

Task Order 27

Study of Digital Learning Resources for Instructing English Learner Students

**Task 4.4 (Part 10) Case Study — District Director of Curriculum and
Instruction Interview Protocol**

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District Director of Curriculum and Instruction

Interview Protocol

Our interview today focuses on how technology resources, or as we term them, Digital Learning Resources, or DLRs, are used in this district in instructing English learner, or EL, students. Please consider DLRs used in supporting EL students' learning of both language and academic content. We are interested in all of the different settings in which EL students are instructed, including both mainstream or general education classrooms as well as the instructional settings where EL specialist teachers work with EL students. When answering questions, we would like you to think about how DLRs have been used for instruction with ELs in the current school year. We will also ask you some questions about general DLR use so that we can understand the similarities and differences in the use of DLRs in the EL and the general student populations.

Before we continue, I would like to review our consent form with you. [*Note to interviewer: Hand interviewee the consent form and highlight the following information: (1) the study team will protect or maintain confidentiality for data collected, except as required by law; (2) only the study team will have access to data with identifiable information; (3) responses will be aggregated; and (4) no individual will be identified by name in any reporting. After reviewing these highlights, please ask the respondent to read and sign the form before proceeding with the interview.*]

Definitions

Digital Learning Resources (DLRs) refers to individual applications, software, programs or websites, hardware, and other digital resources that engage students in learning activities and support students' learning goals. We have defined three categories of DLRs; individual DLRs from the different categories may be provided in a comprehensive package (what we call an "integrated DLR set"). In discussing DLRs with you, we are primarily interested in the software or programs used for instruction; in addition, please indicate the hardware and infrastructure needed to support the use of a particular DLR.

English learner (EL) refers to students not born in the United States or students whose native language is other than English and students who come from non-English-dominant environments, whose skills in English are so limited that they derive little benefit from regular school instruction. "English learner" also refers to students who have no proficiency in English. *Note: If your district has an operational definition for EL students, then use your district's definition in responding.*

[*Note to interviewers: Hand interviewee the definitions sheet and briefly review the three categories of DLRs.*] Do you have any questions about these categories? We'll be using them in some of our questions in the interview today. Please feel free to refer to this sheet throughout the interview.

Background Questions

We'd like to start by learning a little bit about you and the context in which you work.

1. Please describe your role and your responsibilities.
 - a. How long have you been in your role?

- b. To what extent do you or your office support schools or teachers in using technology for instruction?
2. How do you view the use of DLRs, or technology in general, for teaching and learning?
 3. Has the district articulated goals for the use of DLRs in instruction? *[If yes] What are they?*
 - a. Are these goals for the same for all students, including ELs? Or do goals regarding the use of DLRs differ for instructing EL students?
 - b. Do any technology goals relate to how DLRs can be used to engage families? If so, what are they? Are these goals different for ELs and their families?

DLR Use With ELs

4. Has the district identified specific DLRs for teachers to use with ELs? *[If yes] Which DLRs are these?*
 - a. What purposes or goals do these DLRs address? (E.g., *Student engagement, motivation, skills practice, content knowledge, family engagement, communication, language learning, literacy, content area learning*)
 - b. What features or functions of these DLRs do you consider make them useful for ELs? (E.g., *read-aloud functions, translation, first language support*)
 - c. Are these DLRs intended for use with all ELs? Or are some DLRs specifically targeted at particular subgroups of EL students? Are any of these DLRs also intended to be used with non-EL students?
 - d. Are these DLRs intended to be used by mainstream teachers, EL specialist teachers, or both?
5. Has the district identified any DLRs for teachers to use in general? *[If yes] Which DLRs are they?*
 - a. What purposes or goals do those DLRs address? (E.g., *Student engagement, motivation, skills practice, content knowledge, family engagement, communication, language learning, literacy, content area learning*)

Identifying, Selecting, and Purchasing DLRs

6. Does the district have a specific process in place for identifying and selecting DLRs for use with ELs? *[If yes] Please describe the process.*

[If the district has a process for identifying and selecting DLRs for use with ELs, proceed with the following questions; otherwise, skip to the next section.]
 - a. In choosing DLRs for EL students, does the district look for specific characteristics, features, or functions? (E.g., *practice, adaptive learning, translation, games or game-like elements, read-aloud, first language support*)
 - b. To what extent is this process similar or different from how DLRs for general use are selected?

Professional Development and Support Around DLR Use With ELs

7. Do you or your office provide professional development (PD) or support for teachers that focuses on DLR use? *[If yes, proceed with the following questions; otherwise, skip to the next question.]*
8. Does the district provide PD that focuses on the use of DLRs with EL students? *[If yes] Please describe that PD.*
 - a. Who provides the PD?

- b. How frequently does the district offer this PD to teachers?
 - c. What topics does the PD cover?
 - d. Do mainstream teachers and EL specialist teachers receive different PD related to using DLRs with ELs? *[If yes]* Please describe any differences.
9. Apart from PD, does the district offer supports to teachers focused on the use of DLRs for ELs? *[E.g., coaching, technical assistance, IT support, other resources, etc.]*
- a. Do mainstream teachers and EL specialist teachers receive different supports related to using DLRs for instruction? *[If yes]* Please describe any differences.
10. What additional PD or supports related to DLR use do you believe teachers of ELs need?

Barriers Related to the Use of DLRs With ELs

11. In your view, has the district encountered barriers that make it difficult for teachers to use DLRs for all students? *[If yes]* Please describe these barriers.

(E.g., teachers' comfort with and motivation to use technology, availability of technology infrastructure or hardware, lack of technical support to promote effective use, concerns about student privacy.)

- a. Do financial or structural barriers, such as internet connectivity or hardware availability, make using DLRs for instruction difficult?
12. In your view, has the district encountered barriers that make it difficult for teachers to use DLRs with EL students? *[If yes]* Please describe these barriers.

(E.g., access to DLRs for EL students, access to PD around DLR use with EL students, difficulty in finding DLRs that EL students can use independently or that can challenge them appropriately, lack of alignment with ELs' needs, structural factors such as itinerant EL teachers who do not have a homeroom, thus making technology use difficult.)

- a. Has the district been able to address these barriers? *[If yes]* In what ways?

Evaluation of DLR Use

13. How would you rate the success of DLR use with ELs in your district?
- a. Can you provide examples of DLRs that are being used successfully with ELs in this district? What makes these DLRs successful?
 - b. What outcomes do you use to evaluate the success of DLRs with ELs?
 - c. In your view, what features or components of these DLRs have made them useful for EL students?
14. Can you provide examples of DLRs that are being used successfully with students in this district? *[If yes]* What are they?
- a. What makes these DLRs successful?
 - b. What outcomes do you use to evaluate the success of DLRs?
15. Does your district have a process for evaluating the use of DLRs with ELs? *[If yes]* Please describe this process.

- a. To what extent are you involved in this process?
- b. How does this process inform or guide decision-making at the district about DLR use with ELs?

Gaps in DLRs

16. Do you have suggestions for improved DLR design or use to support the learning needs of ELs [or students in general]?
17. Do you have suggestions for how the district could better support teachers in using DLRs to instruct ELs [or students in general]?
18. Are there lessons you have learned through your work using DLRs with ELs that you can share with other educators? *[If yes]* What are they?

This is the end of the interview.

Do you have anything to add regarding DLR use in your district or DLR use related to EL students?

Do you have any questions for us?

Thank you very much for your time.