Nevada Digital Learning Collaborative
Using Technology to Support ELLs in Your Classroom

Nevada Department of Education
Nevada Ready!

5 Things to Consider When Finding the Best Tools for Your Classroom

Look for ELL-friendly supports in the tools you're already using.

1 Many online tools have built-in features to support differentiated instruction for a variety of learners. Newsela offers texts at five variable Lexile levels, plenty in both English and Spanish. ThinkCERCA offers leveled texts with scaffolding for students reading at different levels, including audio versions of texts. Keep in mind that these tools are typically aimed at a more general student audience, so they may be better suited to intermediate or advanced ELLs and beginning-level ELLs may need more robust support.

Tools to try: Newsela, ThinkCERCA

Build basic online resources and productivity tools into daily routines.

2 Plenty of everyday apps and websites can be great for supporting ELL-centered learning activities. Microsoft OneNote is a note-taking tool with recording features which provides the students with the opportunity of speaking and listening practice. Simple English Wikipedia is an adapted version of the standard Wikipedia site but for ELLs, younger students, or anyone else who might struggle with reading. Google Translate is a translation tool.

Tools to try: Microsoft OneNote, Simple English Wikipedia, Google Translate

Get creative and repurpose a digital-storytelling tool.

3 An excellent interactive learning activity for ELLs and bilingual learners of all ages and language abilities is storytelling. Creative projects allow for students to express themselves while they build new language skills.

Tools to try: Book Creator, Shadow Puppet Edu, Explain Everything

Find tools that specifically address your ELLs' needs.

4 Tools designed for only ELLs are somewhat scarce, but there are options. BrainPOP ELL offers a comprehensive online curriculum aimed at improving kids' language skills from beginning to advanced levels. Read&Write is helpful text-to-speech app for students. A platform geared towards teachers, Ellevation, uses robust data to track and monitor students' progress and language growth.

Tools to try: BrainPOP ELL, Read&Write, Ellevation

Supplement instruction with an online language-learning tool.

5 Online language-learning tools can be a helpful option for students to practice outside of class. Keep in mind that these platforms should never replace quality classroom instruction. If you do go this route, look for free options that offer adaptive features such as challenging students as their language skills grow.

Tools to try: Duolingo, Rosetta Course, Mango Languages