

# Principal Accelerates Listening, Speaking and Reading Scores for her ELs using ELD Links™



## Challenge

For over five years, Rancho de la Nación's English Learners have historically underperformed, but finding a cost effective, robust oral language development program to accelerate their learning while, at the same time, conducting a first year systematic ELD implementation, was a real challenge.

## Solution

Using Lingual Learning's **ELD Links™**, Hernandez implemented Rancho de la Nación's before and afterschool program - a strategic, intentionally targeted approach to intervention.

## Results

- Met Mid-Year Safe Harbor goals for EL students according to Renaissance Learning STAR Reading Assessments.
- EL students accelerated in reading faster than all non EL students.
- 24 point gain in proficient reading levels for ELs using **ELD Links™** as compared to 11 point gain for all Rancho students.
- Within six months, 93% of ELD Links™ intervention students (those without SSTs) improved 1.0 to 1.5 years on the ADEPT, which is closely aligned to CELDT levels for Listening and Speaking skills.
- ELs using **ELD Links™**, particularly long-term ELs, are more language confident, upbeat, and willing to share information during content area class instruction.

## Focused Fluency Practice That Complements ELD

In 2014, when Deborah Hernandez first came to Rancho de la Nación, a bustling TK-6 school ten miles from the California-Mexico border, her quest was to close the troublesome achievement gap for Rancho's English Learners. For the last five years, CELDT scores showed that students consistently struggled in Listening and Speaking skills, especially long term ELs.

"Before we can get to comprehension or inferencing or any higher level critical thinking, students have to have the fluency," said Hernandez, a veteran teacher and administrator with over 22 years in education.

Rancho de la Nación, located in National City's National School District (NSD), is 65% English Learner and Hispanic. The city has the second poorest population in California.

Hernandez knew her English Learners needed a double dose of oral language support to catch up to their English-Only peers. Yet, finding a program that fit her site's budgetary constraints and went above and beyond her district's newly mandated systematic ELD program was a challenge.

## Strong, Budget Friendly Oral Language Support

Hernandez and her team discovered ELD Links™ and used it to create a strategic, targeted before and after school intervention program. She described it as Rancho de la Nación's Tier 3 intervention, which goes above and beyond Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports. The team utilized all program elements, and taught **ELD Links™** with fidelity.

"When we looked at **ELD Links™**, it had the oral language practice, it had sentence frames, real life applications – everything that fit our profile," Hernandez said. **ELD Links™** is Lingual Learning's budget-conscious, ELD/C-CCS-aligned listening and speaking program designed to develop students' language confidence.

**ELD Links™** simple two-page lesson design uses targeted academic language frames, robust vocabulary, and fun game-like activities to encourage maximum language output – program elements that specifically met Rancho's needs.



## Consistent, Targeted Intervention Used with Fidelity

Since October 2014, six of Rancho de la Nación's most experienced and fully credentialed teachers spent three days each week using the **ELD Links™** preplanned 20 to 30 minute lessons.

Thanks to a hefty dose of coordinated effort, and expert professional development from Lingual Learning's Maya Goodall, Rancho's staff seamlessly implemented both **ELD Links™** and the district's Systematic ELD at the same time. Hernandez selected 70 of Rancho's neediest 1st through 6th grade students, those furthest behind in Reading, Speaking

and Listening skills. She used two solid data points: disaggregated 2014 Speaking and Listening CELDT scores and the district's research based Renaissance Learning STAR Reading Assessments.

Her particular focus was her Long-Term English Learners who remained stuck at the Intermediate level. "It's a common challenge site wide, district wide, and statewide, so we literally hand selected those students," said Hernandez, who served for three years as an assistant principal at Poway Unified School District before returning to NSD in 2010.

*"The students - especially those involved with ELD Links™ - are more willing to share information. They're coming out of their shells, seem more upbeat, and are more confident during class instruction."*

### District / Student Population / EL Population

National School District / 6,700 pupils / 57% ELs

### District Reclassification Rate

13%

### ELD Instructional Plan

Dual Language Immersion, Bilingual, Systematic ELD

### School Site / Student Population

Rancho de la Nación/ 464 students / 85% Hispanic, 11% Asian, 4% Other

## One to One-and-a-Half Years Growth in Listening and Speaking.

With the help of **ELD Links™**, Rancho's targeted Tier 3 intervention bore fruit. "**Most students made at least a year's growth,**" Hernandez said. "Findings were very strong," she said.

**By May 2015, students accelerated between 1.0 and 1.5 bands on the receptive and expressive scales for the ADEPT, as compared to 2014 Listening and Speaking CELDT scores. In one 5th and 6th grade cohort, for example, 55% of 5th graders and 87% of 6th graders accelerated at least one level for Receptive and/or Expressive skills on the ADEPT.**

In some cases, students **jumped a band in as little as 11 instructional intervention days.** Students attended the 66-day before and after school program for an average of 25 instructional days through May 2015.

Using **ELD Links™** in combination with NSD's Systematic ELD program, students in the program also experienced accelerated growth on Rancho's Renaissance STAR Reading Assessment, helping Rancho de la Nación meet their mid-year English Learner Safe Harbor goals. Rancho's intervention ELs achieved a faster rate of improvement – a 12-point gain as compared to the 11-point gain for students not in the Tier 3 program. Designed for maximal language output, **ELD Links™** singular focus on oral language development was the key ingredient Rancho needed to provide strong, comprehensive ELD for its struggling students.

*"I felt able to meet their needs, especially at their level. Just enough to challenge them and push them through to the next level of proficiency," Hernandez shared.*



In December 2014, only 12% of Rancho's ELs within the program performed at the Proficient level on the Renaissance STAR. By mid-January 2015, 24% of Rancho's Tier 3 intervention ELs were Proficient. "Something," Hernandez says, "we really want to see."

### Language Practice Met Student Needs

Hernandez believes **ELD Links™** structured, yet flexible design and program elements like photo cards, vocabulary lists, journaling, and collaborative activities made a real impact. "I felt able to meet their needs, especially at their level. Just enough to challenge them and push them through to the next level of proficiency," Hernandez shared. "Teachers," she said, liked the program's ease of use and the great student growth."

On her targeted walk-throughs, she was delighted to see "a lot of kiddos" focused and on target. "They have no choice but to practice the language, which spills over into their content instruction."

Hernandez enthusiastically plans to continue using **ELD Links™** for the 2015-2016 school year and is excited to see how the growth her targeted ELs achieved will transfer into higher scores for the Fall 2015 CELDT.

"In terms of language, we're noticing accelerated growth with the lowest students. Those are the students with the biggest gaps we need to build on. So, we're super excited," Hernandez said.

*"Teachers have said how easy ELD Links™ is to work with. They've seen a lot of growth. They are really surprised at how far students have come in a short amount of time."*

#### Spotlight



#### Two Instructional Levels:

***ELD Links™ I: Emerging***

***ELD Links™ II: Expanding/Bridging***

#### Key Features

**96 quick, 20-to-30 minute lessons**

