

# ENL Newsletter

*PS89Q Where Believing is Achieving!*

**Teachers change  
the world one  
child at a time**

3rd grade students in the ENL  
Newcomer Class



## Closing the Achievement Gap for our ELLs

When we watched the video of the young boy Moises during our Welcome Back to school PD (“Immersion: Moises in Math Class”) it was clear that we’ve all had a student like him- maybe even three or four in just one school year. We are familiar with our Newcomer ELLs. They are the ones who stand out the most since they are new to the United States, the first time in public school, or speak little to no English. You will frequently hear teachers ask one another, “What can I do to help my newcomer who is reading at a level A when the majority of the class is on M?” However, in a few months, that same child is speaking English, reading books, and conversing with friends. By the end of the year, the student has made progress in English and is well on their way to the next grade. **However, what about our ELLs who do not stand out like our Newcomer students?**

These students have intermediate English language proficiency and may be labeled as a Transitioning/Expanding ENL student. Progress may have been made, but they are not moving up English proficiency level based on the final cumulative results of the NYSESLAT exam. These students are stagnant. Some may score average or below average on the ELA exam, and teachers might think it’s expected since they are English Language Learners. But how many years is this student going to stay at the Transitioning/Expanding level? Students who have been identified as ELL for 4 years at our school make up 15% of our ELL population. These are the ELLs that have been here long enough to sit for a 6 hour ELA test. They don’t stand out like our 1s or our 4s.

### ENL Proficiency by Level

Entering – Beginner

Emerging – Low Intermediate

Transitioning -Intermediate

Expanding –Advanced Intermediate

Commanding –Proficient



### P.S. 89 ENL Goals & Information:

- PS.89 is offering a Newcomer ENL class for all students who are new to PS. 89 and the United States
- Mondo begins next week!  
Your newcomer students should have received a letter of admittance into the program
- Lexia helps improve your ELLs reading levels
- Students must score either a 3 on the state ELA or pass out of the NYSESLAT to no longer be ENL
- ENL school-wide PD’s will be offered throughout the year - be on the look out!
- Look for PowerPoints and resources under the ENL Department tab on our school website

#### Our school wide goals are to:

- 10% of ENL students will pass out of the 2018 NYSESLAT exam
- 10% of all ELL students will score on or above grade level in ELA
- 16% of all ELL students will score on or above grade level in Math

### P.S.89 School ENL Data (based on 2017 NYSESLAT results)

Eligible students who took 2017 NYSESLAT	814	100%
Increased (went up)	187	35%
Passed out (scored CM)	58	7.1%
Regressed	83	10%
<b>No Progress</b>	<b>383</b>	<b>47%</b>
Students who have been ENL for 4 years	<b>119 (15%)</b>	<b>4 - Emerging 23-Transitioning 92-Expanding</b>

## How can teachers help our Transitioning/Expanding students increase skills across all modalities: speaking, listening, reading and writing?

### Speaking:

- Oral presentations, mid-workshop share, table conversations, book clubs, partner work, one-on-one conferences, grammar instruction embedded in speaking (past, present, future tense, irregular verbs), regular feedback

### Listening

- Read aloud, comprehension questions, think aloud's

### Reading

- Vocabulary, multiple exposure to vocabulary in different texts, word study (prefix, suffix, word roots), Guided Reading, fluency work, running records, reading their own writing, teacher or peer feedback ([The Reading Strategies](#) book is an excellent resource!)

### Writing

- Vocabulary, shared writing, grammar understanding embedded through instruction, regular teacher or peer feedback

## Explicitly Teaching Skills for the Test

### The NYSESLAT (Kindergarten)

Your students should master Foundations (identifying letters and sounds), writing CVC spelling words, and know the main digraphs (th, sh, ch, ck). During the writing portion of the exam, students will transcribe a 3-4-word sentence dictated by the teacher. The hardest part of the exam is Listening Comprehension since it requires them to listen to a longer passage and focus on answering a multiple choice question. There are generally two answers that look the closest, but the answer is obvious. Speaking in complete sentences is stressed, and knowledge of simple transition words (after, then, because, and, first, next, last, finally). There is plenty of picture support throughout the Listening portion of the exam, and short response. Your 4's should most likely pass out of the exam.

## The NYSESLAT (grades 1-2)

### Listening:

Phrases - Some questions begin with the language: ‘in the phrase’.... so students can be tricked by this information. Teach them what a **phrase** is so the question is not confusing.

Pronouns- (direct & indirect) Students need to know pronouns. There are several questions where students have to think back to the story and know who the pronoun is referring to.

#### For example:

Grandma and I put the books on the table. We like to read.

**Who are we?** A: the books B: the table C. read D: Grandma and I

### Reading:

This is a very tricky part for first graders because the reading passages are quite a high level. First graders and second graders take the same exam so the level is above many first graders. Another difficult part about this section is that students have to read the passage, the questions and all the answer choices by themselves. This is a skill that is usually not practiced in first grade. Tests are read by the teacher so this is the first time they must read by themselves. Pacing is a problem. Perhaps more practice with this skill during the year would be useful. Reading response would be a great activity to practice this where students have to read a passage and then read the questions and respond.

What we also noted is that often, to answer a question, the students must go back into the passage and find the answer (evidence) independently. Finding text evidence independently is tricky for a first grader.

**Teachers should practice this skill throughout the year with their students and modeling how to go back to the passage and underline the evidence.**

### Writing:

Students are asked to write both fiction and non-fiction. Students also need to be able to read and analyze a graphic organizer (T-chart, life cycle, bar graph etc.). They have to be able to use this information to support their writing. We recommend exposing students to graphic organizers throughout the year. We have found that sometimes first graders (unfortunately) go backwards in language proficiency. The reason for this is that first graders are at a disadvantage because they take the same exam as the second graders. It is quite a challenging assessment for first graders. The Reading & Listening section are the most difficult.

## The NYSESLAT (grades 3-4)

### Writing:

One major factor that caused many of our Expanding ELLs to receive a low writing score in the NYSESLAT is that they apply the same writing strategy from the ELA to the NYSESLAT. Students have to write at least one original sentence in order to receive a score 1. Many of our ELLs were so well trained in answering ELA questions, they simply answer the question by writing, “In the text it says that .... (and the rest is straight copy from the text). In this case, they will receive a score of 0 because “In the text it says that ..” is not considered a sentence. Sentences copied directly from the original text will not be scored) The NYSESLAT is designed to assess the ELLs’ language skills, while the ELA is more on comprehension.

### Recommended Skills needed to be taught to receive a 4:

#### Mechanics:

- Spelling (spelling patterns, word families, sight words)
- Nouns/ pronouns
- Plurals

Dimension	Score 0 – Entering A response at this level:	Score 1 – Emerging A response at this level:	Score 2 – Transitioning A response at this level:	Score 3 – Expanding A response at this level:	Score 4 – Commanding A response at this level:
Complexity of Language	Contains zero or few words or short phrases Is blank Is completely in a language other than English Is illegible or unintelligible <b>Is completely copied text</b> Is isolated words or a list of words or short phrases	Contains some words, short phrases, and occasionally simple sentences Includes at least one sentence May include adapted text in a well-constructed sentence	Contains mostly simple sentences Includes at least one expanded or complex sentence	Contains simple, expanded, and complex sentences	Contains a variety of simple, expanded, and complex sentences

- preposition
- Verb tenses (regular/irregular past tense)
- Subject-verb agreement rules
- Contractions
- Comparatives/superlatives
- Punctuation

Complexity of Language:

- Basic sentence structure
- Complex sentences- differences between independent and dependent clauses
- Compound sentences
- Compose compound sentences using coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS -for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)
- paraphrase (ELLs need to practice stating ideas using their own words. Sentences copied directly from the original text will not be scored)

Here is an excellent grammar & writing resource! [The Writing Revolution](#) by Judith Hochman & N. Wexler

## What is Comprehensible Input and where can I find more resources?

Often the language demands placed on our English Language Learners are overwhelming. It can seem like an impossible task for teachers to include them in activities which are beyond the reach of their language ability. Comprehensible Input refers to language our ELLs can understand even though they may not know all of the words and language structures involved. We can allow our ELLs to access this language which is just beyond their ability with the use of scaffolds. Some helpful scaffolds include:

- Use visuals to draw out the most important vocabulary, concepts, and language structures.
- Dramatize key parts of the lesson in a way that emphasizes meaning.
- Restate a key part of the lesson in simpler language that helps to make tricky concepts comprehensible.
- Make a concept or strategy clear by giving an especially accessible example.

*For more ideas on scaffolds, refer to Comprehensible Input tab under the Inhouse PD resources on the ENL section of our school website.*



## ELL Misunderstandings & Cultural Sensitivity

### Lack of Motivation

According to the TESOL International Organization, motivation plays a significant role in the process of learning a language. The core to motivation is one's intrinsic goals and desires. A good teacher, then, must tap into the sources of intrinsic motivation and find ways to connect them with external motivational factors that can be brought to a classroom setting. The following strategies are effective ways to increase language learners' external motivation:

- Create a friendly atmosphere in the classroom
- Connect language learning to students' interests outside of class
- Provide group activities to develop students confidence

### Amount of time it takes to speak English conversationally and/or academically

When a person is learning a new language, they first learn how to carry on a conversation. They acquire the language necessary to navigate their classroom, school, and neighborhood. At times, it may seem that a student is a proficient speaker of English. However, this student may only have conversational fluency. We need to make sure that content-

specific vocabulary is presented with a visual/gesture. When it is time to turn and talk, display the prompt and a sentence starter for the students.

### Homework Completion

Some students go home to an empty house after school. Many parents of our ELLs work countless hours to support their families. It may be difficult for an ELL to go home and complete homework on their own. If you notice students are having trouble bringing in their homework, ask yourself two questions: 1.) Is this homework too difficult for the student to complete? 2.) Does the student have someone or something (a tablet, computer) to use if they need help? Make sure that you communicate to their parent/guardian that they are not completing their homework.

### Attendance

In some countries, there are no strict truancy laws. Parents who come from these countries may not understand the importance of attendance. If you notice that a student is frequently absent or late, you should reach out to the parent/guardian and voice your concerns. Sending a note home may not fully express your concern. Try and make a meeting with the parent (and a translator) so that they can grasp the importance of attendance. You can also create an incentive chart with the student, which would give the student ownership.

## P.S.89's ENL Newcomer Class

Ms. Cassaday'ho and Ms. Somers teach our ENL Newcomers grades K-2, and 3-5. They use a combination of thematic based learning, emergent literacy skills, learning English through content, and small-group instruction, while assessing students across all 4 modalities. They are meeting the needs of our Newcomer ELLs by providing them with the space they need to feel comfortable speaking, and sharing their ideas (even if it's in their home language (L1)). Students in this group range between the pre-A - L reading level, and are placed as an Entering or Emerging ENL student.

Please visit room 351 to take a Newcomer Kit that has phonics, picture cards, sight-word cards, and literacy games for your struggling students.

### Helpful Teacher Resources:

- Serravallo, Jennifer (2015). **The Reading Strategies Book**. *Heinemann*
- Serravallo, Jennifer (2015). **The Writing Strategies Book**. *Heinemann*
- Hochman, Judith and Wexler, N. **The Writing Revolution**. *Jossey-Bass Publishers*.
- Foundations Kit for grades K-1 (request from P.S.89 Supply Room)
- P.S.89 Website - ENL Department
- Engage NY - NYSESLAT Rubrics and information
- ENL Newcomer Kits (lakeshore resources, phonics, letter-sound games, leveled A-D books **rm. 351**)

## Sneak Peak into Volume 5: Writing Strategies

Warm Regards,

Mr. Serin & P.S.89 teachers

Ms. Somers (5th grade/Newcomers), Mr. Hill (4th grade/ENL), Ms. Raico (1st grade/ENL) , Ms. Erichsen (1st grade ENL), Mrs. Fitting (4th grade ENL), and Mrs. Ureña (5th grade ENL)