



Dynamic Learning Maps English Language Arts Initial and Distal Precursors 8th Grade

This English Language Arts resource provides teachers with enhanced descriptions of the Initial and Distal precursors for the most frequently used Essential Elements.

By providing a clear connection between the IP or DP linkage level and the Target linkage level, teachers can better tailor classroom instruction for each student. Additionally, links to instructional information for each Essential Element and familiar texts in ELA, make these handy classroom resources.

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ELA.EE.RL.8.1

ELA.EE.RL.8.1 Cite text to support inferences from stories and poems.

Link to Minimap:

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/ELA_EEs/ELA.EE.RL.8.1.pdf

Target | Can identify and cite the explicit information stated in the text supporting the inferences made while reading a narrative text.

Proximal Precursor

Can identify details about characters, objects, setting, and major events that come from information not specifically stated in a narrative text.

Distal Precursor:

Can identify the concrete details, such as characters, objects, setting, and major events that are specifically stated in a narrative text.

Initial Precursor:

As a result of experience with a routine, the student is able to identify the objects that are used in the routine.

How is the Initial Precursor related to the target?

Initial Precursor: Making inferences while reading begins with the ability to understand the explicit meaning of the text. Students at the Initial Precursor linkage level can work toward understanding the explicit information in text through repeated shared reading of DLM Familiar Texts aligned with this Essential Element and linkage level. These texts feature familiar contexts and routines. Over time, students can learn to identify objects that are associated with the routines in the texts.

How is the Distal Precursor related to the target?

Distal Precursor: Making inferences while reading begins with the ability to understand the explicit meaning of the text. Students at the Distal Precursor linkage level can work toward learning to make inferences by reading or listening to texts to identify the concrete details including characters, objects, setting, and major events.

ELA.EE.RL.8.2

ELA.EE.RL.8.2 Recount an event related to the theme or central idea, including details about character and setting.

Link to Minimap:

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/ELA_EEs/ELA.EE.RL.8.2.pdf

Target | Can relate an event with details about specific characters and settings that help the reader to infer the theme or central idea of a narrative.

Proximal Precursor

Can identify the theme of a story, which includes a short, concise sentence about the overall meaning of the narrative .

Distal Precursor:

Can identify early elements of story grammar; can point to pictures or objects or use speech to identify the characters or objects in a simple story.

Initial Precursor:

Can identify the next step or event in a sequence from a familiar routine.

How is the Initial Precursor related to the target?

Initial Precursor: Relating story events with details about characters and the settings to infer the theme or central idea of a narrative requires the integration of understanding of many story elements. This requires students to identify details. Students at the Initial Precursor can work toward these skills by engaged in repeated shared reading of books that focus on familiar routines. Teachers can use the DLM Familiar Texts aligned with this Essential Element and linkage level to help students attend to the steps or events in familiar routines and learn to identify what step comes next at different points in the routine.

How is the Distal Precursor related to the target?

Distal Precursor: Relating story events with details about characters and the settings to infer the theme or central idea of a narrative requires the integration of understanding of many story elements. Students at the Distal Precursor linkage level are working to identify the story elements that they will eventually learn to use to infer the theme or central idea. Teachers can work on this during shared or guided reading (anchor-read-apply) as they set purposes related to identifying and remembering story elements like settings, events, and characters.

ELA.EE.RL.8.3

ELA.EE.RL.8.3 Identify which incidents in a story or drama lead to subsequent action.

Link to Minimap:

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/ELA_EEs/ELA.EE.RL.8.3.pdf

Target | Can identify the impact that certain events have in a narrative, such as causing subsequent events to occur.

Proximal Precursor

Can recall the causes of major actions included in a story.

Distal Precursor:

Student can correctly identify how a character responds to a challenge that is presented within a story.

Initial Precursor:

Comprehends that all objects have some function or action typically associated with it (object action).

How is the Initial Precursor related to the target?

Initial Precursor: Identifying the way one event causes another requires students to understand the impact things have on one another. At the Initial Precursor level, students are working toward this understanding by learning to identify the function of familiar objects. Teachers can use the DLM Familiar Texts aligned with this Essential Element and linkage level to work on this skill in repeated shared reading. The texts feature familiar routines and explicitly reference objects and their function. Teachers might gather the objects that are referenced in the book and act out or otherwise help students experience the actions that are associated with each object.

How is the Distal Precursor related to the target?

Distal Precursor: Identifying the impact events have on subsequent events in a narrative includes the ability to identify how challenges impact characters and their responses. Teachers can work on this during shared or guided reading (anchor-read-apply) as they set purposes related to identifying challenges and character responses to them.

ELA.EE.RL.8.4

ELA.EE.RL.8.4 Determine connotative meanings of words and phrases in a text.

Link to Minimap:

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/ELA_EEs/ELA.EE.RL.8.4.pdf

Target | Can identify the commonly understood cultural and/or emotional meaning of words and phrases in a text.

Proximal Precursor

Can determine the meaning of frequently occurring or transparent simple idioms and figures of speech when reading a narrative.

Distal Precursor:

Can determine the literal meaning of words and phrases using the context in which they are located.

Initial Precursor:

Can determine when two words have the same, similar, or different meanings or whether meanings of a single word are the same or different.

How is the Initial Precursor related to the target?

Initial Precursor: As students work toward understanding the connotative meaning of words in text, they can begin to recognize words that have meanings that are the same or different. Teachers can work on this using the DLM Familiar Texts aligned with this linkage level. These texts intentionally use words that have similar and different meanings so teachers can work with students to begin to identify them.

How is the Distal Precursor related to the target?

Distal Precursor: As students work toward understanding the way words make them feel or the connotative meaning of words in text, they have to identify the literal meaning of words. Students at the Distal Precursor linkage level should be working to use context to determine the literal meaning of words they encounter during shared reading or reading comprehension instruction.

ELA.EE.RL.8.5

ELA.EE.RL.8.5 Compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts.

Link to Minimap:

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/ELA_EEs/ELA.EE.RL.8.5.pdf

Target | Student can compare and contrast the structure of two or more texts (e.g., stories, poems, or dramas).

Proximal Precursor

Student can compare the structure of two or more texts (e.g., stories, poems, or dramas).

Distal Precursor:

Can determine the events that occur at the beginning, middle, and end of a familiar, linear story.

Initial Precursor:

Can identify the next step or event in a sequence from a familiar routine.

How is the Initial Precursor related to the target?

Initial Precursor: Comparing the structure of two or more texts requires an understanding of different text structures. One common structure is a simple, chronological ordering of events. Students at the Initial Precursor linkage level can work toward recognizing a text with a chronological structure by learning to identify the next step or event in familiar routines. In the context of ELA instruction, teachers can use the DLM Familiar Texts aligned with this Essential Element and linkage level to help students attend to the steps or events in familiar routines and learn to identify what step comes next at different points in the routine.

How is the Distal Precursor related to the target?

Distal Precursor: Comparing the structure of two or more texts requires an understanding of different text structures. One common structure is a simple, chronological ordering of events. Students at the Distal Precursor linkage level can work toward recognizing a text with a chronological structure by learning to identify which events occurs at the beginning, middle, and end of a story.

ELA.EE.RI.8.1

ELA.EE.RI.8.1 Cite text to support inferences from informational text.

Link to Minimap:

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/ELA_EEs/ELA.EE.RI.8.1.pdf

Target | Can use information and details inferred from the information and details explicitly mentioned in the text for citing.

Proximal Precursor

Can use information and details explicitly mentioned in the text for citing.

Distal Precursor:

Can identify the concrete details, such as individuals, events, or ideas in familiar informational texts.

Initial Precursor:

As a result of experience with a routine, the student is able to identify the objects that are used in the routine.

How is the Initial Precursor related to the target?

Initial Precursor: Making inferences while reading begins with the ability to understand the explicit meaning of the text. Students at the Initial Precursor linkage level can work toward understanding the explicit information in text through repeated shared reading of DLM Familiar Texts aligned with this Essential Element and linkage level. These texts feature familiar contexts and routines. Over time, students can learn to identify objects that are associated with the routines in the texts.

How is the Distal Precursor related to the target?

Distal Precursor: Making inferences while reading begins with the ability to understand the explicit meaning of the text. Students working at the Distal Precursor linkage level can work toward making inferences by reading to identify the concrete or explicit details in the text.

ELA.EE.RI.8.2

ELA.EE.RI.8.2 Provide a summary of a familiar informational text.

Link to Minimap:

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/ELA_EEs/ELA.EE.RI.8.2.pdf

Target | Can summarize the information in a familiar informational text.

Proximal Precursor

Can determine more than one main idea in an informational text.

Distal Precursor:

Able to identify explicit details in an informational text.

Initial Precursor:

Can demonstrate an understanding when information is not pertinent to the current task and can prevent this information from affecting their decisions and performance, allowing him or her to focus on the relevant task information.

How is the Initial Precursor related to the target?

Initial Precursor: Providing a summary of a text requires readers to identify the information in the text that is important and use it to provide an overview of the main points. Students at the Initial Precursor linkage level can work toward this during repeated shared reading of familiar texts. During these repeated readings, teachers can help students identify the important details in the texts and use them to identify a summary of the text.

How is the Distal Precursor related to the target?

Distal Precursor: Providing a summary of a text requires readers to identify the information in the text that is important and use it to provide an overview of the main points in the summary. Students at the Distal Precursor linkage level can work toward providing summaries by reading or listening to informational texts to identify the concrete or explicit details in the text.

ELA.EE.RI.8.3

ELA.EE.RI.8.3 Recount events in the order they were presented in the text.

Link to Minimap:

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/ELA_EEs/ELA.EE.RI.8.3.pdf

Target | Can recall and describe the events and details in an informational text in the same order as they appeared in the text.

Proximal Precursor

Can identify the relationship between multiple concrete facts or details in a literature or informational text.

Distal Precursor:

Can identify the concrete details mentioned in beginner level informational texts.

Initial Precursor:

Can identify the next step or event in a sequence from a familiar routine.

How is the Initial Precursor related to the target?

Initial Precursor: Recalling the sequence of events in a story begins with being able to identify the next steps (first-next) in everyday, familiar routines. Students at the Initial Precursor linkage level can work toward this understanding during repeated shared reading. Whether teachers use the DLM Familiar Texts aligned with this linkage level, or other texts that features a familiar routine with a clear sequence of events, they can use the repeated shared reading as a way to help students learn the steps in the routine and identify what comes next as each step is encountered in the book.

How is the Distal Precursor related to the target?

Distal Precursor: Recalling and describing the events and details in a text in the order they appear in the text requires students to identify the details. Students at the Distal Precursor linkage level are expected to identify the concrete details in a text. Teachers can support this through guided reading (anchor-read-apply) lessons that focus on reading to identify the details as they occur in a text.

ELA.EE.RI.8.4

ELA.EE.RI.8.4 Determine connotative meanings of words and phrases in a text.

Link to Minimap:

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/ELA_EEs/ELA.EE.RI.8.4.pdf

Target | Can identify the commonly understood cultural and/or emotional meaning of words and phrases in a text.

Proximal Precursor

Can use the surrounding context of a word in a text to determine the meaning of multiple meaning words.

Distal Precursor:

Can determine the literal meaning of words and phrases using the context in which they are located.

Initial Precursor:

Can determine when two words have the same, similar, or different meanings or whether meanings of a single word are the same or different.

How is the Initial Precursor related to the target?

Initial Precursor: As students work toward understanding the connotative meaning of words in text, they can begin to recognize words that have meanings that are the same or different. Teachers can work on this using the DLM Familiar Texts aligned with this linkage level. These texts intentionally use words that have similar and different meanings so teachers can work with students to begin to identify them.

How is the Distal Precursor related to the target?

Distal Precursor: As students work toward understanding the way words make them feel or the connotative meaning of words in text, they have to identify the literal meaning of words. Students at the Distal Precursor linkage level should be working to use context to determine the literal meaning of words they encounter during shared reading or reading comprehension instruction.

ELA.EE.RI.8.5

ELA.EE.RI.8.5 Locate the topic sentence and supporting details in paragraph.

Link to Minimap:

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/ELA_EEs/ELA.EE.RI.8.5.pdf

Target | Student can identify the topic sentence and identify the details in the paragraph that support the topic sentence. There is a slight shift here from previous nodes as the student will need to use some text searching skill to locate the topic sentence and supporting details (they will need to use their knowledge of structural elements of informational texts to accomplish this).

Proximal Precursor

Can determine which key details in an informational text support the main idea of the whole text or a section of it.

Distal Precursor:

Able to identify explicit details in an informational text.

Initial Precursor:

When supplied with a member of a category, can determine if the member belongs in the category.

How is the Initial Precursor related to the target?

Initial Precursor: Identifying the topic sentence and the details that support it requires students to understand the relationship between the topic and information in the text. Students at the Initial Precursor linkage level can work toward understanding these relationships by recognizing whether or not something belongs in a category. Teachers can work on this during repeated shared reading using texts, including the DLM Familiar Texts aligned with this linkage level, that explicitly include objects or characters that are part of a category and others that are not. Teachers might gather objects that are included in the story and have students decide whether they belong in a teacher-identified category or not.

How is the Distal Precursor related to the target?

Distal Precursor: The Target for this Essential Element includes identifying the topic sentence and the details in the paragraph that support the topic sentence. Students at the Distal Precursor linkage level are working toward the second part of this by identifying explicit details in an informational text. Teachers can support this through guided reading (anchor-read-apply) lessons that focus on reading to identify the details as they occur in a text.

ELA.EE.RI.8.6

ELA.EE.RI.8.6 Determine an author's purpose or point of view and identify examples from text that describe or support it.

Link to Minimap:

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/ELA_EEs/ELA.EE.RI.8.6.pdf

Target | Can pick out examples in an informational text or a presentation on a topic describing or supporting the author's or presenter's point of view on the topic.

Proximal Precursor

Can identify the author's point of view or purpose for writing an informational text on the topic at hand. The point of view of an author is his/her physical or mental relationship with a specific event or area of a general topic.

Distal Precursor:

Can identify the concrete details mentioned in beginner level informational texts.

Initial Precursor:

As a result of experience with a routine, the student is able to identify people associated with the routine.

How is the Initial Precursor related to the target?

Initial Precursor: Understanding an author's purpose for writing a text requires that students understand the information that is included in the text. For students at the Initial Precursor linkage level, this can begin with a focus on understanding the people that are associated with actions or activities described in text. Teachers can use DLM Familiar Texts aligned with this Essential Element and linkage level during repeated shared reading interactions to help students learn to identify the people who are associated with the routines that are featured in the texts.

How is the Distal Precursor related to the target?

Distal Precursor: Understanding an author's purpose for writing a text requires a reader to understand the text itself and use that understanding to determine the purpose. Students at the Distal Precursor linkage level can work toward this by reading or listening in order to identify the details in a text.

ELA.EE.RI.8.8

ELA.EE.RI.8.8 Determine the argument made by an author in an informational text.

Link to Minimap:

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/ELA_EEs/ELA.EE.RI.8.8.pdf

Target | Can identify an explicitly made argument (must be overtly stated in the text) in an informational text. Note - locating the argument is similar to noting the overall main idea. In a persuasive text there is a central argument presented with several claims and evidence to back the claims.

Proximal Precursor

Can find out how specific points made by an author in an informational text relate to the reasons supporting it.

Distal Precursor:

Can determine what the points are that the author of an unfamiliar informational text is trying to communicate to the reader.

Initial Precursor:

Realizes that what he or she is thinking or viewing may or may not be the same as what other people see or think.

How is the Initial Precursor related to the target?

Initial Precursor: As students work toward determining the argument an author is making, students can work on recognizing that they have thoughts, ideas, and opinions that may be different from others. In the context of shared reading, teachers can help students begin to identify their own thoughts or views using the DLM Familiar Texts and other texts that prominently feature opinions or preferences.

How is the Distal Precursor related to the target?

Distal Precursor: Determining the argument an author is making in a text requires readers to understand the explicit points or information the author includes in the text. Students at the Distal Precursor linkage level can work toward this by reading informational texts to determine what explicit points the author makes.

ELA.EE.W.8.2.a

ELA.EE.W.8.2.a Introduce a topic clearly and write to convey ideas and information about it including visual, tactual, or multimedia information as appropriate.

Link to Minimap:

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/ELA_EEs/ELA.EE.W.8.2.a.pdf

Target | Can introduce an informational topic while writing and extend by writing about ideas and information related to the topic.

Proximal Precursor

Can select a topic for writing an informational text and then find information that is either tactile, visual, or multimedia for use when writing the text.

Distal Precursor:

Can respond to wh- questions regarding choice of topic and other questions related to writing about the topic.

Initial Precursor:

Given a choice of two objects, uses eye-gaze, physical movement, gesture or vocalization to indicate choice.

How is the Initial Precursor related to the target?

Initial Precursor: Selecting and writing about a topic requires students to successfully communicate a choice of topics. In the context of emergent writing, students at the Initial Precursor level can work on clearly communicating a choice between two familiar, preferred objects as a topic for writing. The key here is to practice communicating a choice before writing about the choice rather than communicating a choice during an activity unrelated to writing.

How is the Distal Precursor related to the target?

Distal Precursor: One way to help students learn to write an informational text is to help them brainstorm ideas about the topics they select. Teachers can work on this by asking students to select a topic for writing and then ask them basic questions about the topic. These questions might begin with yes/no personal preference questions, but as students grow more successful, can include the wh-questions that are the focus of this linkage level.

ELA.EE.W.8.2.b

ELA.EE.W.8.2.b Write one or more facts or details related to the topic.

Link to Minimap:

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/ELA_EEs/ELA.EE.W.8.2.b.pdf

Target | Student is able to put facts or details identified about a topic into writing.

Proximal Precursor

Student is already able to identify facts and details related to topic from a set of choices. Now they are able to provide written facts, details and/or information about a topic.

Distal Precursor:

Can use perceptual words (describe a noun's features) to describe common persons, places, objects, or events.

Initial Precursor:

Can determine some of the relevant words for describing people, places, things, or events familiar to the student.

How is the Initial Precursor related to the target?

Initial Precursor: Successful writing requires the writer to know something about the topic. When students are familiar with the topics they choose, they can begin working to use words that describe the people, places, things, or events that relate to the topic. In the context of writing, teachers can work with students to select from a range of familiar topics and then determine words that could be used to describe the people, places, things, or events they might write about.

How is the Distal Precursor related to the target?

Distal Precursor: As students work toward being able to include facts and details about the selected topic when writing, it is helpful for them to have the skills to elaborate on the words they plan to include. One way to do this is to ask students to select a topic, communicate some ideas (e.g., people, places, objects, and events) they might write about, and then use words that describe the ideas to elaborate on them.

ELA.EE.W.8.2.c

ELA.EE.W.8.2.c Write complete thoughts as appropriate.

Link to Minimap:

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/ELA_EEs/ELA.EE.W.8.2.c.pdf

Target | Student is able to produce a complete thought in writing. Up to this point, students may produce writing that requires some interpretation or context to understand (e.g., frg lgs = frogs use their legs to jump). By this node students are able to create a complete thought (e.g., Frogs jump). The produced thought may not be grammatically correct (i.e., The frogs can jump), but still conveys a complete thought or idea.

Proximal Precursor

Can use two words together when producing a written text.

Distal Precursor:

Can produce utterances comprising of two words.

Initial Precursor:

Can produce single word utterances.

How is the Initial Precursor related to the target?

Initial Precursor: In the context of writing, students can work on producing words (utterances) when communicating about the topic they have selected. Teachers can support this by providing students with word banks or other augmentative and alternative communication supports with words related to the selected topic.

How is the Distal Precursor related to the target?

Distal Precursor: In the context of writing, students can work on linking together two or more words when brainstorming ideas to write relative to a selected topic. Teachers can support this by providing students with word banks or other augmentative and alternative communication supports with words related to the selected topic.

ELA.EE.W.8.2.d

ELA.EE.W.8.2.d Use domain specific vocabulary related to the topic.

Link to Minimap:

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/ELA_EEs/ELA.EE.W.8.2.d.pdf

Target | Can include domain-specific vocabulary when writing an informative text.

Proximal Precursor

Student is able to select domain-specific words to use for writing about a topic.

Distal Precursor:

Using their categorical knowledge, can make generalizations about the category to novel instances of that category.

Initial Precursor:

When supplied with a member of a category, can determine if the member belongs in the category.

How is the Initial Precursor related to the target?

Initial Precursor: Selecting domain-specific words when writing about a selected topic requires students to understand how words relate to specific domains. Students can work toward this understanding by applying knowledge of words from familiar categories. In the context of writing, students can select a topic for writing. The teacher can then list words, and students indicate if they are or are not members of a category related to the topic.

How is the Distal Precursor related to the target?

Distal Precursor: Selecting domain-specific words when writing about a selected topic requires students to understand how words relate to specific domains. Students can work toward this understanding by applying knowledge of words from familiar categories. In the context of writing, students can select a topic for writing and then work to generate words in categories related to the topic.

ELA.EE.W.8.2.f

ELA.EE.W.8.2.f Provide a closing.

Link to Minimap:

http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/sites/default/files/documents/ELA_EEs/ELA.EE.W.8.2.f.pdf

Target | Can produce a conclusion for a text he or she is writing.

Proximal Precursor

Can write a concluding sentence, statement, or section of a written text to bring together all the information presented in the text.

Distal Precursor:

Can produce a universal ending in writing (e.g., the student can write "the end").

Initial Precursor:

As a result of the experience with a routine, the student is able to identify the end or completion of a routine.

How is the Initial Precursor related to the target?

Initial Precursor: As students work toward understanding conclusions as endings when writing, they need to work on developing understandings of the end or completion of familiar routines. In the context of writing, teachers can help students understand this by marking the end of the writing routine with a gesture or symbol indicating finished and then carry that over to other routines across the day.

How is the Distal Precursor related to the target?

Distal Precursor: As students work toward writing a meaningful conclusion, they can use more universal endings to mark the end of their writing. For example, students can write "the end" to mark the completion of the things they write.