

Odell Education Texas High School Literacy Program

The Odell Education Texas High School Literacy Program inspires creativity, builds knowledge, and enhances the skills students possess through student-centered and student-led analyses of robust texts and topics. Our instructional units empower students to pose questions, inquire deeply, reflect, and evolve as independent thinkers and engaged participants in a learning community.

Support for Students with Diverse Learning Needs

Support for students is central to the design of the Odell Education Texas High School Literacy Program and is offered on several levels. Support is embedded into instruction itself, including the suite of Reading Closely and Note-Taking Tools. Teaching notes provide options and strategies specific to student support and differentiation, and reference guides provide centralized resources for literacy concepts and processes and offer vocabulary, sentence starters, and other writing support. Independent reading offers students opportunities to increase background knowledge of the text or topic of study and their understanding of the English language. In addition, units are conceptually organized around text sets, which supports cohesive knowledge and vocabulary development. Units also employ backward design, so all students, including diverse learners, understand the demands of the unit and have opportunities to build and practice their skills before they complete the Culminating Tasks.

Students might read below or above their grade level for myriad reasons, including but not limited to, disability or acquiring English as an additional language. Some students may read at grade level but write above or below grade level. Others may demonstrate difficulty reading, but may speak and present above the grade-level expectations; still others may be fluent readers and writers, but experience difficulty speaking. In short, students themselves are diverse and represent a wide and varying body of skill sets; there is no one, single prototype for students who need additional support or who would benefit from an additional challenge. As such, all students are supported while reading and analyzing texts and are held to high academic expectations for literacy, regardless of their demonstrated mastery of skills. Students designated as having one or more disabilities, English learners, or students in gifted and talented education programs are afforded support throughout the program. The program supports the needs of *all* students—students whose work reflects grade-level mastery, students whose work is below the expectations of the grade level, students who are English learners, students with disabilities, identified or not, and students whose work exceeds the expectations for grade-level mastery.

Specifically, students who identify as English learners, from Beginner to Advanced High, benefit from ELPS based language development in an environment that values their linguistic and cultural diversity as they engage in content work at the grade-level expectation. While not all English learners will need additional support, for those who do, the program is designed for students to have ongoing oral discussion with their peers, often using newly acquired academic and Tier 2 vocabulary with sample discussion stems as support. Through these discussions, English learners are able to strengthen their Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive

Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). Units are designed to increase in their cognitive demand, and within the units, students closely read texts in activities designed to target language development by focusing on specific skills (e.g., examining specific sentences for their functionality and purpose). Writing is an ongoing expectation, allowing students to strengthen, refine, and enhance their English skills so they can meet the demands of any discipline.

Similarly, students with disabilities may benefit from additional support as well. The units are designed conceptually or thematically, providing a central home base for students to return to and cement their learning. In the units, students have a range of ways to demonstrate their learning, both orally and in writing.

As the needs of students are likely to be diverse and wide-ranging in a class, teachers are supported in meeting the needs of students who need additional support in the teaching notes section, Student Support and Differentiation. Opportunities for differentiation are often presented as questions for the teacher to reflect on and use to make instructional decisions. The questions are designed to inspire teachers to reflect on their students, the level of mastery evidenced in students' work, and the content itself. Finally, the prompting questions are a way for teachers to assess points of difficulty to provide appropriate scaffolding.

The following principles uphold the design of the program, specific to supporting students with diverse learning needs:

1. All students' language, literacy, cultural knowledge, communities, and diversity are assets that should be leveraged as they develop and express their understanding in English language arts.
2. All students receive the same opportunities to be challenged and to succeed.
3. All students regularly engage with meaningful, grade-appropriate, complex texts and content.
4. All students engage in academic discourse and meaningful interactions with others through grade-appropriate texts and content, even with developing language.
5. All students have opportunities to meet grade-level standards through appropriate scaffolds and supports.
6. All students are provided with instructional supports that build on and enhance what occurs during regular instruction, but supports should not supplant or compromise rigor or content.
7. All students have access to language instruction that is integrated with reading and writing instruction and is focused on meaning and communication.

Students Whose Work Reflects below Grade-Level Expectations

Student work may reflect the need for additional instructional support and guidance for many reasons, including that the student may have a learning disability, is learning English as a second language, may have experienced interrupted formal schooling, or may have experienced trauma. The program is designed to meet the diverse needs of learners in an ongoing fashion through the following best-practices:

- Attention to Social and Community Learning
 - Students connect, associate, collaborate, and cooperate with their peers in an accepting, respectful community to exchange ideas and build toward independence by participating in formal and informal academic discussions in which they are expected to use academic language.
- Attention to Ethnic, Racial, and Identity inclusion in Texts
 - Students read texts that feature people of diverse races and ethnicities, languages, and ability.
- Attention to Context to Transfer Knowledge
 - Students cement newly acquired vocabulary by considering the words in familiar contexts, examining cognates, and creating new context.
- Attention to Oral Language Development
 - Students participate in peer activities in which they can hear and imitate more fluent speakers; students are encouraged to hold discussions initially in their home language to gather their thoughts before sharing in English.
- Attention to Task and Purpose
 - Students benefit from understanding the focus of a lesson or activity.
- Attention to Explicit, Systematic Instruction
 - Student activities are designed by providing explicit instruction, often providing a structure for students to note and track their thoughts.
- Use of Scaffolds and Learning Tools to Codify Learning
 - Students are provided a suite of tools, materials, and resources to support their learning, including sentence frames and conversation starters.
- Setting Meaningful and Attainable Goals

- In each unit, students set goals for vocabulary usage and sentence exploration on the Section Diagnostics and Culminating Task.

- Using Data to Inform Instruction
 - All assessments in the program are a rich source of data for teachers to evaluate the quality of student work. By using data from the assessments, teachers can select activities for reteaching. Each evaluation plan identifies upcoming lessons that target specific skills for reteaching opportunities.

- Metacognition and Reflection
 - Students reflect on their learning in an ongoing fashion throughout the program, bringing awareness to what they have learned and how they learned it, instilling self-responsibility for their learning.

Students Whose Work Reflects above Grade-Level Expectations

Student work may reflect the need for extended instruction for many reasons, including that the student may identify as gifted and talented. The program is designed to meet the diverse needs of such learners in the following ways:

- Students are encouraged to experiment with their own writing styles and structures on assessments.
- Students are given opportunities to lead small groups and teams.
- Students are encouraged to make metaphorical connections for newly acquired vocabulary.
- Students are encouraged to make concrete and conceptual connections between texts or topics in one unit, to text and topics in different units, and across other disciplines.
- Students are encouraged to develop their own note-taking habits and styles if they no longer need the support offered on tools.
- Students can draw on tools from the Literacy Toolbox as they learn to recognize their own proficiencies and needs for specific supports, given the specific demands of text or tasks.
- Students are encouraged to pursue their own interests at their own pace in the Foundation and Application units.
- Students are encouraged to pursue independent reading options with texts written at a complexity level above the grade-level expectation.

Support Accessing Grade-Level Content

Unit Topics & Text Sets

The more students know about a topic, the better they are able to comprehend complex texts associated with that topic. In the program, lessons are organized around compelling unit topics and themes, not isolated and disconnected reading comprehension strategies. Students read multiple texts related to these topics and themes, and each interaction with a text serves to build students' schema so that they have the knowledge to access increasingly complex texts. At the same time, each interaction reinforces and enhances students' skills, such as reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. Conceptually designed units also increase reader engagement and interest, creating a positive reading experience for students.

Tools

Instruction in the program includes tools that provide students with a precise and guided manner for reading texts closely, attending to pertinent textual details, and developing writing skills. These tools use clear, visual organizers to comprehend complex text, and they help students understand the relationships among those details and the connections and observations they make from the text.

While units have specialized handouts that cater to specific elements of their topics or texts, they also draw on agnostic tools from the Literacy Toolbox that are used throughout the program. Students closely read using the tools regardless of the text and topic, ensuring continuity of skills development and procedures.

Teachers are encouraged to assign tools as needed throughout the program. The need for additional support may vary from text to text and passage to passage.

Guiding Questions

Students use guiding questions to focus their reading, helping them to focus on important parts of the text. The **Questioning Reference Guide** provides multiple sample guiding questions students can use to focus their reading and access complex texts. Students also use question sets consisting of text-specific questions to support their reading and analysis.

Rereading & Chunking Text

Complex text is chunked into sections for students to focus on during rereading, providing students who need additional reading support opportunities to interact with grade-level text. Rereading texts gives students another opportunity to comprehend complex text, and the question sets provide an additional access point to help students peel off the layers of the text to arrive at a deeper understanding of its meaning. The text is divided into small chunks in order to focus student analysis of important ideas.

Read Alouds & Modeling

At key parts in the instruction, teachers read text aloud so students can listen to the cadence and structure while also following along. By listening to a proficient reader, students pick up on natural pauses and pronunciation of words. Teachers also model the use of tools in which they think aloud and discuss what they pay attention to as they read a text. Therefore, teachers model reading proficiently, using the skills and tools that help students learn to read closely. Students see the tools and skills modeled before applying them.

Academic Vocabulary & Grammar Instruction

Instruction on vocabulary and grammar is grounded in the context of the unit texts and topics; students understand how language functions in the context of the texts they read. Units include suggested vocabulary teachers can select and key words to pre-teach that assist with comprehension, but students also learn how to use context clues to define words. Students can also conduct word sorts in which they group together related words to help establish relationships between them. Teachers of English learners and below grade-level readers are encouraged to use additional vocabulary building strategies, such as Word Walls, whereby students can visually reference the meaning of key words in the classroom as they read and discuss texts. Teaching notes also encourage students to identify related cognates in their home language when appropriate.

Students are also encouraged to understand and utilize specialized language of the English language arts classroom with the use of guiding questions. The questions in the **Questioning Reference Guide** and question sets utilize vocabulary related to reading skills that students can apply while reading and discussing texts. Additionally, many guiding and text-specific questions direct students to identify and think about key words and phrases in texts.

Students learn about language usage through the study of mentor sentences that come from the texts they read rather than from ambiguous examples. Supported by the **Working with Mentor Sentences Tool**, students study example sentences before trying the strategy themselves. Students are continually encouraged to not only add to their **Mentor Sentence Journal** as they encounter sentences they wish to better understand or emulate, but also to use the examples in preparation for Section Diagnostics and Culminating Tasks. Embedding grammar instruction in the context of the texts and topics makes the understanding of language use more comprehensible and meaningful for English learners.

Working Teams & Discussion

Students often work in pairs and teams to read and analyze texts, and conduct peer reviews of their work. Working in teams gives students opportunities to regularly communicate their understanding of text and practice using academic vocabulary. Teachers can group students in various ways, sometimes by reading abilities, sometimes by interests or target text, sometimes heterogeneously to pair less-able readers with more advanced readers. By reading in teams, students practice talking about texts in a structured, supported context. Teaching notes offer suggestions for when students might work in homogeneous groups, either by grouping by home language or ability.

Funds of Knowledge

Students bring a wealth of knowledge and understanding into the classroom. This includes both cultural knowledge and knowledge of language. English learners' understanding of their home language can strengthen their understanding of English. Teaching notes frequently encourage teachers to ask English learners how sentence structures relate to those in their home language. Notes also give ideas on when students might annotate or hold discussions in their home language, or relate language use or vocabulary to their home language.

Teachers are encouraged to activate background knowledge at the beginning of units. Activating students' prior knowledge helps teachers gather information about what students already know or misunderstand about a topic. These activities can illuminate students' underlying beliefs about the topic under investigation, expose misunderstandings, and uncover their preexisting knowledge. They also give teachers opportunities to know what students do and do not know or understand, providing an opportunity to adjust instruction. Strategies utilized in the program include anticipation guides, K-W-L activities, and the use of Notice and Wonder tables. All of these provide students opportunities to share what they know about a particular topic and begin forming an understanding of what they will read and analyze.