

CHAPTER 6

The Immense Potential of English Learners and Their Realization of College and Career Readiness

By Susan Pimentel

After leading the development of the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy, Susan Pimentel joined Understanding Language at Stanford University, an initiative dedicated to promoting the development of students' English language proficiency and disciplinary knowledge simultaneously within the context of college and career readiness demands. In that capacity, she coauthored Realizing Opportunities for ELLs [English Language Learners] in the Common Core English Language Arts and Disciplinary Literacy Standards with George Bunch and Amanda Kibler. She also facilitated the expert team that created the English Language Proficiency Development Framework, designed to assist states with their development of English learner proficiency standards. Describing herself as still very much a learner in this field, Pimentel has focused her recent work on promoting the simultaneous learning of English, learning in English, and cultivation of home languages so that ELs can realize their full potential.

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Introduction

English learners (ELs) account for almost 10 percent of the K–12 enrollment, or 4.8 million students, in U.S. schools (National Center for Education Statistics 2019). Any discussion about the education of ELs in the United States must begin with an acknowledgment that they represent a diverse population. Most are children of parents who hail from Latin America and Asia, with Mexico being the leading country of origin. From newcomers to those born in the United States, they're heterogeneous in terms of their age, grade level, English proficiency, literacy level, and time in the United States. The terms *incipient* bilinguals, *ascendant* bilinguals, and *fully functional* bilinguals highlight the distinctions among students from these different backgrounds and reflect the need for instruction to flex in order to reflect and build on what knowledge and experiences students bring to the classroom (Valdés et al. 2005).

With the advent of the Common Core State Standards and other sets of high-quality college and career readiness standards, the challenges all ELs face in school have intensified. Such standards demand that all students—ELs included—engage in increasingly sophisticated language and literacy tasks in order to acquire and demonstrate knowledge and skills required for college and workforce training. These standards articulate high expectations for students: accessing complex texts, constructing cogent, well-supported explanations and arguments, pinpointing central points formulated by speakers, elaborating on ideas generated from peer discussions, assembling and testing a range of claims, and strategically implementing procedures to solve problems, to name just a few requirements. In short, the need to provide ELs with opportunities that simultaneously promote the development of language *and* disciplinary knowledge has never been greater.

It's no exaggeration to say that districts and schools undercut their best intentions by embracing an approach toward EL instruction that undermines the twin goals of learning English and attaining college and career readiness. In the view of EL scholar Lily Wong Fillmore, traditional EL instruction is characterized by “a lot of attention and energy focused on turning ELs into English speakers, and not nearly enough on educating them” (2010, slide 11). The attention put on creating students who are fluent speakers of English neglects the deeper need for ELs to *understand* what they're reading and learning. This neglect, Fillmore believes, is tied directly to unexamined assumptions that educators have too long accepted in EL instruction. The biggest problem has been the use of texts (and accompanying tasks) that are adapted for ELs—often “so greatly simplified” that they don't offer access to the English that ELs are supposed to learn. What ELs need instead “are authentic and age appropriate texts” that they learn how to navigate “with appropriate

instructional support from teachers who know how to support language development” (slide 17).

A solution to the failure of the traditional approach to preparing ELs for college and careers comes into focus when we examine the sequence of instruction schools conventionally provide to ELs. EL experts such as Fillmore decry the penchant of schools to make learning English a bridge ELs must first cross before they’re allowed to take part in grade-level core disciplinary classes in science, math, history/social studies, technical courses, and even English language arts. Because many ELs never achieve the elusive goal of perfect English fluency, too many are denied the rich academic experiences and language found in such classrooms—precisely the kind of experiences and language that contribute so heavily to college and career readiness. To be sure, EL experts don’t suggest that incipient bilinguals with little understanding of English be flung willy-nilly into challenging core classes without the benefit of English instruction or support; instead, their position is that once ELs reach a moderate level of English language proficiency—ascendant bilingualism—they ought to have the same access as their native-English-speaking peers to rigorous mainstream disciplinary classes so they can *simultaneously* build their knowledge base and conceptual understanding (buttressed with supports) and nurture their budding English language competence.

(Re)Envisioning EL Education

ELs face the double-barreled challenge of learning enough of a second language (English) to participate successfully in grade-level academic classes and gaining the disciplinary knowledge and skills they need to be prepared for college and careers enmeshed within that second language. The challenge is not insurmountable, however, as proven by the fact that many students who enter school as ELs attain English proficiency and learn academics, are reclassified as fluent, make good grades, and graduate high school with their postsecondary ambitions intact (Saunders and Marcelletti 2013; Kieffer and Thompson 2018). But neither is the challenge inconsequential: Despite years of schooling, substantial numbers of students who begin school with an EL designation aren’t reclassified and too often don’t complete high school. Their graduation rates are nearly 20 percentage points lower than the overall high school graduation rate (63 percent versus 82 percent)—lower than that for students living in poverty (75 percent) (National Center for Education Statistics 2019). Even if they can complete high school, many don’t develop adequate levels of linguistic and academic skills to secure their futures. These students score 36 points lower in reading than their non-EL counterparts in fourth grade and almost 44 points lower by eighth grade (Office of English Language Acquisition 2016). Many will leave school not being college and career ready and will struggle to fully participate in the economic and social opportunities otherwise available

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to them (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2017).

Also distressing is the fact that while multilingual learners begin their school careers with a potent linguistic asset—knowledge of another language—it can atrophy or fail to develop commensurate with their age when that language isn't used regularly in school (or promoted at home) (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2017). Well-founded concerns exist that too many ELs (currently and formerly designated) lose a great deal of their productive home language ability by the time they graduate from U.S. high schools. And is it any wonder? Psycholinguistic expert François Grosjean (2012) recounts the history of bilingualism in the United States as one that “has traditionally been transitional—a passage, over one or two generations, from monolingualism in a minority language to monolingualism in English.” While the costs of failing to address achievement gaps and graduate fully biliterate students from U.S. schools are borne most plainly by ELs themselves, there are broader economic and social losses for the nation as well.

Studies point to the damaging consequences of shielding students from core academic classes (Walqui et al. 2010; Olsen 2010). This approach has stranded large numbers of ELs for years—many for six years or more—on the plateau of “insufficient English proficiency” as measured by state reclassification tests, thus denying them access to rigorous mainstream core classes because they haven't yet reached full or native-like English proficiency. The consensus of experts is that annual reclassification assessments meant to gauge ELs' English proficiency should be viewed with a degree of caution and concern (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2017). They're imperfect. They're inadequate. They're single on-demand measures—inconsistently applied within and across states—that carry high-stakes eligibility consequences for ELs.

Scores of ELs find themselves marginalized academically, tracked into low-level EL-only “sheltered” or remedial-level core classes, and locked into language intervention classes for much of the school day, ostensibly to boost their English learning. They spend most of their days sequestered among other learners of English. This debilitating cycle of students not being exposed to disciplinary content and experiencing only English taught in isolation from its academic uses perpetuates itself. When ELs are in courses that lack academic rigor, they don't learn how English is authentically encountered in disciplinary classrooms and therefore are unable to meet the standards in English fluency needed for reclassification. Their lack of proficiency in academic language and literacy, in turn, denies them opportunities to advance to the higher levels of academic course work they need to meet the standards in English. And

on it goes. Indeed, too many ELs wind up *losing* ground as they move up the grades until college or workforce training is out of reach because they can't earn the high school credits they need (Olsen 2010).

There are, however, promising alternatives, backed by sound theory and research on language development and learning, that point the way to better outcomes for ELs. An alternative approach (alluded to above) insists English learning and academic instruction go hand in hand instead of proceeding sequentially. Modern theories and research on first- and second-language acquisition show that learning a language is an essential tool for connecting disparate pieces of knowledge and is therefore inseparable from actually gaining knowledge. Recently dubbed "language as action," this approach, in a classroom context, involves ELs engaging in a range of meaningful academic activities that encourage language growth in the various school disciplines (van Lier and Walqui 2012; Bunch, Kibler, and Pimentel 2012). Said another way, linguists have found that students learn language best in the context—and communities—in which it's used. What constitutes "language" shifts in academic contexts depending on who's using it, how it's being used, what's being communicated, and for what purpose. Academic language development grows from engaging with, reflecting on, thinking about, investigating, discussing, and writing about topics and concepts that appear in authentic disciplinary texts and through authentic instruction in the disciplines (Baker et al. 2014; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2017). ELs, therefore, will only learn and become fluent with the English used in academic contexts through authentic experiences in core disciplinary classrooms.¹

Closing the achievement gap and giving ELs genuine opportunities to meet the demands of college and workforce training requires that educators take a broader view of EL instruction by creating parallel opportunities for ELs to cultivate their home language(s), advance in English proficiency, and pursue grade-level English language arts and additional discipline-specific course work. What's not yet clear is the best mix of these three and how to pull it off so that the simultaneous learning *of* English, learning *in* English, and nurturing home languages complement and reinforce each other productively (Claude Goldenberg, private correspondence, January 2019).

Three Tenets of Excellence²

The means for simultaneously promoting the development of language and disciplinary knowledge can be encapsulated in the following three

¹ These same principles apply regarding high-quality opportunities for students to develop academic uses of their home language and literacy.

² These tenets build directly from Stanford's "Understanding Language" resource. See Stanford University Graduate School of Education (2013).

"tenets of excellence" for EL instruction, each of which is discussed in turn.

1. Instruction that's effective for native English speakers—academically rigorous, grade-level instruction in core classes—is also the foundation of sound instruction for ELs (Goldenberg 2013).

Like other students, ELs need to learn more than English to prepare themselves for postsecondary success. Learning English must be a partner in learning the practices, skills, and knowledge contained within academically rigorous grade-level content area classes; the two sets of abilities are symbiotic and should be codeveloped instructionally. The best way for ELs to build complex language and literacy practices, skills, and knowledge is through complex content learning (Doherty et al. 2003; Fillmore and Fillmore 2012) rather than a strict language-before-content sequence.

While it may seem counterintuitive to have ELs engage in content before they have high levels of English language proficiency, studies show that by participating in meaningful grade-level activities as part of mainstream instruction in the subject areas, ELs who have a modicum of English proficiency have the potential to learn not only the target content but also the particular ways in which language and literacy are used for different audiences and purposes in different disciplines (Baker et al. 2014; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2017). With proper supports, detailed in tenet #2 below, ELs can build expanded language repertoires and engage productively in the kinds of literacy practices called for by college- and career-readiness standards while still absorbing the content.

Two important provisos must be kept in mind when adopting this approach: First, ELs must be allowed to engage using English that's still under development. Sounding like a native speaker of English shouldn't be a prerequisite for inclusion. Second, ELs need and deserve early and ample targeted language instruction to ensure long-term academic success. Specific time must be set aside for English language development (ELD) instruction in which teachers group ELs by language proficiency (but *only* for those classes) and in which ELs receive language practice—conversational and more specialized—so they can participate fully in disciplinary classes (Saunders, Goldenberg, and Marcelletti 2013). Systematic instruction is especially crucial for ELs who are least proficient in English.

2. Targeted supports are essential to provide ELs with productive opportunities to access rigorous core content (Bunch, Kibler, and Pimentel 2012).

Within mainstream classes, temporary instructional supports (e.g., scaffolds) can bridge learning gaps and make grade-level content comprehensible for ELs. Such supports help students reach higher levels of comprehension and skill acquisition than they would without assistance and are designed to lead to students taking charge of their learning (Bunch, Walqui, and Kibler 2015). Crucially, scaffolding should supplement and not supplant core instruction. As EL scholar, curriculum developer, and teacher professional development leader Aída Walqui puts it, “Rather than simplifying the tasks or the language, teaching subject matter content to ELs requires amplifying and enriching the linguistic . . . context” (2006, 169). Because scaffolds should always be limited to “just-enough, just-in-time” support, teachers must both plan ahead to anticipate the needs of their EL students and be prepared to adjust, transform, swap out, or dismantle the scaffolds at any given moment as the developing situation warrants.

Several key literacy supports have proved effective in providing ELs with productive opportunities to access grade-level content across the curriculum and develop academic English as part of subject matter learning (Baker et al. 2014; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2017). They include

- providing ELs with regular opportunities to negotiate meaning from grade-level complex texts (i.e., texts that meet grade-appropriate expectations) and grade-level activities across the curriculum by integrating into instruction supports that help ELs make the content comprehensible;
- providing daily opportunities for ELs to collaborate and discuss course content with their peers—opportunities anchored in topics present in the texts they’re reading and the grade-level content they’re learning—in order to build confidence with newly acquired skills and knowledge;
- engaging in intense vocabulary instruction as part of subject matter learning, including instructional conversations in which teachers draw ELs’ attention to important words, phrases, and clauses in the texts with which they’re working; and
- providing regular, structured writing opportunities anchored in content to extend and solidify EL learning.

These supports are specifically designed to assist ELs in disciplinary settings (and are discussed in greater detail in the next section). As noted above, it’s essential that ELs have dedicated language classes offered by linguistic specialists as extra support for academic success. Such classes need to be sensibly scheduled so that students don’t end up double-booked and thereby miss out on chunks of academic content (Olsen 2010).

3. ELs bring with them considerable resources, including knowledge of a home language(s) and culture(s), that should be leveraged for English acquisition, learning more broadly, and graduating fully functional bilingual students (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2017).

Instructing students in their home languages is politically charged in some sectors, but a large body of evidence indicates that investing time and resources to cultivate students' home languages has inherent advantages. Having a clear statement of philosophy that "recognizes the nexus among students, their languages, cultures, immigration, and home and community experiences" is essential to establishing the right tone for English learner practices and promoting culturally responsive learning environments (Council of Chief State School Officers 2019, 5).

Knowing and being literate in two (or more) languages offers students considerable cognitive, cultural, and economic rewards—and is the global norm (Goldenberg 2013; Goldenberg and Wagner 2015). Such benefits include, among others,

- enhanced working memory, improved abstract, symbolic representation skills, and improved ability to plan and think flexibly (Adesope et al. 2010; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2017);
- several positive sociocultural effects on intergroup relationships between native English speakers and ELs (e.g., a reduction of prejudice and stereotyping) and improved self-esteem of ELs (Genesee and Gándara 1999); and
- numerous employment and promotion opportunities, including an increased probability of obtaining a higher-status job and higher annual earnings (Bialystok 2011).

There's also clear evidence that tapping into ELs' first language literacy can confer many advantages in their acquisition of English literacy (Dressler and Kamil 2006). For example, teaching students to read in their home language has been shown to promote higher levels of reading achievement in English. ELs benefit in a host of other ways from their knowledge of a home language, enhancing fine-grain abilities such as interpreting metaphors and performing intraword segmentation as well as broader skills such as English speech discrimination and production (e.g., accents, pronunciation, manners of oral expression) (August and Shanahan 2006). Research shows that ELs perform better on tests measuring comprehension, reading, spelling, and vocabulary when their home culture and language are valued and incorporated into academics (Doherty et al. 2003). Conversely, ELs suffer academically when schools ignore their upbringing or, worse, devalue it or view it as an impediment or a liability; doing so can rob ELs of their self-respect and sense of

self-efficacy as well as diminish their motivation to learn and even to stay in school (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2017).

Teachers can capitalize on the home language of ELs to boost their acquisition of English, activate their knowledge of the world, and enhance their comprehension and communication processes. By these actions, teachers acknowledge to ELs (and others) the inherent cognitive and economic advantages of ELs' knowledge of another language (August, Fenner, and Snyder 2014; Francis, Lesaux, and August 2006). ELs can, for example, bring to bear conceptual knowledge they developed in their first language to their disciplinary studies. ELs often also have a heightened awareness of grammatical functions and effects as they develop and use more than one language. ELs who speak a first language that shares cognates with English—Spanish is a major one—can also apply first-language knowledge to acquiring a second language.

There are several approaches mainstream teachers can adopt. At critical points during lessons in core classes, home languages can be tapped to help facilitate knowledge acquisition by ELs (Bunch, Kibler, and Pimentel 2012; Goldenberg 2013). For example, to prepare for a lesson, ELs can research the unit topic or read (or listen to) in their home language the text that they'll be reading in class. The teacher (or specialist who knows the home languages) can also preview lesson content with ELs. During the lesson, teachers can encourage ELs to discuss and clarify their ideas about texts or topics under study in their home language with fellow speakers before being asked to express those ideas in English. As the lesson proceeds, the teacher (supported by a language specialist when possible) can provide brief explanations of the text in the home languages of ELs, offer ELs bilingual glossaries, and encourage ELs to write or conduct research in their home language before they're asked to explain their understanding in English. Also, classrooms and libraries can be outfitted with books from ELs' home languages. The bottom line is clear: the more the home languages of ELs are developed and validated, the more positive the outcomes for ELs (Olsen 2010).

The need to focus on ELs' home languages translates into a critical need for many more highly qualified ELD and bilingual certified teachers who can support the transfer of literacy skills from their home languages to disciplinary discourse patterns in English.³ As defined by the Council of Chief State School Officers' 2019 report, "highly qualified" means teachers who have, among other characteristics, "completed required coursework in English language development," "strong content

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³ The federal government's Office of English Language Acquisition estimated back in 2010 that 47,000 or more additional ESL and bilingual teachers were needed (Gándara and Escamilla 2017). Almost a decade later, the demand is even higher.

knowledge,” familiarity “with students’ communities,” and “high levels of language proficiency in students’ home languages” (17).

To be clear, promoting the use of students’ home languages isn’t meant to imply that opportunities for students to hear and use English should be restricted; indeed, students can’t learn an additional language without ample opportunities to listen to it, produce it, and engage meaningfully in it.

From Vision to Promising Classroom Practice

In helping ELs meet the dual challenge of acquiring college and career readiness content and learning English, disciplinary teachers should provide robust and varied opportunities for ELs to learn the principal language and literacy practices inherent in their disciplines, thereby enhancing students’ engagement with the rich academic subject matter required by today’s more rigorous state standards (Valdés, Kibler, and Walqui 2014; National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine 2017). Disciplinary teachers need to “attend to,” not “teach,” language use in the classroom (Valdés, Capitelli, and Quinn 2018). That translates into teachers alerting ELs to “language usage that is frequent and recurring but may not be immediately noticed” and regularly “providing students with opportunities for ‘real language’ interactions” (Valdés, Capitelli, and Quinn 2018, 22). Disciplinary teachers needn’t concern themselves with correcting errors or explicitly teaching the formal aspects of the English language (e.g., subject-verb agreement, modals, order of adjectives and nouns, conditionals, possessives); language specialists can better handle that instruction. Schools need to reimagine the role of specialists, however, to ensure it supports both conversational or colloquial language (including everyday teacher talk) and the discourse practices required for ELs’ full participation in disciplinary classes (Bunch, Kibler, and Pimentel 2012; Saunders, Goldenberg, and Marcelletti 2013; Bunch, Walqui, and Kibler 2015).

Disciplinary teachers and language specialists must have regular opportunities to collaborate in the design of instruction. Issues related to language acquisition and culturally responsive pedagogy need to be front and center in these collaborations, as do the analysis of student work and the development of robust lessons that align to college and career readiness standards (Goldenberg 2013). One specific area of focus for these collaborative efforts should be the systematic trial of promising evidence-based EL scaffolds. A closer look at how these different kinds of scaffolds operate in the classroom will reveal valuable insights into how they assist EL students in expanding their knowledge base and developing their English language competence. Said another way, we have a distance to go before we know which combination of

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instructional approaches in which settings—including approaches yet to be designed—hold the most promise for making sure ELs realize their full potential. In the meantime, at the very least we must strategically provide all promising supports and carefully evaluate their effects on students (Goldenberg 2013). Such supports include the following:

1. Scaffolds that support ELs in negotiating the meaning of grade-level complex texts in core academic classes

Research on the reading of grade-level complex texts by ELs in instructional settings indicates that text simplification is ineffective in promoting comprehension and may even be counterproductive (Bernhardt 2011). “Simplified texts offer no clue to students as to what academic language sounds like or how it works” (Fillmore and Fillmore 2012, 2). Indeed, once vocabulary demands are lowered, the length of sentences shortened, and the syntax and meaning of the passage simplified, the resulting text bears little resemblance to the source material. Complex ideas require complex lexical and grammatical structures and patterns. When teachers give ELs a diet of simple texts to read, students don’t get access to the mature discourse—vocabulary, syntax, and concepts—needed to succeed in college and workforce training. Alternatively, when teachers provide ELs with access to a range of authentic texts that embody various elements of complexity, they achieve at higher levels on both language development assessments and standards-based assessments (Fillmore and Fillmore 2012). As a result of misguided worries that ELs will be frustrated by anything too hard, educators too often persist in denying ELs complex works to read. They want to safeguard ELs against failure in the immediate term without understanding the cost of ensuring it in the long run. (For a fuller treatment of text complexity, see chapter 1.)

How, then, should ELs encounter complex text such that they’ll be successful at negotiating its challenge? A convincing body of research points to an initial overarching scaffolding suggestion of providing ELs with texts that are brief, engaging, and have sufficient heft for thought-provoking discussions (ELICIT Collaborative 2014; Baker et al. 2014). Researchers in the field cite as the best candidates content-rich informational texts in science and history/social studies and narratives with topics that have moral and ethical ambiguity (Beaulieu-Jones and Proctor 2016). Students’ interests, motivations, and prior knowledge can point teachers to excellent text choices and to what pedagogical supports to employ for engaging ELs with complex texts and rigorous tasks (Bunch, Walqui, and Pearson 2014). While student interest often provides a good starting point, the suggestion here isn’t that teachers should limit ELs to their self-defined comfort zones; there are, in fact, ways to build student interest and knowledge across a broader array of topics.

Another scaffolding approach endorsed by EL experts is to provide ELs with auxiliary, more accessible texts (including those in the students' first language) to build their background knowledge of the subject prior to them encountering grade-level complex text: "If the [main] text contains cultural, historical, or thematic information ELs are unlikely to have acquired, they can read short supplementary texts to help them acquire such knowledge" (August, Fenner, and Snyder 2014, 5). Accessing additional resources such as illustrations, photographs, short video clips, demonstrations, and the like is another way ELs can get a leg up on complex, unfamiliar text and engage with content (August et al. 2009; Valdés, Capitelli, and Quinn 2018). The range of above practices can ground instruction, create for ELs a shared experience with their native-English peers (who equally benefit from such practices), and help students make sense of the content. The prework (scaffolding) builds the knowledge and vocabulary necessary to tackle the grade-level complex text, creating "Velcro" in the brain to which new information and ideas can attach. When an anchor text is buttressed with supplementary texts and resources, forming a unit of study organized around a topic of interest, ELs (and native speakers) are more likely to comprehend and engage with the text more thoroughly than if they merely encountered the topic through the complex text alone. (For more on text sets, see especially chapter 3, on vocabulary and knowledge building.)

While text annotations that gloss crucial vocabulary can offer additional scaffolding for ELs, researchers also recommend multiday readings of complex texts—each with a different focus and purpose—as a more robust way to scaffold the reading experience for ELs and provide them with productive exposure to rich text (August and Shanahan 2006). Below is a sample sequence of how ELs could productively engage with a complex text over repeated encounters, couched within meaningful, exciting, and engaging conversations and tasks regarding the central meaning of the text and why students should care about it:

First read: Students listen to a fluent read-aloud of the text by the teacher and follow along in their texts.

Second read: Students answer a series of text-dependent questions that delve systematically into the text, guide them in extracting key ideas and details, and establish whether they're getting the gist of the text.

Third read: Students focus on vocabulary and sections of the text that they didn't understand on previous reads.

Fourth read: Students revisit the text to analyze author's craft and structure and to prepare for writing about the text.

(The close reading paradigm discussed in detail in chapter 2 mirrors the above sequence.) Educators can employ other useful scaffolds, such as having collaborative discussions, developing academic vocabulary, and providing structured opportunities to write (described below) throughout the multiday reads. An example of how learning tasks and lessons within a single unit of topically related material can provide integrated opportunities for ELs (and all students) to engage intensely with complex texts can be found in a unit produced by WestEd for the Understanding Language initiative (Walqui, Koelsch, and Schmida 2012; Kibler, Walqui, and Bunch 2015). The middle school unit *Persuasion across Time and Space: Analyzing and Producing Complex Texts* (https://ell.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/ela_archives/understanding_language_materials_Jan2013.pdf) features five multiday lessons that encompass a five- to six-week time frame. Each lesson develops and refines students' understanding of the principles of persuasion, moving from more familiar forms of discourse, such as media advertisements, to progressively less familiar, more complex forms that are historically situated, such as Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and Barbara Jordan's speech "All Together Now." Because each lesson builds on the next rather than consisting of standalone texts and tasks, lessons form a coherent, connected whole that deepens students' knowledge of the topic.

An additional practice—and one that teachers can easily integrate into daily instruction—is called the Juicy Sentence protocol (Fillmore and Fillmore 2012). The protocol began in 2007 as a strategy to jump-start the instruction of ELs in New York City who had stalled at the intermediate level of English proficiency. While the Fillmores didn't conduct formal research on the effectiveness of the approach, schools (lab sites) that implemented the protocol decided to expand its use because of the results officials had observed. These included increased numbers of ELs passing both the New York State English language proficiency test and the Regents global history test as well as the fact that ELs outperformed non-EL students on the ELA test that was given each year at lab sites.

The protocol makes use of the rich, complex, discipline-appropriate texts that ELs and native English speakers are already (or should be) studying in class. From these texts, the teacher each day selects one meaning-rich, syntactically complex sentence—one jam-packed with information and begging for examination and discussion. For ten to fifteen minutes, usually at the start of class, the teacher and students probe the meaning of the words, phrases, and clauses in the "juicy" sentence. Teachers should intentionally select instructional preludes such as this with the larger unit topic in mind so that students are learning content as they get comfortable with the look and feel of complex academic language. Through this daily work, students

develop the skill and habit of breaking down complex sentences and, through that effort, come to understand how to construct their meaning. Students thereby become more proficient at independently unlocking the information and ideas encoded within other syntactically complex sentences they encounter and producing such sentences themselves.

2. Scaffolds that support ELs in accelerating the growth of their oral language facility

Research shows that ELs benefit from multiple opportunities each day to deliberate collaboratively about what they're learning and reading in a range of subject areas (Baker et al. 2014; Beaulieu-Jones and Proctor 2016). Anchoring small-group, collaborative conversations in topics associated with the texts ELs and their classmates are reading and the content they're learning gives all students time to explore and rehearse their thinking—thus allowing them (and ELs in particular) to be more secure when they speak with the larger class. Such conversations maintain a sharp focus on engaging with academic registers beyond the common teacher question–students answer routines (Beaulieu-Jones and Proctor 2016). Through these collaborations, students learn to rely on each other as resources for sense making and language development.

Studies show that if planned well, small-group discussions can deepen ELs' text comprehension and broaden their knowledge base. Instructional conversations are most successful when ELs are encouraged to take part in prolonged oral discourse in which students take turns speaking and building on one another's comments and reflections. Students during these conversations should be allowed to use their home language in combination with English, a practice referred to as "translanguaging" (García 2009).

A related scaffold delves into one of the most common (and first) decisions teachers must make in the classroom: how to group ELs in mainstream classes to process content collaboratively (August et al. 2009). Different language groupings offer different benefits: Heterogeneous language collaborations, in which all students speak English, enable ELs to benefit from hearing the ideas and oral expressions of peers who are native or otherwise fluent English speakers. Alternatively, homogeneous language groupings allow ELs to discuss and clarify their thoughts about content with one another in their home languages, enabling them to gain confidence as they work on tasks teachers ask them to complete in English. There's a third way that leading EL researchers advocate for that builds on the advantages of the other two approaches: student triads (Valdés, Capitelli, and Quinn 2018). In classrooms that enroll ELs at various levels of language proficiency, teachers can form three-person groups consisting of an EL who is less English proficient with two other ELs

with the same home language who are more English proficient—homogeneous language groups with ELs at heterogeneous levels of English proficiency. Working in these triads, students who aren't yet confident English speakers are still able to engage fully in the community of practice as listeners. Triad members who are more proficient in English also can translate (at times) as discussions progress. Asking young people (rather than language specialists) to serve as occasional translators reduces dependency and spurs ELs to persist in listening to—and working to comprehend—spoken English even through frustration.

What follows are some additional field-tested scaffolds for teachers who want to facilitate highly interactive collaborative discussions in which students attend to register and pragmatics (ELICIT Collaborative 2014; Beaulieu-Jones and Proctor 2016).

- Crafting a significant content- or text-based question for which there's no single correct answer but rather multiple well-reasoned ones supportable with textual evidence (For more on the use of textual evidence, see chapter 2.)
- If the discussion is text based, insisting that students have the text they're reading in front of them so that they can refer to it when supporting their ideas (This reinforces the message concerning the importance of textual evidence.)
- Promoting a classroom culture that's welcoming and respectful by creating a set of discussion protocols that build spaces for listening and valuing one another's perspectives and insights
- Beginning with brief discussions (five to ten minutes in length) and then transitioning into longer ones (fifteen to twenty minutes in length) as students become more familiar with how to grapple with the content, respond to their peers, and follow the discussion protocols
- Teaching the language of argumentation to facilitate students taking positions on the texts they're reading (and topics they're studying), presenting evidence, and considering and challenging their peers' perspectives
- Assuming the role of "prompter-in-chief" by stepping in (and out) of discussions as necessary—ensuring that students understand and stay focused, encouraging them to construct longer and deeper responses than they might otherwise offer, and pulling back and letting them manage the discussion as they gain experience

3. Scaffolds that support ELs in expanding their vocabulary

Not surprisingly, research is emphatic regarding the benefit of engaging ELs in intense, explicit vocabulary instruction—especially in tier two (general academic) vocabulary (Beck, McKeown, and Kucan 2013)—over the course of multiple lessons (Baker et al. 2014). ELs

have been shown to improve their vocabulary knowledge and reading comprehension skill from repeated exposures to new vocabulary through diverse interactions over as short a span as fifteen or eighteen weeks (Carlo et al. 2004; Lesaux et al. 2010). Successful approaches for vocabulary instruction enable students to come to know words and phrases through the discovery of their literal meanings as well as their connotations, syntactical uses, and morphological structures. Such understanding, in turn, provides students with the skills to learn new words and phrases on their own and to acquire the knowledge contained in texts that use academic vocabulary.

What follows are some tried-and-true vocabulary methods that research shows teachers can use as scaffolding in conjunction with the texts students are reading (Carlo et al. 2004; Gersten et al. 2007; Vaughn et al. 2009; Lesaux et al. 2010; Baker et al. 2014).

- Focusing on tier two words and phrases in context. Teachers should select a small number of high-value words and phrases from grade-appropriate texts (including those in core content areas) that ELs are already reading to serve as the focus of instruction for several lessons. The words and phrases should be essential for understanding the reading as well as ones that students will frequently encounter in the text or along their educational journey. (For a detailed discussion of tier two words and phrases, see chapter 3, on vocabulary and knowledge building.)
- Focusing on everyday words and phrases that are central to the core content of texts. ELs may not yet have encountered certain words and phrases that native speakers have learned through everyday speech (what Beck, McKeown, and Kucan [2013] refer to as tier one words and phrases). Everyday words and phrases could pose barriers to comprehension and deserve attention, especially when such words and phrases are essential to understanding the texts ELs are reading.
- Providing student-friendly dictionaries. In contrast to standard dictionaries, student-friendly dictionaries take pains to avoid defining one unfamiliar word (e.g., *vociferous*) in terms of other unfamiliar words (*crying out noisily*) and instead provide useful context (*People who are vociferous speak with determination because they want their views and beliefs to be heard*).
- Focusing attention on prefixes and suffixes. Many studies point to the value of teaching ELs how to use word parts to discern word meanings independently. Like knowing how to use contextual clues, such a skill is vital because it's not possible for teachers to provide students with direct instruction in the thousands of vocabulary words and phrases they need to learn for academic success. The

two skills can be used in tandem as well: readers can be taught first to use word parts to predict a word's meaning and then to use context to confirm or correct that prediction.

- Clarifying and reinforcing definitions of words and phrases. Word and phrase definitions can be enhanced using tools such as graphic organizers and other visual strategies to tie a word or phrase to concrete examples and nonexamples (e.g., *ant* and *baby* as nonexamples of *enormous*). Identifying cognates in other languages that have a common etymological origin with English counterparts (e.g., *actividades* and *activities*, *centro* and *center*, *investigación* and *investigation*) is another way to clarify definitions of words and phrases.
- Using vocabulary when writing and speaking. Providing ELs with frequent and varied opportunities to use newly learned academic vocabulary—beyond memorizing definitions—cements new words and phrases into their working knowledge. Requiring ELs to use targeted academic words and phrases anchored in the texts they're reading as part of their writing and small-group discussions increases students' experiences with the words and phrases. Engaging ELs in a range of fun and interesting games that are also intellectually meaningful, such as crosswords and charades, can also increase their exposure to these high-value words and phrases and provide a useful review of words and phrases previously taught.

While no one can deny the importance of vocabulary scaffolding, it's important to emphasize here that teachers should envision vocabulary instruction as supporting core disciplinary learning goals rather than the reverse, teachers planning content instruction around meeting particular vocabulary aims (Bruna, Vann, and Escudero 2007).

4. Scaffolds that support ELs in developing their facility with written language

Just as teachers can carefully scaffold the reading of complex texts, they can also provide ELs with scaffolds as they learn to write about a variety of topics and texts. Anchoring assignments in the texts students are reading (and the topics these texts cover) gives ELs (and all students) meaningful information and ideas to write about as they extend and solidify their content learning as well as their writing skills. In the words of one EL expert, "It is precisely because reading and writing access similar cognitive strategies . . . that reading and writing make such a powerful combination when taught in connection with one another" (Kim et al. 2011, 233). Such assignments are superior to ones explicitly geared toward producing grammatically standard writing because decontextualized writing is much harder to negotiate than is writing on a subject one knows about (Bunch, Kibler, and Pimentel 2012). Allowing students to write about what they've learned grounds that content deeply in students' understanding.

ELs are also aided when instructional routines guide them from whole-class to small-group discussions, followed by the creation of notes and graphic organizers, sentence and paragraph writing, and finally the production of fully developed written compositions (Kim et al. 2011). The early stages of such routines help ELs capture and reflect on new knowledge and make explicit the relationships among concepts in texts well before they're asked to respond to a writing prompt. Mentor (model) texts that highlight specific elements of well-structured responses can serve as scaffolds that guide ELs in understanding the expectations of assignments (Bunch, Kibler, and Pimentel 2012). Reviews of common transitions and other linking words and phrases can also help ELs beginning to write in English (Baker et al. 2014).

Finally, formative feedback is essential but an oft-overlooked scaffolding opportunity. So as not to overwhelm or discourage ELs but rather foster their writing development, useful feedback should be explicit, constructive, and targeted to the instructional objectives of the lesson or an identified, limited set of language features relevant to the individual or the class (Ortmeier-Hooper 2013). For example, if the instructional target is to "have students write a compelling argument about zoo habitats, then [the teacher should] provide specific feedback on the ideas presented in the text rather than on spelling, grammar, or punctuation" (Baker et al. 2014, 52).

From Theory to Realization

The promise of the best practices for EL instruction reviewed above isn't just theoretical, as a recent study examining six high schools in the northeast United States shows (Castellón et al. 2015). While these six schools vary in terms of the size of their EL populations, all have over 80 percent of their students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch (a commonly used metric of school socioeconomic status). Each school has raised the graduation bar above minimum district and state mandates, and still these schools have higher-than-average EL high school graduation and postsecondary entry rates.

What's their secret? While the schools don't share a common curriculum, they do share several emphases that reflect both the policies and many of the instructional methodologies advocated above (Castellón et al. 2015):

- They've adopted ambitious missions focused on preparing all students for college and career success, and those missions guide all instructional and policy decisions.
- They set clear and achievable goals dedicated to integrating students' knowledge and language development, with particular attention to meeting the language demands integral to the disciplines.

- They view scaffolding of learning not as the exclusive responsibility of certain teachers but rather as the responsibility of the entire school community—the whole teaching staff as well as students helping students and parents working at home with their children.
- They celebrate the cultural and linguistic diversity of students rather than view that diversity as an obstacle to academic progress, and, as a result, students feel proud of their identities and abilities as well as those of their peers.
- They welcome the use of home language in classes, including “translanguaging” in which bilingual speakers move fluidly between the languages they know. Several schools have made graduating fully bilingual and biliterate students an imperative.
- They place a priority on hiring teachers who can speak students’ home languages or have themselves been immigrants or ELs and who are dual certified in ESL and content areas.
- They promote deliberate and thoughtful collaboration between language specialists and content area teachers, including coteaching to support both language and content learning.
- They encourage teachers to take risks, test out their ideas, and report on the success (or lack of success) of their instructional practices.
- They’re highly attuned to students’ needs and capacities and have developed flexible support structures in their master schedules, including longer school days, additional support through tutoring and double periods, and supplementary English and math courses.
- They value diagnostic assessments “for learning and not just of learning” (18; emphasis in original) and use their results along with other data points to adjust instruction and to prompt students to take charge of their own progress.
- They leverage community partners by providing students with opportunities to take part in college-level courses, mentorships, and extracurricular activities.

Conclusion

Lau v. Nichols succinctly frames the legal responsibilities of schools to provide ELs with access to equal educational opportunities:

Any ability grouping or tracking system employed by the school system to deal with particular language skills needs of national origin minority group children must be designated to meet such language skills needs as soon as possible and must not operate as an educational dead-end or permanent track. (414 US 563 (1974), 569)

In the spirit of this directive from the U.S. Supreme Court, this chapter draws on several strands of theory and research on language and literacy

development and pedagogy to offer a new vision of EL instruction that meets the demands of college and career readiness. The guidance herein is united under the banner of integrating language development and content learning deeply and coherently. Under this approach, ELs take part in disciplinary core classes with generous language supports, receive additional language instruction in targeted ELD classes, and utilize their home languages as an additional asset on the way to becoming fully functional bilinguals. This instructional methodology allows ELs to engage genuinely with content-rich, appropriately challenging texts and tasks that build knowledge and broaden worldviews. It teaches ELs the value of evidence when they answer weighty questions both orally through extended discussions and in writing. Most of all, it enables ELs to become self-directed learners able to fully pursue their interests and futures. In sum, the investment in teaching language with grade-level content is worth the effort, satisfying the twin goals of equity and effectiveness.

It's perhaps fitting to end by reflecting on the fact that not only does the research suggest that effective teaching and instructional supports for students who are native English speakers benefit ELs, but also that the reverse is true: many of the effective teaching and instructional supports for ELs also benefit native English speakers. Tellingly, this includes developing native English speakers' fluency in one or more additional languages. Let's hope that as schools strengthen the instruction of ELs, they embrace the goal of fully functional bilingualism for all students as a linguistic and culturally enriching approach that would benefit the entire populace and nation.

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