Listening	4
Reading	3
Speaking	2
Writing	2

A photograph of two women sitting at a table, smiling and engaged in conversation. The woman on the left is wearing a dark vest over a light-colored shirt, and the woman on the right is wearing a light-colored top. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a library or study area with bookshelves. The image is overlaid with a yellow-to-blue gradient.

Resources and Q&A

Resources and Support

Where can I find assessment-related resources and information?

- Arizona ELPA21 portal
 - <https://az.portal.cambiumast.com>
- ELPA21.org
 - <https://elpa21.org/>
 - <https://elpa21.org/resources/?state=Arizona>
- ADE's AZELLA site
 - <https://www.azed.gov/assessment/azella>

Where can I ask assessment-related questions?

- For technical assistance:
 - Arizona Help Desk azhelpdesk@cambiumassessment.com
- For state policy and administration questions:
 - AZELLA@azed.gov

Q&A Session



Thank You!

SOCIAL MEDIA

-  elpa21assess
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-  elpa21.bsky.social

DIRECT

-  elpa21.org
-  info@elpa21.org