



**MA Public Adult Education
Professional Development System**
A PUBLIC ADULT EDUCATION OF MA PROGRAM

Transcript: Overview of MA ELPS – Part 2

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Welcome back. In this video, we will be taking a closer look at what’s inside the Mass ELPS document itself: the standards and benchmarks, and how they’re organized within the language strands and through the levels. Please have a copy of the Mass ELPS for adult education with you, as I’ll be referring to it several times throughout the video.

This chart shows all of the Mass English Language Proficiency Standards. You can find this chart in Appendix B in the standards document. Listed in the first column on the left are the five standard topics, which you might remember from the previous video: focus on meaning; organization and style; components of English; use of effective strategies; and use of diverse media.

These topics run across the three language skill areas, or strands, which you can see across the top: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. So, for example, Standard One focuses on finding meaning in reading, producing meaningful writing, and communicating meaning through speaking and listening.

Similarly, Standard Two is the same across the strands—understanding and using the organization or structure of a text effectively when reading, writing, or speaking and listening. Please pause the video now and take a moment to read through Standards Three,

Four, and Five.

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One thing to notice is how manageable these five standards are. One can easily remember these five topics, or the standards in general terms: meaning, organization, components of English, strategies, and diverse media. Then it is just a matter of applying that general topic to the language skill area to get at the standard itself.

Another organizational feature of the Mass ELPS is the threads. Here you see a sample of the threads in Standard One. The threads are the subcategories within each standard. While they're not identical across the language strands, you can still find some continuity. For example, in Standard One across the board, there is a subcategory or thread that focuses on increasingly complex texts and another thread that focuses on arguments.

Don't worry about remembering all of the threads. They're in the document to help you locate particular information when you're looking for it. You'll see them throughout the document and in a chart in Appendix B.

Now let's take a look at a standard thread and benchmarks across the levels. You may remember this example from the first video. This chart shows Reading. The standard is Focus on Meaning. The student levels are one through six. The first thread is increasingly complex texts, and then the benchmarks across all levels.

This is the layout of all of the standards and benchmarks across the levels throughout the Mass ELPS document, though less colorful. There is another layout with the standards and benchmarks laid out by each level that we'll talk about later, but for now let's look more closely at this one. We've color-coded this image to assist in identifying each of the elements as I talk about them.

First, we see the blue row at the top: Reading Standard One, which may be becoming familiar to you at this point. The letters and numbers in the parentheses after the standard indicate the source documents for the standard.

In the pink row, you'll see that each standard is divided into the six NRS levels, from Beginning Literacy Level One to Advanced Level Six. Note that the levels are not SPLs, as in the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework.

In the green row below, you'll see the capital letter A and the first of the three threads in Reading Standard One. Remember this from the previous slide. The first thread focuses on types of texts and the purpose for reading, and the benchmarks below share this focus. The last three rows on this slide—purple, peach, and gray—contain the benchmarks.

If you'd like, pause the video and take a moment to read across the first set of benchmarks. Did you notice the increasingly complex texts, with examples of what a complex text looks like at each level? A note about these examples: they are not exhaustive or required. They are included to clarify what the benchmark is referring to and are meant to be helpful, not restrictive or prescriptive.

Did you also notice the words “with support” in the Level One benchmark? You'll see this often in the benchmarks as an indication that you can increase the rigor and complexity in your ESOL instruction, even at the lower levels, with scaffolding or support.

Now perhaps pause the video again and take a look at the second row. Here, the benchmarks focus on increasingly complex activities a reader might do to build knowledge from those increasingly complex texts. Notice that at Level One, the benchmark is that a learner will read and answer questions about simple text. At Level Two, it's to read and describe short relevant texts. In Level Three, it's read and summarize simple narrative,

explanatory, and literary texts. Level Four is read and integrate a range of texts, and Level Five is read and synthesize, before you reach Level Six, which is read and analyze.

You'll see this pattern of developing critical thinking skills throughout the standards and benchmarks. Let's take a look at the last row in gray, where the benchmarks focus on carrying out increasingly complex research. You may notice that there is no benchmark at the Beginning Literacy level. In a few reading and writing strands, there are no benchmarks for this level. However, this is not the case in any of the listening-speaking standards, because beginning ELLs are generally stronger in listening and speaking than they are in reading or writing.

So, if you are teaching this level, you wouldn't necessarily expect learners to read or write research, but you would want to consider how to harness their listening and speaking skills to conduct research as a way to prepare them for the next level.

Let's look at another example of a benchmark across the levels and the idea of scaffolding. In the second standard for writing, the focus is on organization and style, and Thread A focuses on organizing writing. Here we see the benchmarks for the first three levels of the first thread.

The Beginning Literacy benchmark indicates that students need support and a model or sentence stem to write a sentence. In the next level, Low Beginning, students are expected to produce information in a sentence without that support. Support that is used and then removed when it is no longer needed is called scaffolding, and you'll see that word or concept often in the benchmarks at the lower levels. But even where you don't see it, scaffolding is always an option and an effective technique for preparing learners for independent work later.

In the next, High Beginning level, learners are expected to produce a short, simple paragraph. Tasks move from less complex to more complex as the NRS level increases, and learners move from being less independent learners to being more independent.

You've seen a sample from the reading strand and from the writing strand. Now let's look at the listening and speaking strand. In the Mass ELPS, listening and speaking are together in one strand. Within the listening and speaking strand, there are threads and benchmarks that focus on listening, others that focus on speaking, and others that focus on both listening and speaking.

Let's look at some examples. In this example, we're looking at the listening and speaking strand, Standard One, Focus on Meaning, Level Five, High Intermediate, and Thread A: carrying out increasingly complex communicative tasks.

The first benchmark focuses on listening skills and, at this level, would include tasks that might not be so familiar to learners, such as interview questions, digital recordings, or multi-step directions or instructions. The second benchmark focuses on speaking tasks, and this is the level which would include making an argument in a public, professional, or academic setting; advocating for needs with unfamiliar or unsympathetic decision makers; or explaining gaps in work history. The third benchmark combines the two in an interactive conversation.

The last thing I'd like to talk about is the notation used in the Mass ELPS. Let's deconstruct this one: R 2.A.2.c. The strand is designated by a capital letter—R, W, or L/S. The standard is designated by a number. The thread is designated by a capital letter, followed by a period. The level is designated by a number, and the benchmark is designated by a lowercase letter.

Take a few seconds to find this benchmark in the document. As you can see, the notation format makes it easy to locate the benchmark in the document. That said, we encourage you to write out the wording of the benchmark while you're becoming familiar with them as a way to learn.

We've come to the end of Part Two of the overview of the Mass ELPS for adult education. So far, we've heard about the how and the why the Mass ELPS were developed. We've talked about the organization of the document—the strands, levels, standards, threads, and benchmarks. We've talked about increased complexity of the benchmarks through the levels and the notation format.

Moving right along, in Part Three, the final session, we'll take a look at how you can use this document, what the different layouts are, how they lend themselves to different uses, and the ways in which rigor is woven throughout the Mass ELPS.

Thank you so much for joining us. See you in Part Three.

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