Principles of Integrated Language Teaching and Learning

Ms. Varma, first-grade teacher, has taken advantage of a beautiful autumn day to take her class, which includes seven English learners, on an English scavenger hunt. Working in pairs, the class walks around the school, the school grounds, and nearby streets looking for words in English. They carefully observe and take turns writing down all the words they find. They will use these words to study phonics and the alphabet as well as to create and share sentences, stories, and maps when they return to class. The list grows and grows: *Grade 1, Ms. Varma, Boys, Girls, School, Library, quiet, Garden Hills, Georgia, Fulton County, Delmont, Lookout, Drive, Street, Park, Bus, Bakery, Police . . . .* Desta, a new arrival from Ethiopia, looks at the long accumulated list in amazement. "Ms. Varma," he cries, "There's English everywhere!"

Ms. Varma has designed a lesson that offers opportunities to learners at all levels and illustrates the usefulness of spoken and written English. She has structured a lesson that promotes conversation and connects to themes the class is studying in reading, science, social studies, and math. She has brought a new learner to delight in the language around him that he is beginning to learn, and she will use this experience as a starting place to take the child beyond delight to competence in using his new language. But on what does she base her choices and practices as a teacher of culturally and linguistically diverse learners?

Though we still have far to go toward a thorough understanding of language development, language teaching, and language learning, the teaching profession has a rich body of research upon which to base our instructional decisions. Teachers need to understand and be able to articulate the principles that underlie their teaching, and these principles should be based on sound research about how language is learned and what works best in supporting language development in the classroom. The principles that teachers hold not only make a difference regarding how and how well they teach but they also make teachers more able to learn from observation of their learners and from reflection on their own teaching.

What are the principles of integrated language teaching and learning?

- What principles can we draw from research about language learning and teaching?
- What are strategies and practices that exemplify research-based principles?

In this chapter, we outline nine principles that apply our best understandings of research on both effective teaching and learning for school-age learners and specific knowledge about how language is most efficiently acquired and best taught. We have named our model the **activity-based communicative teaching and learning model** (or the **ABC model**). The nine principles are organized along two dimensions: (1) activity-based teaching and learning and (2) communicative teaching and learning.

Language is best developed when it is used in ways that are active, convey meaning, and have a communicative purpose

Activity-based teaching and learning focuses on what learners bring to the classroom and the active role that learners play in the language acquisition process. Research on learning and memory (Sprenger, 1999), on language acquisition and language learning (Cameron, 2001), and on the functions of the brain (Genesee, 2000) shows us that English language learners in elementary and middle school are *not* passive recipients of learning. Rather, they are actively constructing **schema** (organizational structures of language and content) and meaning. Thus, all teaching—even direct teaching—must be planned so that learners play active roles as they learn. Four of the ABC principles describe how classroom instruction can be planned and conducted to promote active student roles in learning.

Communicative teaching and learning focuses on the importance of authentic, comprehensible communication in the learning of language. For teaching and learning to be effective and efficient, language must be used in ways that clearly convey meaning and have communicative purpose. Five of the ABC Principles fall along this dimension and outline how our instruction must include communicative elements.

These two dimensions and nine principles are designed as guidelines for organizing and planning instruction for classrooms in which language develops as quickly and smoothly as possible. Although there is necessarily some overlap among the nine activity-based and communicative principles, we have found each to provide unique guidelines and organization for planning and evaluating the instruction of English language learners, and we apply them in the aspects of instruction detailed throughout the book. In the following paragraphs, we introduce each principle, provide a brief theoretical/research foundation for it, and give an example. These examples offer snapshots of the principles in action in the classroom in various content areas at various grade levels. Although we work to cover the range of school-age learners, we encourage readers, as they study the principles, to transform these examples by thinking about how each might be adapted and revised to best depict their own current or potential teaching situations.

ACTIVITY-BASED LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Principle 1 Active Engagement

Learners play enjoyable, engaging, active roles in the learning experience. Language and literacy development are facilitated by a comfortable atmosphere—not only one that values, encourages, and celebrates efforts but also one that provides the appropriate level of challenge to motivate and

Active Engagement in Practice

To help his multicultural, multilingual third-grade students "use" language authentically in studying the food pyramid, Ted Burch had his students keep a written and/or pictorial food diary and then use word source tools (such as a picture dictionary, bilingual dictionary, or Internet search) to list in English the foods they ate. Next the third-graders made word cards of the foods and taught their classmates and teacher names of unfamiliar foods from the various cultures represented in the class. As a final step, students classified all the foods they had eaten two ways: by locating them on a map of the world showing where the foods were grown and by placing word and picture cards next to the appropriate category on a large food pyramid.

engage learners (Cummins, 2007; Guthrie et al., 2004; Jensen, 1998; Sprenger, 1999; Krashen, 2003). When **active engagement** is practiced, language is learned while doing something with it, not just learning it. Language is best viewed as a verb (language as something to use and do) than as a noun (language as a content to be learned). School-age learners develop language and literacy best first by using language as a tool for creating and sharing meanings (Vygotsky, 1986); and later, as they are developmentally ready, by studying language structures and features as they are needed and used in authentic contexts (Lightbown & Spada, 2006).

Principle 2 Cultural Relevance

Classrooms respect and incorporate the cultures of learners in those classes while helping them to understand the new culture of the community, the school, and the classroom. Teachers play the most important role in determining the quality and quantity of participation of ELs in their classrooms. When teachers develop a climate of trust, understand children's social and cultural needs, and model for the rest of the class how they, too, can include English learners in classroom conversations and activities as important members of the classroom learning communities, ELs' active involvement in the classroom and their learning show improvement (Yoon, 2007).

Research has also led to a wide consensus concerning the value of parental involvement in students' school achievement and social development (Cummins, 1986; Delpit, 1995), and in literacy development in particular (Bronfenbrenner, 1975; Tizard, Schofield, & Hewison, 1982; Heath, 1983; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Reese, Garnier, Gallimore, & Goldenberg, 2000). Creating a culturally responsive and **culturally relevant** classroom goes beyond "parental involvement" and requires thoughtfulness and effort on the part of teachers to learn about students' cultures from students themselves, families, community members, and library and Internet resources; to value and include what learners bring to the classroom from their cultures; and to take into account the different world views represented in the classroom. Creating such a classroom requires an understanding of culture that is deeper than viewing the "exotic" differences between cultures, or focusing on holidays, foods, and customs. Instead, it integrates a multicultural perspective on the daily life of the classroom (Derman-Sparks & Edwards, 2010).

Cultural Relevance in Practice

Lydia Achebe knows that her first-graders want to see themselves in the books that they read, and recognizes how they appreciate it when they and others view their home cultures in a positive light. She works closely with the school library media specialist, who tries to acquire texts from and about the cultures of children in the school. When a new student arrived who was from the Ndebele region of South Africa, the teacher and media specialist found the delightful book, *My Painted House, My Friendly Chicken, and Me* with text by Maya Angelou and photographs by Margaret Courtney-Clarke (1994). All the class enjoyed looking at a globe and discussing the path the new student took to come to the United States from Southern Africa. They shared the book as a read-aloud several times, compared and contrasted schools and homes in different places where they had lived, and then painted their own pictures using elements of the bright designs of the Ndebele.

Principle 3 Collaboration

Learners develop and practice language in collaboration with one another and with teachers. As language is a tool for meaning-making, and communication and thinking are developed through using language to accomplish things (Vygotsky, 1986), and as learning cooperatively has been shown to be effective at improving learning (Kessler, 1991; Slavin, 1995), so instruction should be organized to facilitate interaction and collaboration. Learning should provide two-way experiences through which learners solve problems, negotiate meaning, and demonstrate what they have learned.

Collaboration in Practice

When Kamal Gebril's fifth-grade class studied ancient Egypt, collaboration among peers included a simple "elbow buddy" or "pair-share" activity, in which partners restate to one another something they have learned about burial practices in the time of the pharaohs. Collaboration between teacher and learners included a shared writing activity in which students, after studying pictures in David Macaulay's classic book, *Pyramid* (1975), described and illustrated the process of building a pyramid. Kamal was careful to include discussion of contemporary Egypt as well, describing such family customs as visiting ancient monuments and traveling outside the city on special holidays to visit graves of their forebears and having a family picnic. The assignment was extended to collaboration between school and home when children took home pictures they had drawn and stories they had written about customs of ancient and modern Egypt. First they read the story in English to family members and then they retold the story in the home language. A final collaboration at the end of the unit was a "numbered heads" review of what they'd learned. In this strategy, children, in groups of about four, are each given a number. Kamal asks a question and the groups put their "heads together" to find the answer. Then a number is chosen randomly and the child with that number gives the group's response. Even newcomers are able to participate meaningfully and actively in the review as a result of the coaching and support of their peers to prepare them to answer the questions.

Principle 4 Learning Strategies

Learners use a variety of language and learning strategies to expand learning beyond the classroom and to become independent, lifelong learners. **Learning strategies** (also called *learner strategies*) (Chamot & O'Malley, 1996; Nunan, 1996; Oxford, 1996; Lessard-Clouston, 1997) are steps taken by learners to enhance their learning and develop their language competence. These strategies can be observable behaviors, steps, or techniques, such as **SQ3R (*s*urvey, *q*uestion, *r*ead, *r*ecite, *r*eview)** (Robinson, 1970), a reading strategy, or nonobservable thoughts or mental practices, such as visualization or positive thinking. Although learners do use strategies unconsciously, the focus in teaching learning strategies is to bring them to the learners' attention and make them consciously part of the learners' repertoire. Learning strategies allow learners to control and direct their own learning. These strategies also expand the role of language teachers beyond teaching language to that of helping learners develop their own strategies. They are generally oriented toward solving problems and can involve many aspects of language to be learned beyond the cognitive.

Learning Strategies in Practice

To help her eighth-graders become more independent in learning new vocabulary, Lenore Duink first used modeling, supported practice, and independent practice to develop learners' ability to ask questions when they don't understand—teaching them polite phrases for asking a teacher, peer, or other person appropriately for repetition, clarification, or explanation of vocabulary. Then she taught her students various ways to support their vocabulary learning, including making **word squares** (see Table 1.1 for an example), sorting terms into categories, visualizing meanings, practicing with a peer, drawing pictures, composing and singing songs with new terms, highlighting verb endings, listening for words on the radio and TV, using mnemonic devices, and finding ways to put new terms to use in conversations both in the classroom and beyond.

TABLE 1.1 Word Square Graphic Organizer

Mammal	
Definition a type of vertebrate **Translation** in my language (Spanish) mamífero	**Characteristics** • Are warm blooded • Produce milk • Give birth to young alive • Have hair • Are vertebrates • Have lungs to breathe air
Examples • Human • Monkey	**Nonexamples** • Rooster • Fish

## COMMUNICATIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Principle 5 Differentiation

Learning activities accommodate different language, literacy, and cognitive levels and incorporate many dimensions of learning: different learning styles, intelligences, and preferences. All learners are not the same: they have different native intelligence, learned intelligence, learning styles, and preferences. Including English learners in a grade-level classroom expands the differences by adding different language backgrounds, educational levels, cultural experiences, experiences of culture change, and sometimes the trauma of war, famine, or poverty. When learners are limited in their comprehension of English, providing input through other means—pictures, gestures, sounds, movement, graphics—helps provide them the "hook" they need to be included in the classroom conversation. Effective **differentiation** to include English learners involves expanding the dimensions of learning across different learning styles—verbal, auditory, kinesthetic—and different intelligences. Gardner's (1983, 1996) categories of intelligences include linguistic (language, e.g., writer), logical-mathematical (e.g., mathematician or engineer), musical (guitarist), bodily-kinesthetic intelligence (athlete, dancer), spatial intelligence (artist, designer), interpersonal intelligence (counselor, politician), intrapersonal intelligence (philosopher), and naturalist (oceanographer). Teachers differentiate the language they use and introduce in the classroom, the content they use, the classroom processes, the products that learners are asked to produce, and the assessment of those products. Many states and school districts are implementing a model called *response to intervention* (RTI) to provide early intervention for at-risk learners, but in this book, we also describe how it can be used within a framework of differentiated learning. We will introduce culturally and linguistically responsive RTI in this chapter, and throughout the book, we offer RTI Samplers to illustrate how the principles and practices we propose can be applied through culturally and linguistically responsive RTI.

Differentiation in Practice

Marie Matluck wanted to address a variety of learning styles while helping her kindergarteners learn letter names and sounds, so she provided opportunities for learners to learn these by differentiating the process—involving children in looking at pictures, singing, building with blocks, teaching one another, searching for letters in the environment outside schools, drawing letters and words that included the sounds of the letters, visualizing—making "mind pictures" associating letters with key words—and making letter shapes with their bodies. She sometimes gave learners choices as to which activities they used to practice their skills. With sounds that are used in both English and students' home languages, Marie provided pictures of key words that begin with the letter in both languages to take advantage of what children already knew and enhance transfer of learning from one language to another (Figure 1.2).
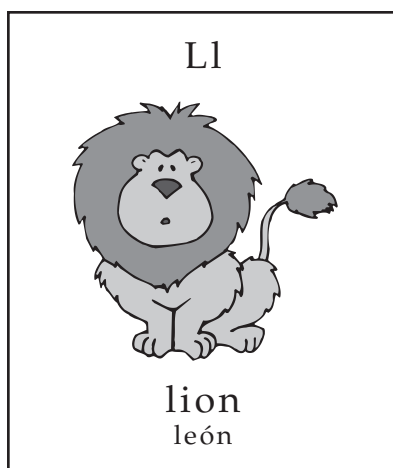
FIGURE 1.1 **"Lion" / "León" Is a Key Word That Begins with the Same Letter in Both English and Spanish**

Principle 6 Comprehensible Input with Scaffolding

Teachers provide rich input with appropriate context and support, to make that input comprehensible to learners, and appropriately and increasingly more challenging. English learners cannot learn from language they do not understand. **Comprehensible input** is a term first used by Steven Krashen (2003) that refers to language used by teachers and others in ways that English learners can understand as their language ability is developing. It ties back to Vygotsky's (1986) thinking about the social nature of learning. Oral and written input from teachers can be adapted to convey meaning to language learners at various levels and to be more understandable in a variety of ways. To make learners better understand oral language in the classroom, teachers make sure they face students when they speak (so that students can watch their mouths and facial expressions), speak slowly, and articulate clearly (so that students can hear the separate words), and increase **wait time** (the time after a question is asked before a student or students are asked to respond).

A scaffold is a metaphor for the way teachers provide support for language learners as they acquire English
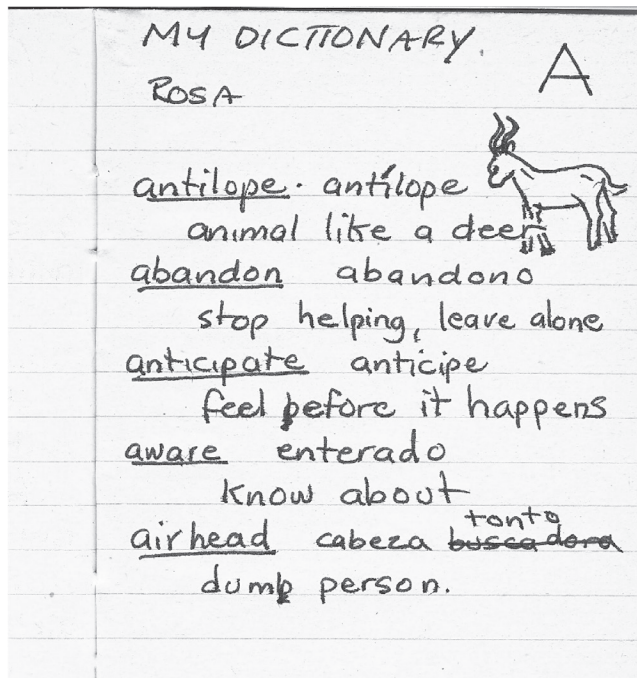
FIGURE 1.2 Rosa's Personal Dictionary

To improve the comprehensibility of written input, teachers choose texts with rich graphic elements and teach students how to understand and use these graphics; teach learners to use a variety of print and online sources to find word meanings, pronunciations, and examples of use; teach learners to organize and keep their own vocabulary notebooks or personal dictionaries (see example in Figure 1.2); provide alternate texts when texts are clearly beyond student comprehension; and use a variety of strategies to help students access texts that are near their instructional level. Table 1.2 suggests means to increase comprehensible input both orally and in writing. Strategies and techniques in Chapter 5, Oral Language Development, and in Chapters 8 and 9 on reading and writing will expand on these ideas to add to your repertoire of tools to support English learners by helping them to understand the language of your classroom.

Comprehensible Input with Scaffolding in Practice

When Jim Stalzer's sixth-grade class was studying the life cycle in science, he invited an ornithologist to come to speak to the class on the life cycle of birds. Jim wanted to make sure that all the students in his class, including newcomers who were beginning learners of English, could enjoy the visit. After the ornithologist accepted his invitation, Jim asked him for a short set of terms that he could preteach before the visit and supplied the speaker with a short list of suggestions (much like the ones in Table 1.2 for oral language input) that might help the ornithologist to be more easily understood in the multilingual, multicultural classroom. Jim also pretaught some of the terms to the newcomers and helped them practice questions to ask the guest.

Principle 7 Prior Knowledge

Teachers help learners use their prior knowledge of language, content, and the world to develop new language and increase learning. If we already know a lot about a topic—global warming, for example—we will find television programs, lectures, or written materials on global warming much easier to follow. If a student has learned a lot about a topic in his home language, it is easier to develop new language about that topic. **Prior knowledge** or background knowledge is key to comprehension for all learners (Marzano, Pickering, & Pollock, 2004), but it is of particular importance for English learners. If learners are less familiar with a topic and structures of the oral discussion or written text, they will have more difficulty with comprehension (Upala et al., 2007; Carrell & Eisterhold, 1988). Language difficulty increases

TABLE 1.2 Scaffolding Instructional Language

Adaptations to Make Oral Language Input Comprehensible	Adaptations and Resources to Make Written Language Input More Comprehensible
• Select topics that are familiar to learners and/or make connections between learners' prior knowledge and information they will read.	• Select topics that are familiar to learners and make connections between learners' prior knowledge and information they will read.
• Check comprehension often (use signals, cards, choral responses, questions, slates). When learners do not understand, demonstrate, explain, or rephrase.	• Use pictures, maps, and graphic organizers.
• Use translation when this is the most efficient way to convey meanings of new words.	• Preteach and reinforce key vocabulary.
• Adapt language of input to help learners understand:	• Use and teach learners to use dictionaries and other word sources: picture dictionaries, learner dictionaries, translation dictionaries, and word source software.
• Face students.	• Teach learners to find and use picture, translation, and dictionary resources on the Web.
• Speak slowly (but naturally) and articulate clearly.	• Provide alternate texts at appropriate levels.
• Pause frequently and increase wait time.	• Teach learners to select texts at appropriate reading/language levels.
• Use gestures, mime, facial expressions, pictures, props, and real objects to enhance meaning.	• Assign key selections from texts when entire text is out of reach.
• Model and provide student models of language to be used.	• Use audio texts.
• Monitor use of idioms and figurative language and explain them when needed.	• Include reference links (to pronunciation, translation, pictures, background, etc.) in digital texts (McCloskey & Thrush, 2005).
• Use more direct sentence structures, articulate carefully, and adjust vocabulary.	• Use scaffolding strategies to support reading (e.g., reciprocal teaching, shared reading, guided reading).
• Point out key ideas and vocabulary.	
• Use terms consistently; avoid overuse of synonyms for key terms.	

with cognitive difficulty, unfamiliarity, and lack of context. So, when developing language with English learners, teachers must work to *start where students are*. This includes finding out what students already know about a new topic and helping them to make connections between what they already know and what they are learning. It includes making connections

A teacher engages learners in a dialogue about nature

Prior Knowledge in Practice

Liz Bigler is introducing a lesson to her fourth-graders on Rosa Parks and the Montgomery bus boycott. She wants her beginning learners to understand the meaning of the word *fair* that is key to understanding the motivation for the boycott. She takes a bag of pennies and gives them out to a group of students. Three students get 10 pennies. The fourth gets 1. The children look puzzled, and Liz explains to them (with repetition, rephrasing, and gestures) that this is an example of something that is "not fair." The students then proceed with their total physical response (TPR) lesson, which includes acting out the boycott as the teacher tells the story. (See Bigler, 2006, for a complete description of this lesson.)

between learners' cultures and cultural knowledge and the new culture of the school and the community. It also may include, at beginning levels, selecting topics that learners are likely to be familiar with, providing necessary background information on new topics in home languages, preteaching key vocabulary to expand background knowledge before studying a topic, or helping learners make connections between what they know about language in their home language (L1) to uses of this knowledge in English (L2). It also might include providing background information in L1 before proceeding to study a theme or topic in L2. In a bilingual classroom, content could be taught in two languages. In a monolingual classroom teachers might, for example, have learners read or listen to a home language summary of a text before they will be reading it in English.

Principle 8 Content Integration

Language learning is integrated with meaningful, relevant, and useful content—generally the same academic content and higher-order thinking skills that are appropriate for the age and grade of learners. Teaching language along with age-appropriate academic content has several advantages: it is efficient because two goals—acquisition of language and

Children reenact the story of Rosa Parks and the Montgomery bus boycott

Content Integration in Practice

Julia Raca teaches in a multicultural, multilingual second grade with several English learners at different levels. She wants to make sure that everyone benefits from her science curriculum, including the new arrivals in her classroom, so she includes both language objectives and science objectives in all her lesson plans. (See Table 1.3.) When she teaches her "How Things Work" unit, her goals include students' understandings about tools, machines, and magnets, and she adds to them language goals including key vocabulary, giving instructions, and using verbs in the command form and future tense form. Julia starred objectives that she thought were appropriate for newcomers to achieve and others she expected them to work toward.

content learning—are accomplished at once. It is effective first because language is learned better when learners are doing something purposeful and important to them—and learning the content for their grade level is very important. It is also necessary because learners cannot afford to take a year or two off from content learning while they develop language: they will end up only further behind their peers. Content-based language learning can happen in a variety of settings: in a pull-out English language development (ELD) class (also called an *ESL class*), in which the teacher introduces content through integrated themes (this is often used with newcomers/ beginners); in a special section of a content class with a grade-level teacher with training in teaching ELD who teaches the content using approaches that make the content comprehensible to language learners and promote language development (this is sometimes done in middle and high schools with significant numbers of English learners); or in grade-level classes that include both English proficient learners and English language

TABLE 1.3 Including Language and Content-Learning Goals

Content Goals	Language Goals
• Learners name uses of various simple machines and explain/demonstrate how they work.*	**Key Vocabulary**
	wheels, gears, machine, parts, work*
• Learners identify certain machines and their parts (e.g., bicycle, gears, wheels).	**Oral Language**
	• Naming*
• Learners demonstrate and label the workings of simple machines (screws, wheel and axle, lever, pulley) on a compound machine, the bicycle.	• Retelling
	• Reporting
	• Asking for explanations
	Grammar
	• Future tense with "going to"
	• Helping verb "can/can't"
	• Commands*
	Comprehension
	• Visualization and description of information from text and charts
	Literacy
	• Use of alphabet to find information*
	Writing
	• Labeling of a diagram
	• Writing about how bicycles work

*Objectives appropriate for newcomers.

Source: Adapted from Freeman, D., Freeman, Y., Garcia, A. C., Gottlieb, M., McCloskey, M. L., Stack, L., & Silva, C. (2010). *On Our Way to English,* Grade 2, Unit 7.

Good teaching involves making assessment an integral part of every lesson

learners and in which teachers have training to attend to both content and language needs of learners and to differentiate instruction to include learners at different language and learning levels. These integrated models are used because research findings have shown that they are the most effective at both language learning and content learning for English learners (Cummins, 1986; Thomas & Collier, 2003). Teachers can differentiate through adapting the language, content, process, or product in classrooms (Tomlinson, 1999).

Principle 9 Clear, Appropriate Goals and Feedback

Teachers set and communicate attainable goals for learners and provide students appropriate and consistent feedback on their progress in attaining these goals. Setting clear goals helps both teachers and learners have a much greater chance to attain those goals. Goals begin our curriculum, inform our curriculum, and new, more advanced goals are the outcome of our curriculum. As John Dewey once said, "Arriving at one goal is the starting point to another."

We want English learners to attain the same high goals as their English-proficient peers, but to do this, we must set the right goals—goals that comprise the next step forward for individual learners. Learners want to do well, and will do much better when they understand what is expected of them and when our expectations are appropriate. We must establish clear language and content goals for learners and provide them feedback on their progress toward those goals. We can also, in developmentally appropriate ways, encourage learners to begin to evaluate their own progress toward accomplishing goals to help them become independent, self-motivated learners.

We must determine intermediary steps toward grade-level standards that are attainable at learners' language level. World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA), a consortium of states dedicated to the design and implementation of high standards and equitable educational opportunities for English language learners, collaborated with the standards of the professional organization Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages International Association (TESOL) for school-age learners of English (Gottlieb, Cranley, & Cammilleri, 2007; TESOL, 2006). These *English language proficiency standards in the core content areas for grades PK-12* outline standards for teaching English learners the language they need to develop essential content concepts. The general standards are included on Table 1.4. The standards document offers expectations in the areas of language arts, science, math, and social studies for learners at five grade-level clusters of English language proficiency (PreK–K, 1–3, 3–5, 6–8, and 9–12) across the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Many states and districts have determined their own standards for English learners and selected instruments to assess their achievement.

But good assessment goes far beyond summative tests at the beginning or end of the year. Good assessment includes multiple assessments. Good teaching includes assessment as

TABLE 1.4 WIDA Consortium English Language Proficiency Standards in the Core Context Area (Gottlieb, Cranley, & Cammilleri, 2007)

English Language Proficiency Standard 1	English language learners communicate for *social and instructional* purposes within the school setting
English Language Proficiency Standard 2	English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the area of *language arts*.
English Language Proficiency Standard 3	English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the area of *mathematics*.
English Language Proficiency Standard 4	English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the area of *science*.
English Language Proficiency Standard 5	English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the area of *social studies*.

Source: Gottlieb, M., Cranley, M. E., & Cammilleri, A. (2007). WIDA English language proficiency standards. In *Understanding the WIDA English language proficiency standards: A resource guide.* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Board of Regents System. Retrieved from, http://www.wida.us/standards/Resource_Guide_web.pdf.

an integral part of every lesson so that children and teachers can clearly see the progress they are making. Teachers may assess in many ways that range from informal to formal: by asking questions of individuals, groups, and the whole class; by having learners give signs or signals; by having learners demonstrate their understanding with responses on slates; by giving a group

Clear, Appropriate Goals and Feedback in Practice

Scott Kessler teaches a middle school integrated mathematics class that includes seven early and late intermediate learners of English. His aim is to make the content of mathematics comprehensible to English learners in his class, and to do this he works to set incremental goals toward full achievement of content and language goals. He's consulted the WIDA standards (Gottlieb, Cranley, & Cammilleri, 2007), which have been adopted by his state, the Common Core Standards in Mathematics (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010), and adapted the rubric shown in Table 1.5 to use with his learners in a unit on decimals and measurement of central tendencies (mean, mode, median) in the domain of listening.

TABLE 1.5 Mathematics Rubric Using WIDA ELP Standard 3

Grade-level cluster: **6-8WIDA**   *Framework:* **Formative**   *Language Domain:* **Speaking**

ELP Standard 3: **English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of mathematics**

Curriculum Topic: Metric & Standard Units of Measurement

Correlated Common Core Standard for Mathematics: 5.MD.1. Convert among different-sized standard measurement units within a given measurement system (e.g., convert 5 cm to 0.05 m) and use these conversions in solving multistep, real world problems.

Level 1: Entering	Level 2: Beginning	Level 3: Developing	Level 4: Expanding	Level 5: Bridging
Name tools and units of standard or metric measurement from labeled examples (e.g., ruler-inches or cm; scale-pounds or kilos).	Estimate standard or metric measurement from pictures or real objects (e.g., "The dog weighs about 10 kilograms.").	Describe real-life situations in which measurement is needed from illustrated scenes (e.g., at the clinic or marketplace).	Discuss how measurement is used in real-life situations from illustrated scenes (e.g., construction, architecture, or cartography).	Explain how and when to convert standard or metric measurement in real-life situations (e.g., recipes, temperatures, or international sports)

TABLE 1.6 Nine Principles of ABC Language Teaching and Learning

Activity Based	Communicative
1. *Active Engagement*. Learners play enjoyable, engaging, active roles in the learning experience. 2. *Cultural Relevance*. Classrooms respect and incorporate the cultures of the learners and their families in the classroom while helping them to understand the new culture of the community, the school, and the classroom. 3. *Collaboration*. Learners develop and practice language in collaboration with one another and with teachers. 4. *Learning Strategies.* Learners use a variety of learning strategies to maximize learning in the classroom, to expand their learning beyond the classroom, and to become independent, lifelong learners.	5. *Differentiation.* Learning activities accommodate different language, literacy and cognitive levels and also incorporate many dimensions of learning: different learning styles, intelligences, and preferences. 6. *Comprehensible Input with Scaffolding.* Teachers provide rich input with appropriate context and support to make that input comprehensible to learners as well as appropriately and increasingly more challenging. 7. *Prior Knowledge.* Teachers help learners use their prior knowledge of language, content, and the world to develop new language and increase knowledge. 8. *Content Integration.* Language learning is integrated with meaningful, relevant, and useful content, generally the same academic content that is appropriate for the age and grade of learners. 9. *Clear, Appropriate Goals and Feedback.* Teachers set and communicate clear attainable goals to learners and provide students with appropriate and consistent feedback on their progress in attaining these goals.

quiz; by having learners score themselves along a rubric or on a checklist; by keeping checklists of learner accomplishments; by writing portfolios; by using state and national English language assessment instruments; and when learners are ready, by giving district, state, and national criterion-referenced or standardized tests designed for all learners.

We have now outlined nine principles included in two dimensions—principles that we hope will guide you toward supporting the learning of English language learners in your setting. Table 1.6 summarizes these principles for your review. The following chapters will show these principles at work in various aspects of your instructional program for English language learners in organizing your classroom, teaching oral language vocabulary, reading, writing, assessing, and putting it all together through content-based learning.

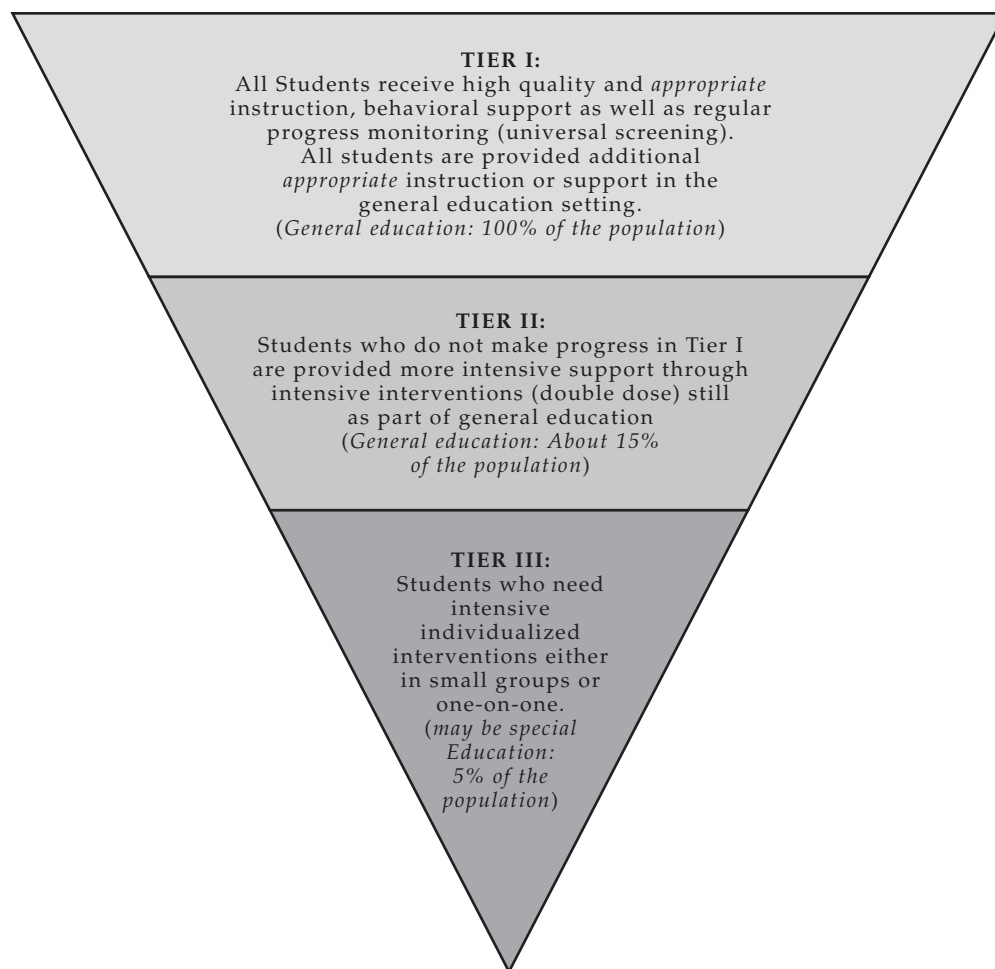## What Is Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Response to Intervention (RTI)?

The RTI model is designed to meet government expectations for (1) quality instruction based on scientific research, (2) use of highly qualified teachers in the classrooms, and (3) instruction informed by regular assessment. The comprehensive model includes both regular and special education. RTI uses three tiers of instruction: Tier 1 includes research-based instruction in the general education classroom, Tier 2 involves intensive assistance as part of the general education support system, and Tier 3 provides special education. Because of this book's focus on the mainstream classroom, our focus will be the first two tiers of instruction (See Figure 1.3, Response to Intervention: Three-Tier Model for ELLs) (Brown & Doolittle, 2008; Baca, 2009),

In this book, we focus on Tier 1 and 2 instruction provided by general classroom teachers who may or may not be English language specialists. RTI is designed so that teachers do not wait for students to fail but provide appropriate, quality instruction from the beginning. Culturally and linguistically responsive RTI includes differentiation, accommodations, collaboration, and progress monitoring using appropriate assessment. Characteristics of effective RTI implementation for English learners include the following applications of the ABC model described earlier:

1. Active Engagement
   - Learners apply concepts to their own lives and to authentic tasks.
2. Cultural Relevance
   - Teachers incorporate the native language strategically. The model has been implemented successfully in bilingual settings in which native language is used strategically and/or as a first language for reading instruction (Vaughn et al., 2006).
   - Instruction builds on learners' home cultures

3. Collaboration
   • Learners have many opportunities to use language for interpersonal and academic purposes.
   • Learners collaborate to use higher-order thinking and active problem solving as well as to practice what they have learned.
4. Learning Strategies
   • Learners develop multiple ways to take responsibility for their own learning, including independent reading as well as reviewing and applying previously learned concepts.
5. Comprehensible Input with Scaffolding
   • New language is introduced in ways that support learning including rich vocabulary development, preteaching and reinforcing learning, and using organizers to build and support concepts and language
6. Prior Knowledge
   • Learners access prior knowledge, make connections between previous learning and new, and build new knowledge.
7. Content Integration
   • Learners use authentic content for development and application of language.
8. Clear and Appropriate Goals and Feedback
   • Teachers use appropriate diagnostic assessments before teaching, formative assessments while teaching to ensure that learners are acquiring concepts and to make them aware of what they are learning; summative assessments at key points in instruction to ensure that instruction is sufficient, appropriate, and well scaffolded and to provide clear feedback to learners on what they have achieved.

Response to Intervention: Three-Tier Model for ELLs

TIER I:
All Students receive high quality and *appropriate* instruction, behavioral support as well as regular progress monitoring (universal screening).
All students are provided additional *appropriate* instruction or support in the general education setting.
(*General education: 100% of the population*)

TIER II:
Students who do not make progress in Tier I are provided more intensive support through intensive interventions (double dose) still as part of general education
(*General education: About 15% of the population*)

TIER III:
Students who need intensive individualized interventions either in small groups or one-on-one.
(*may be special Education: 5% of the population*)

FIGURE 1.3 Response to Intervention: Three-Tier Model for ELLs (Brown & Doolittle, 2008, p.12).

Questions for Reflection

1. How is what a teacher believes about teaching reflected in how that teacher performs in the classroom?
2. What do you believe is important to best promote learning for all learners? What do you believe is important for enhancing the academic language of English language learners in particular?
3. Reflect on your own experiences of studying a new language.

Were you successful? What was most helpful? What was least helpful? What classroom principle and characteristics promoted your learning? Compare and contrast these principles with the ones outlined in this chapter.

4. Which of the principles outlined do you think is the most important? Why? Did any principle surprise you? If so, how?

Activities for Further Learning

1. Each "principle in practice" in this chapter describes teaching English learners in a particular grade-level classroom. Rewrite one of these vignettes to describe how this principle in practice might be changed to meet the needs of students at a different grade level.
2. Develop a lesson for a grade level that you teach or may teach. Focus your lesson on meeting one or more of the principles named in order to include learners of English. Exchange lessons with a partner and discuss how you have succeeded in teaching according to the principles and how you might take the lesson even further in that direction.
3. Observe an English learner in a content classroom over several days. Note what the student is doing, saying, and attending to during your observation. Does that learner seem to comprehend the language and expectations of the classroom? What does the learner seem to comprehend? What evidence from your observation indicates that the learner comprehends? What does the learner not seem to understand? What evidence from your observation indicates that the learner does not comprehend?
4. If a new student entered your class from a culture with which you were unfamiliar, outline preparation and processes that you might use to provide cultural relevance for that student in your classroom.
5. Interview two adults who learned English after starting school. Ask your interviewees about their educational history and experiences as early, intermediate, and advanced learners. Ask about the

difficulties they faced and what people, processes, materials, or strategies they feel helped them to learn English. How do these connect with the principles in this chapter?

6. Visit a community center, farmers' market, place of worship, or other location frequented by members of language minority groups in your area and where another language or languages are often spoken. Spend some time listening and observing. Reflect: What does it feel like to be the one who does not understand? If you can, begin a conversation with some individuals. Ask them how people in their community go about learning English and about challenges they face. Ask them what they wish for their children.
7. Choose a language that you do not know much about and that is spoken by one of your students/potential students. Search for information on the language you selected. See how much you can learn about that language in 20 to 30 minutes—just a little about pronunciation, writing system, grammar, vocabulary, related languages, words for greeting, and so on. What might speakers of that language find difficult when learning English? What connections to English might you capitalize upon?
8. Visit the Safe Schools Coalition web site on guidelines for avoiding bias in school curriculum materials (http://www.safeschoolscoalition.org/guidelinesonbias-screen.pdf). Use its criterion to review your textbooks and/or materials that you are using or considering using in a future unit or theme.

Suggested Reading

Ariza, E. N. W. (2006). *Not for ESOL teachers: What every classroom teacher needs to know about the linguistically, culturally, and ethnically diverse student.* Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. Teachers of diverse learners are offered essential concepts for fully including those English learners in the mainstream classroom. Using many examples in the voices of students and teachers, Ariza considers the classroom settings, learning about cultures, specific information about cultural groups, language acquisition, and learning English through academic content, assessment, and connecting to the community.

Brown, H. D. (2000). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson ESL. This popular methodology text surveys a variety of language teaching options grounded in accepted principles of language learning and teaching.

Gibbons, P. (2002). *Scaffolding language, scaffolding learning: Teaching second language learners in the mainstream classroom.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. Gibbons introduces the theory behind second-language learning in readable language and provides concrete classroom examples of applications along with classroom activities to implement to help English learners speak, listen, read, and write.

King-Shaver, B., & Hunter, A. (2003). *Differentiated instruction in the English classroom: Content, process, product, and assessment.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. The authors clearly and concisely explain differentiation as a way of thinking about the classroom and a strategy for improving teaching. They provide both the rationale for differentiating and descriptions of differentiated teaching in the English classroom through modifications in learning content, learning process, and learning products and assessment.

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- **A+RISE** A+RISE® Standards2Strategy™ is an innovative and interactive online resource that offers new teachers in grades K-12 just in time, research-based instructional strategies that meet the linguistic needs of ELLs as they learn content, differentiate instruction for all grades and abilities, and are aligned to Common Core Elementary Language Arts standards (for the literacy strategies) and to English language proficiency standards in WIDA, Texas, California, and Florida.

Language Acquisition and Language Learning in the Classroom

Children's language development is wonderful, novel, creative, and awe inspiring. Children speak in order to tell us stories:

Adult: *What did you do yesterday at school?*

Leslie: *I listened to a story. Was a horse. And roses maked him sneeze. And his nose itched and his eyes itched. Sumpin' else. I had . . . uh I haved . . . a had a motorcycle and I sit down and thinking what I was doing and lookin' at all those kids and teacher goed by and she didn't ask me anything.*

Adult: *What might she have asked you?*

Leslie: *How come you're sittin' here?* (Weeks, 1979, p. 71)

They speak to amuse us:

Child: *(Sitting close to the teacher during Rug Time, an opening activity.) Hot. (Touches the microphone.)*

Teacher: *It's not hot. It's not hot. It's a microphone.*

Child: *(Takes the teacher's hand and places it on the microphone.) See hot?*

Teacher: *Cold. It's cold.*

Child: *See. Hot.*

Teacher: *No, it's not hot. It's cold.*

Child: *Ahm, hot.*

Teacher: *No, it's not hot* (Urzua, 1981, p. 56).

They sometimes speak to resist us:

Child: *Nobody don't like me.*

Mother: *No, say "nobody likes me."*

Child: *Nobody don't like me (eight repetitions of this dialogue).*

Mother: *Now listen carefully; say "nobody likes me."*

Child: *Oh! Nobody don't likes me* (McNeill, 1975, p. 27).

And they often speak to help themselves learn:

Wally: *The big rug is the giant's castle. The small one is Jack's house.*

Eddie: *Both rugs are the same.*

Wally: *They can't be the same. Watch me. I'll walk around the rug. Now watch—walk, walk, walk, walk, walk, walk, walk, walk, walk—count all these walks. Okay. Now count the other rug. Walk, walk, walk, walk, walk. See? That one has more walks.*

> **Eddie:** *No fair. You cheated. You walked faster.*
>
> **Wally:** *I don't have to walk. I can just look.*
>
> **Eddie:** *I can look too. But you have to measure it. You need a ruler. About 600 inches or feet.*
>
> **Wally:** *We have a ruler.*
>
> **Eddie:** *Not that one. Not the short kind. You have to use the long kind that gets rolled up in a box.*
>
> **Wally:** *Use people. People's bodies. Lying down in a row.*
>
> **Eddie:** *That's a great idea. I never even thought of that* (Paley, 1981, pp. 13–14).

Developing and using language to promote learning is the focus of this book. We will describe the classroom conditions and teacher behaviors that promote language development and academic achievement for **English language learners (ELLs)** in grades K through 12. If you are a teacher with ELLs in your classroom, you have the double task of teaching those children content learning and the language they need to understand, speak, read, and write about that content. This is an exciting and challenging task.

To help us understand the kinds of classrooms we need to create for our English language learners, it is important to understand how languages are acquired. Although this discussion is limited, it will highlight the essential information you need to know.

What do we know about first language acquisition?

- What is the nature of the first language environment?
- How is learning a second language in the classroom different from the experience of acquiring the first language?
- What strategies do ELLs use to acquire languages?
- What can ELLs tell us about positive classroom environments and learning experiences?

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT FIRST LANGUAGE ACQUISITION?

- First language acquisition is universal.
- First language acquisition is natural.
- First language acquisition does not require formal instruction.

Language Acquisition Is Universal

The birth of a child is a joyous event in all cultures of the world. Even so, parents worry about their soon-to-be born infant. They worry the child will be born healthy and with all fingers and toes intact and whether their children will see, hear, and function normally. It is very rare, however, for a parent to worry about whether a child will learn to talk. We all assume our children will learn to speak a language even though we may wonder if they will learn to read. Language acquisition is universal in all cultures of the world. All children with normal or near-normal mental and physical abilities learn to speak a language.

Although children in various parts of the world are spoken to in a variety of diverse languages, children within those language communities are able to acquire languages that many adult speakers in the United States find to be difficult. In addition, children accomplish much of their learning at an age when their cognitive abilities are not yet fully developed.

Language Acquisition Is Natural

Human beings are born with the biological predisposition to acquire languages. Language learning is part of our human nature. Children begin to acquire language by attempting to make sense of the language they hear around them. Somehow, in the first five years of life, children have figured out enough about sounds, words, sentences, and extended discourse to master most of the structures of their first language (Piper, 2006). Because this task is so natural to almost all children, we fail to appreciate the enormity of it.

Parents the World Over "Talk" to Their Infant Children

Innate language theorists such as Noam Chomsky have speculated that children are born with mechanisms that predispose them to learn language systems (1957, 1975). Chomsky believes the human brain contains the basic structures for all rule-governed, human languages. As evidence of this, he notes that all languages contain components in common, such as categories of word classes, hierarchical structure, and linearity. He calls this innate device the *language acquisition device* (LAD) and proposes that it contains a "universal grammar" that enables all children to analyze the language spoken to them and construct grammatical rules for that language.

We believe the process through which children create languages is one of hypothesis testing. Children generate rules based upon the language input of the community: For example, the word *dat* refers to objects distant from the child, whereas *dis* refers to objects close by. In time, these rules are refined until most children have created the basic grammars of their first languages.

Children learn the language of the community around them. Those who live in multilanguage communities will sort through those languages and learn each in the specific language context in which it is used. For example, one author lived in a small town in the Philippines on the northern coast of Mindanao. The children of the town spoke Visayan with Christian shopkeepers, Maranao with Muslim schoolmates, and Tagalog and English with their teachers in school.

Children are known to create their own languages to communicate with others. The ten-year-old son of one author moved to the Peoples' Republic of China with his parents for a year's teaching assignment. Shortly after arrival in the country, the boy was observed playing ball with Japanese, Chinese, and American children of the university faculty. None of the children spoke the others' languages yet. But to play baseball, the children began to create a language mix from words used by each of them. They used Japanese for the word *throw*, English for *catch*, and Chinese words for *you* and *run*. In the absence of a common language, children will create one because it is natural for human beings to communicate with language (Figure 2.1).
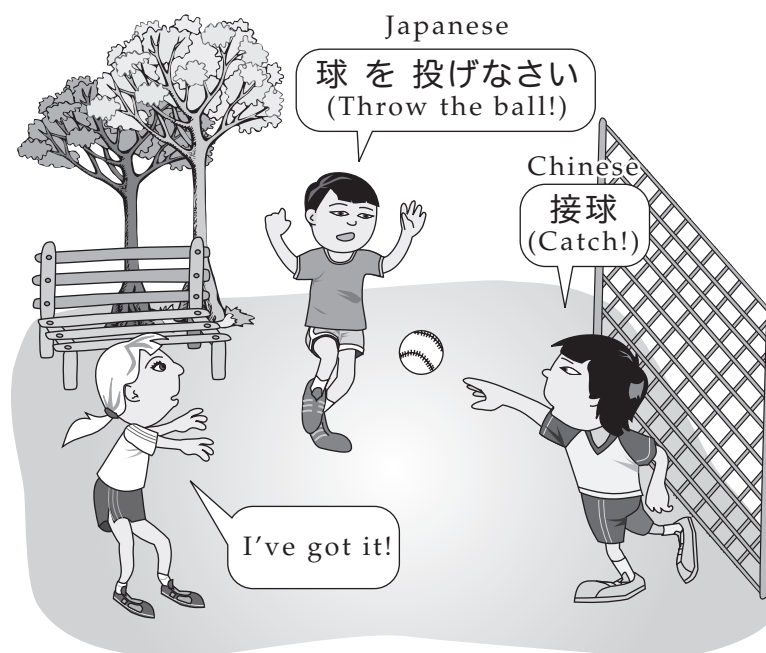
First Language Acquisition Does Not Require Formal Instruction

If we taught children to speak, they'd never learn.

HOLT, *HOW CHILDREN FAIL,* 1964

It was once believed children acquired languages because they listened to and repeated the language of their parents. Imitation was seen as a form of tutoring for young children. We now

FIGURE 2.1 Children Often Acquire New Languages Because of a Need to Communicate during Play with Children Who Don't Speak the Same Language

know this behaviorist perspective is too simplistic an explanation for a complex and creative learning process. Children rarely repeat exactly what their parents say and often say things they have never heard said around them.

Even in the second language classroom, the creativity of children is apparent. When Marisol, a ten-year-old student recently arrived in the United States from Spain, raised her hand in class, we were surprised because the child spoke very little English and had never volunteered to speak. When called upon, she asked *Me go peepee?* Marisol was ignoring the structured lessons of the language classroom to create her own language system. She substituted *Me* for the first person pronoun *I* and simply used intonation for the request form. She was highly communicative and creative but could not be said to be imitating her teacher or any of her fourth-grade classmates.

In addition to not formally instructing their children in language, parents rarely make overt corrections of children's language. Instead, parents usually respond to the substance of their children's talk and ignore the grammar. One author watched two-year-old Anthony coloring with his mom (Levine, 1981). Anthony held up a crayon, and his mother said, *That's yellow*. Anthony then jumped up and said, *I get red*. His mother responded with, *You want to get the red? Show Mommy the red if you're gonna get it. What's red? It's like the red light. That's the same color as the red light when Mommy's gotta stop the car.*

Anthony's mother did not correct her child's grammar but responded to the topic of the conversation and used it as an opportunity to expand the child's utterance into a grammatical sentence: *You want to get the red?* She then continued to model a variety of other sentence forms all related to the subject of the red crayon. Her conversation does not resemble what we usually think of as language teaching, but her language input to her child is important to his growing language system.

Even though children's acquisition of a first language appears to be accomplished effortlessly, their growth in language skill in school requires considerable effort. We tend to assume that children are able to understand the highly abstract language of the school system, the text, and the standardized test when, in fact, they do not (Piper, 2006). Learning academic language—the variety of language that leads to school success—requires direct instruction and involves learning to read, write, and think at high cognitive levels. One of the reasons for this difference in ease of learning may be due to the nature of the learning environment in school versus the first language environment.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THE FIRST LANGUAGE ENVIRONMENT?

Children Are Immersed in Language

As we saw in the conversation with Anthony and his mom, parents immerse their children in a "veritable language bath" (Lindfors, 1987). Parents of newborns begin speaking to their infants in the delivery room. They continue the conversation with questions, exclamations, and commentary even though their babies are unlikely to answer a single question for at least two years. The lack of a child's response does not deter parents one bit. They keep on talking to their babies and attempt to engage their developing attention spans for increasingly longer periods of time.

Language Is Highly Contextualized

The language that parents and other family members use is thought to be helpful to language acquisition because it is highly contextualized. Contextualized language is accompanied by many visual cues as to its meaning. For example, pointing to a dog is one way to identify the meaning of the word *dog*. Caretakers use gestures such as pointing, touching, and making facial expressions to convey meaning to young children. They almost always speak about topics that young children are attending to at the moment of the utterance. Children can easily attach meaning to the language they hear because parents and family members are intent on helping their children understand their language. Children, then, acquire language within a context of use. They learn to ask for milk by pointing to the milk and approximating the "m" sound. They get picked up by raising their arms and saying *up*. They play with the doors on the cabinets and learn how to open and close them while also learning the words *open* and *close.*

Language Is a Tool for Purposeful Use

For children, language is a tool used to satisfy a purpose. Language helps children to get what they want, enables them to interact with other people, and allows them to report, have fun, imagine, and learn more about the world around them.

Children use language tools initially to satisfy their personal needs: *Want milk*. They quickly learn to use language as a tool for controlling others: *Gimme dat*. Informing and identifying objects is part of early language development: *Dat doggy*. Later, children develop these functions in more complex ways and add others as required. Imaginative play produces language such as *You be the mommy and I be the daddy*. Children's curiosity prompts them to ask *Why?* and is the precursor to higher-level reasoning skills.

Children Are Physically Active While Acquiring Language

The child acquiring a first language is physically very active in exploring the environment. Sucking, crawling, dropping, and throwing are learning activities for young children. Jean Piaget, a Swiss psychologist, explained how the physical activity of young children contributed greatly to the developmental stages of a child's conceptual growth. Children progress through several stages of development and capability, finally culminating in a stage called *formal operations.* In the early stages of language growth, the sensory-motor stage, children acquire knowledge by touching, grasping, looking at, and manipulating the objects around them (Labinowicz, 1980).

When children are not permitted to engage in active play, the cognitive and language losses that result are tragic. We have heard of these results in children who are confined to their cribs in orphanages and are unable to move outside a small space. Depression and retardation are some of the consequences of a lack of physical, active play in young children.

Active movement has been found to be central to learning. There seems to be a neurological basis to learning that occurs in activity-based environments. The cerebella system, which controls motor activity, is one of the first parts of the brain to mature and has been found to be central in the formation of memory, attention, and spatial perception. In other words, the same part of the brain that controls movement also processes and promotes learning (Jensen, 1998). It is highly likely that environment plays an important part in determining the cognitive and linguistic maturity of children. Active play is a critical element of a child's environment.

Acquisition Occurs within a Social Environment

The environment of a child acquiring language is predominantly social. Young children need caretakers for a long time. While parents are caring for their young children, they are also talking and playing with them. Daily activities such as feeding, bathing, and dressing take on the nature of games as parents encourage children to eat (*Open wide. Here comes the airplane!*) or to cooperate while putting on socks and shoes (*This little piggy went to market, this little piggy stayed home).*

Parents interact with children in a cycle of speech that is geared to the child's level of understanding. Most caregivers modify their speech in ways to help children understand the language. In English, for example, parents will eliminate pronouns (*Come to Mommy*), use redundancy (*You want the red? What's the red, honey?*), use diminutives (*See the doggy?),* simplify the topic and the length of the sentence, and exaggerate intonation in order to engage a baby's attention (Snow, 1977). Although other cultures may customize caretaker language in different ways, all cultures modify language for children to enable babies to understand and grasp meaning from the interactions they have with other children and adults (Figure 2.2). This customizing of language is finely tuned to the baby's beginning speech comprehension. The bond of love and trust between the parent and child ensures that parents will continue to speak to children and children will continue to take risks to develop linguistically even after the age of three when basic communication has been established.

Children Choose Those Aspects of Language That They Wish to Acquire

The young child's language environment is one where the child chooses the language topic. Children decide what is interesting to them, and parents begin to talk about those interests. For example, in an interaction between Anthony and his mother (to whom we were introduced earlier in this chapter), Anthony sat at a table coloring while his mother watched. The two of them talked about the colors. At one point, Anthony shifted his gaze from the coloring book to a truck on the toy shelf. His mother immediately changed the topic of the conversation to the truck and engaged Anthony in talking about it. Children direct the nature of their own language learning by choosing which grammar elements to focus on, deciding which words to learn, and even choosing the topics of the conversations they have with their caregivers (Levine, 1981).
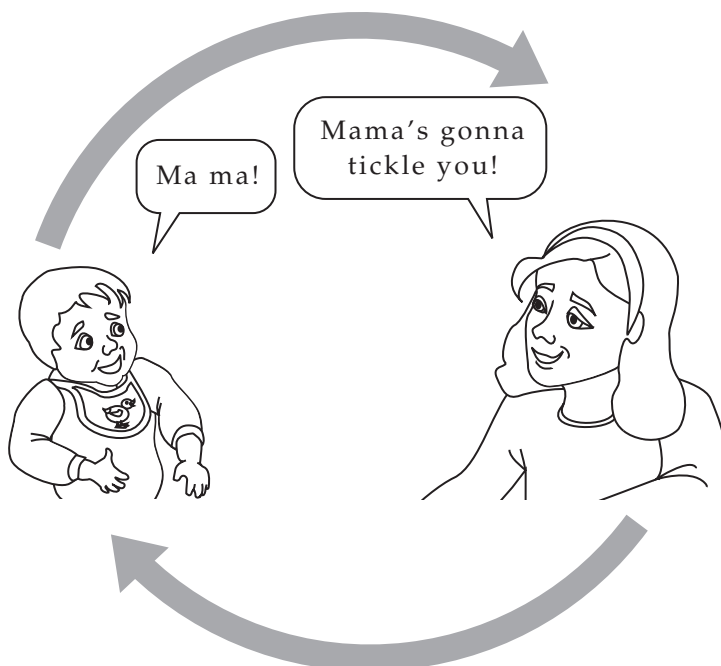
FIGURE 2.2 Parents Modify Their Speech in Response to a Child's Linguistic Proficiency

Language Acquisition Is Emotionally Embedded

The language acquisition environment is an emotional one for children. The bond of love and trust between parents and children is the major impetus to the continuing conversations that occur for years between them. Recent brain research (Jensen, 1998) tells us that the emotional overlay to language learning has a neurological basis. Results from research that was begun in the mid-1980s upset our notions of the rational mind and the separation of emotion and reasoning. Emotions drive attention, create their own memory pathways, and create meaning. Although the amygdala, an almond-shaped organ in the central brain, seems highly involved in emotional thought, the expression circuitry of emotion is widely distributed in the brain. In fact, when the frontal lobe of the brain is destroyed through accident, human performance on intelligence tests drops very little. Removal of the amygdala, however, is extremely harmful; it destroys the capacity for decision making, creativity, humor, imagination, altruism, and love (Jensen, 1998, pp. 73–75). It appears that emotions are critical to all learning experiences and the formation of memory.

Language Acquisition Is an Integrated Learning Experience

The language environment of the young child is one where language is not separated from learning about the way the world operates. Although schools find it helpful to separate the math class from the social studies class, the learning of a young child is integrated. Children do not learn about the parts of language as described in a grammar book. They are completely uninterested in the names of word classes and verb tenses. Rather, children acquire language as a holistic experience while playing with objects and people around them. One-year-olds enjoy dropping objects into containers and spilling them out again (*in* and *out*). Two-year-olds explore every object in their environment while asking *What's dat?* Eight-year-olds are captivated by the world of nature and enjoy learning information about animals and their habitats. These children often report on their learning using the language of a biological scientist.

HOW DO ACQUISITION AND LEARNING DIFFER?

In our work with **English as a second language (ESL)** programs in the public schools, we have encouraged teachers to use children's natural, innate language-acquisition mechanisms to be successful language learners of English. In doing so, we acknowledge our belief in language acquisition driven by innate mechanisms interacting with the language-learning environment. Other factors driving language acquisition have equal importance, in our view, in content classrooms. The interaction between speaker-hearers is highly influential in the acquisition and learning of academic language; thus, we value the interactionist position as well. Explanations for both positions follow.

Stephen Krashen (Krashen & Terrell, 1983) was an early proponent of the innatist position as described by Chomsky and extended Chomsky's theory to second language acquisition research. Krashen believed that children learning the English language constructed their own grammars through a process of hypothesis testing, thus creating grammatical rules for the new language in a way similar to that of first language acquisition. Krashen explained the path of second language acquisition as a "natural approach," and has developed five hypotheses that have had an impact on classroom instruction of English language learners: the acquisition-learning hypothesis, the natural order hypothesis, the input hypothesis, the affective filter hypothesis, and the monitor hypothesis.

The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

The distinction between acquisition and learning is a critical one for classroom teachers. Krashen and Terrell (1983) define **acquisition** as "developing ability in a language by using it in natural communicative situations" (p. 18). When children play softball together on the playground or chat in the school cafeteria, acquisition may be coming into play. ELLs pay little attention to grammatical forms and instead concentrate on understanding and communicating meaningful messages. Language **learning,** however, requires "having a conscious knowledge about grammar" (p. 18). When learning about a language, children are taught word forms, suffixes

and prefixes, spelling regularities, mechanics, and other aspects of a formal language system. Most learning about languages occurs in classrooms, but it is possible for classrooms to foster acquisition as well. Krashen's emphasis on the acquisition-learning distinction is not merely one of environment, however. The claim is that learners process language differently under the two conditions—acquisition focuses solely on meaning with subconscious internalization of language structures and forms while learning requires conscious awareness of the formal properties of language. (Piper, 2006).

Krashen believes children acquire their first language and "most probably, second languages as well." He says adults can also acquire languages although "they do not usually do it quite as well as children." Both learning and acquisition are important in classroom language development, but Krashen feels "language acquisition is the central, most important means for gaining linguistic skills even for an adult" (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p. 18). Intuitively, the acquisition-learning distinction has appeal to teachers who have worked with ELLs. We recognize that students will not be effective or efficient learners when the focus of instruction is placed on rote repetition and grammar drills. Instead, effective teachers focus on meaningful communication related to purposeful content-learning activities.

The Natural Order Hypothesis

The natural order hypothesis claims that learners acquire language rules in a predictable order. This claim is based upon morpheme studies of second language acquirers (Dulay & Burt, 1974). These studies show that some of these structures, such as the progressive –*ing* ending and the plural, were acquired early in the grammars of both children and language-learning adults. Other structures, such as the regular past, the third person singular –*s,* and the possessive –*s* were acquired relatively late. This order prevailed when learners were acquiring (not learning) languages and focusing on meaning rather than form. Later work on the natural order hypothesis indicates that structures in a learner's first language may influence the order of morphemes acquired in the second language (McLaughlin, 1987). In spite of the evidence to indicate a natural order in the acquisition of morphemes, teachers do not base their language curriculums on this order and Krashen would not recommend that they do so. The reason is that language is acquired most efficiently in an environment of natural conversation that responds to children's interests and is structured for their understanding.

The Input Hypothesis

Language input in the form of oral language or reading is of primary importance for progress in the target language. Krashen asserts that the best input (*i*) is language that is understood by the learner but is a little beyond the learner's current understanding or competence (*i* + 1). The role of the teacher then is to provide abundant input to learners and to do so in ways that will help students understand the meaning of the communication. By providing a here-and-now context, instruction becomes **comprehensible input** and helps ELLs to negotiate the meaning of increasingly more complex structures and thus continue the acquisition process. Krashen considers comprehensible input the "most important part of any language teaching program" (Krashen & Terrell, 1983, p. 55). Teachers' experiences and classroom practice support the input hypothesis.

The Affective Filter Hypothesis

There are social and emotional variables that affect language acquisition. Those learners in a low-anxiety environment with motivation and good self-esteem have a lower **affective filter** and are more open to the input of others. This openness allows the learner to interact easily with proficient speakers and receive increasingly larger amounts of comprehensible input. Because acquisition proceeds under these conditions, it is important for teachers not to force ELLs to speak, thus creating a high-anxiety situation. Many children spend time in a **silent period** during which they attempt to understand the input around them and then choose to speak when they are ready. The silent period of some ELLs can be lengthy, depending on the personality of the student. Silence does not indicate acquisition is not taking place, however. Many ELLs begin to speak rather fluently at the end of their silent periods.

The Monitor Hypothesis

Krashen & Terrell (1983) assert that acquisition is primary to language development. As such, there is little emphasis on formal rules. When writing, however, ELLs are able to reflect upon the formal rules of language (if they know them), spend sufficient time in following those rules, and focus on the form of the language. This reflection process devoted to form is called the **monitor,** an internal grammatical editor that is called into play as students learn the formal structure and requirements of a language.

Krashen has had a major influence on the teaching and learning of second languages. He has been influential in showing teachers the importance of comprehensible input for oral and written language, the existence of the silent period, and the need for a low-anxiety classroom. These ideas in connection with techniques developed to increase academic competency in language have changed the nature of language classrooms.

The Interactionist Position

While acknowledging the importance of comprehensible input in language acquisition, interactionists stress the need for language interaction among speaker-hearers to promote language acquisition and language learning (Long & Porter, 1985; Swain, 1985; Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, & Linnell, 1996; Izumi & Bigelow, 2000; Klingner & Vaughn, 2000). Teacher interactions with ELLs have helped these students perform better academically. The reciprocal interaction model of teaching in which teachers participate in genuine dialogue with students has been shown to be more beneficial than the traditional teacher-centered transition model (Doherty, Hilberg, Pinal, & Tharp, 2003; Tikunoff, 1985). This model facilitates, rather than controls, student language while encouraging the development of higher-order cognitive thinking. High-quality exchanges between ELLs and content teachers who are trained in second language acquisition techniques also give students better access to the curriculum (Berman, Minicucci, McLaughlin, Nelson, & Woodworth, 1995; Doherty et al., 2003; Montecel and Cortez, 2002; Tikunoff, 1985).

Small-group work in classrooms between native speakers (NS) and ELLs or among pairs of native speakers has shown increased motivation and initiative among learners. Students produce more language in these conditions and are less anxious about their language usage (Long & Porter, 1985). Indeed, small groups of students, engaged in two-way tasks that require the exchange of previously unknown information, participate in a higher amount of language practice to produce a broader range of language functions, greater grammatical accuracy with frequent corrections, and more negotiation of meaning than those classes that are conducted by a teacher (Long & Porter, 1985). The use of cooperative learning has also been shown to be highly effective with ELLs, leading to higher achievement levels (Caldéron & Carreon, 1994; Caldéron, Hertz-Lazarowitz, & Slavin, 1998).

Negotiation of meaning is crucial to effective interaction in classrooms because it significantly aids the development of second language acquisition (Long & Porter, 1985). Negotiation of meaning occurs as learners receive comprehensible input and/or feedback on prior utterances. This input serves as data that enable learners to construct grammars while modifying and adjusting their language output, thus expanding their language development (Pica et al., 1996). Modified output results from signals from other speakers that communication has not been achieved, for example, open-ended questions such as *Glass? What about glass?* Requests such as these tend to generate modification in ELL language output that is more comprehensible and grammatically on target. Izumi and Bigelow (2000, p. 239) found that "extended opportunities to produce output and receive relevant input were found to be crucial in improving learners' use of the grammatical structure."

Even when the members of the small groups are language learners themselves, negotiation of meaning occurs that promotes language learning. "Teachers can be confident that the interaction can assist second language learning whether the source of that interaction is a NS [native speaker] or another learner" (Pica et al., 1996, p. 80). Klingner & Vaughn (2000) demonstrated negotiation of meaning among small groups of bilingual fifth-graders using a collaborative reading strategy (CRS). Interactions among the ELLs in their study led to semistructured vocabulary practice, negotiation of the meaning of text, and progress toward both language and content-learning goals.

It is clear that both innatist and interactionist theories have contributed to the nature of classroom instruction today. Teachers who "think language" while teaching content area objectives and who provide effective small-group work experiences with abundant comprehensible input in a low-anxiety environment, will be effective in enabling ELLs to both acquire and learn language. In spite of the gains made in helping teachers to create classrooms that take advantage of the brain's ability to acquire languages, there are still major differences in the first and second language experience. Table 2.1 illustrates some of the differences in the two environments.

TABLE 2.1 How Do Language-Learning Environments Compare?

	L1 Acquisition Environment	L2 Classroom Learning Environment
Opportunities for interaction	• Are constant and continuous • Focus on meaningful communication • Proceed from gestural responses to one-word utterances to phrases to sentence forms • Promote cognitive growth	• May be limited by large classes and restricted opportunities for interaction • May be teacher-directed lessons • Has limited time available for language practice • Includes unmovable furniture • May be few opportunities for language interaction outside the classroom
Language input	• Is abundant and frequent: teacher to student ratio often 1 to 1 • Has simplified syntax • Is highly redundant • Is well formed • Is semantically concrete	• May be limited in transmission-type classrooms • May not be at each student's level of ability • May be limited by lack of exposure to target language in the community
Language context	• Focuses on the here and now • Is highly meaningful to the child • Provides the meaning for most utterances	• May be removed from the here and now and focused on course book content • May be limited by lack of pictorial resources, gestural cues, and context clues
Topic selection	• Has learner-initiated topic • Had adult-adjusted language topics to capture the child's interest • Focuses on communication of meaning	• Has topics decided by curriculum or textbook, not the learners
Language output	• Has abundant output after a long, initial, silent period • Uses output for hypothesis testing and patterning • Is characterized by grammatical errors initially but still communicative • Is "authentic"	• May be extremely limited • May have delayed speech • Has large classes with full group instruction that limit opportunities for output • Discourages output errors • May not have "authentic" output opportunities
Love and trust (affective environment)	• Has language that is acquired in a highly trusting environment • Has high expectation of success. • Has affective environment that mediates the risk of language acquisition and motivates the speech act	• Must create trust, which does not occur naturally in the classroom • Has affective environment that depends on the skills of the individual teacher and the school setting • Has highly authoritarian classrooms that may increase learners' anxiety and decrease language growth

WHAT ARE FACTORS AFFECTING LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN THE CLASSROOM?

Classroom language learning is very different from home first language acquisition. There are factors in the nature of classroom instruction that affect second language acquisition and ultimately, academic achievement, and are important for all teachers to understand.

Limited Language Input

Classrooms contain many children, and this may lead to limited language input to the learner. The ratio of speaker-hearer is increased from a one-on-one situation to a thirty-to-one situation. Without careful planning, the teacher cannot easily address children's language needs for abundant input. Whereas a child is immersed in language while acquiring a first language, many students are rarely spoken to in schools at all (Harklau, 1994, 2000). As children proceed through the grades, comprehensible input is reduced. Without abundant input of meaningful language, ELLs will not acquire language efficiently or quickly.

The emotional attachments that occur between parents and their children are not easily replicated in classroom experiences either. After elementary school, teacher interactions with students become more formal. Lectures increase and circle time decreases. These distinctions may lead to a classroom environment where ELLs are spoken to infrequently and receive little emotional support. Teachers who recognize the necessity for emotionally rich, input-abundant environments will need to restructure the typical classroom situation in order for children to acquire language more efficiently.

Classroom Organization

The way in which we organize our classroom has an impact on the amount of language learned. With all the demands of the content classroom, teachers of math, social studies, science, and language arts may report little time to teach to the specific language-learning needs of one or two children. Teachers tend to feel guilty about not spending enough time alone with ELLs to help them develop language skills. Teacher-centered, frontal teaching styles lead to more limited interaction between teacher and student and between student and student. There are times when this organizational style is necessary, for example when viewing a movie, listening to a speaker, or viewing a demonstration. But frontal teaching is only one of many classroom organizational patterns.

When we realize that teachers are not the only speakers of the language within a class, we can begin to understand how other students can be used to facilitate the language development of their peers. Classrooms that differentiate instruction through activities, projects, and group work are more easily able to manage the needs of a wide variety of learners. Because language acquisition occurs in a social environment, student-centered classrooms place the focus on activities that are multilayered, allowing for diverse kinds of learning and permitting children at all levels to integrate themselves within the classroom learning community. When ELLs are given purposeful opportunities to communicate about topics interesting to them, their language acquisition is facilitated.

High Content and Language Load

Language acquisition and content learning are difficult and demanding tasks. Content mandates now require students to learn content information and develop communication skills at increasingly higher standards. ELLs may not be able to read the textbook or easily comprehend teacher lectures or classroom discussions. But teachers expect that all students will become able to use language in complex ways and to pursue further learning. Teaching content in a way that supports the learner's efforts promotes both content learning and language acquisition. Differentiation of objectives, activities, and assessments helps ELLs to cope with the heavy language and content load of the typical classroom.

Language learning is a highly complex activity. Acquiring a language means acquiring the following:

- *Phonemes*: speech sounds that make a difference in meaning between words (such as pin pen).
- *Phonology*: rules governing the sound system of English, including sound-symbol relationships, intonational variations, stress, pitch, and juncture.

- *Morpheme*: a word or part of a word conveying a grammatical or lexical meaning (such as the –*ed* ending turning a present tense verb into the past tense).
- *Morphology*: the system dealing with the structure or form of words (want, wanted, wanting, unwanted).
- *Syntax*: the system describing the way in which words, oral or written, combine into sentences; grammar.
- *Lexicon*: the vocabulary of the language.
- *Semantics*: the scientific study of the meaning underlying a word, phrase, or sentence.
- *Pragmatics*: the conversational rules guiding the use of language in a social situation. These rules change as a variety of social factors change: context, age, purpose, and so on.

All of these can be acquired by ELLs in meaningful, communicative classrooms. But they will also need to learn aspects of language to extend their communication into academic discourse. Aspects of syntax, for example, can be acquired, but certain grammatical constructions that are rarely used in oral language can be learned only through classroom instruction.

In addition to the systems of language and their various components, speakers of a language are able to adjust their language usage between formal and informal application and use all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing in complex ways and for a variety of purposes. Academic **registers** and formal written **discourse** are examples of language requiring classroom instruction and learning.

Teachers assist ELLs the most in the early stages of language acquisition by helping them comprehend the language of the classroom and giving them time to attempt to make themselves understood. As ELLs feel more comfortable with and begin to use the language, we provide more opportunities for formal language learning and higher-level thinking and problem solving.

Academic Language and Social Language

In addition to the aspects of language mentioned earlier, the language of school is different from the social language used by students in the cafeteria or the playground. Cummins (1980, 1999) describes social language (**basic interpersonal communication skills**, or **BICS**) as language occurring within a **context-embedded** social environment. Social language is more easily understood because the speaker-hearer uses the context of the situation, gestures, and facial expressions to enable comprehension. A social setting that encourages natural interaction is helpful to the acquisition of social language. ELLs acquire this dimension of language within two years of schooling in an English-speaking environment.

Academic or school language (**cognitive academic language proficiency**, or **CALP**) is the language of the textbook and is **context reduced.** Learners will not be able to learn the verb forms, transitional and cohesion devices, and specific lexicon of this language dimension unless they receive targeted instruction. Academic language involves oral and written forms that are cognitively demanding but required for school success. The amount of time required to reach grade-level competency in academic context-reduced language is between five to seven years (Ovando, Combs, & Collier, 2006; Collier, 1989).

The distinction between social and academic language is an important one for teachers to understand. ELLs who speak social language are sometimes viewed as competent speakers of English. When they are slow to make academic progress, their delay may be ascribed to learning deficits. However, there is no relationship between academic achievement and social language. Unless students master academic language, including reading and writing, they will not achieve academically. When we involve students in appropriate grade-level content curriculum and experiences, support learning with context, and directly teach academic language forms, we are helping ELLs acquire and learn the language necessary to be successful in school.

Negative Bias

Although no one expects a young child to use language well, older students are expected to know languages. When children in school classrooms cannot use the language of their peers, the school community views them as nonknowers. These negative opinions can affect children by slowing the pace of their language development. Cohen and Garcia (2008) report that a negative social identity limits motivation to learn and creates a threatening environment that undermines achievement.

Interesting Content-
Related Experiences Provide
Excellent Language-Learning
Opportunities

Rather than viewing the child as deficient or culturally deprived, we need to examine the school systems in which many of our children are failing. The native language abilities of ELLs are underutilized in many schools. The school community does not always view the cultural backgrounds of our students as resources. ELLs can achieve at higher levels with increased motivation when teachers integrate student experiences, interests, and cultures into the curriculum, the classroom instruction, and the educational experience in general.

Cognition, Age, and Social and Cultural Differences

School-age children do not always receive the abundant language input that very young children do when acquiring their first languages. But the cognitive level of school-age children is much higher than that of an infant. Thus, higher cognitive abilities can facilitate language-learning experiences in school. If the ELL has already acquired a first language and can read and write in that first language, the transition to a second language will be much smoother and more efficient. The ability to read in one language is an asset when learning to read in another. Aspects of reading transfer from language to language. For example, literate ELLs expect to retrieve meaning from the printed page and use strategies to find and retain information. Those who are writers in their first language can use writing as an aid to language learning, taking notes, and collecting vocabulary lists. The learning strategies used in first language schooling also transfer to the second language classroom. ELLs can use dictionaries, memorize vocabulary, compare grammatical rules, and focus on areas of the language that are problematical. Higher cognitive functioning is an asset to the older, literate, and educated ELL.

Underschooled ELLs are lacking in the first language academic skills that promote learning a second language. These children are usually placed in age-appropriate grade levels even though they may have had limited or no prior schooling. Age-level placement of these children is appropriate and desirable for affective and emotional reasons, but the learning curve for these youngsters is very steep and the challenges for their teachers are great. For children such as these, the entire school community is needed to plan a comprehensive educational program and carry it out.

The different social and cultural contexts of school are more difficult for older learners in general. As children advance through the grades, they may feel ostracized from social groups and friends. Newly arrived students will not understand the cultural and social patterns of U.S. adolescents. At times, the demands of school may be at odds with the demands of home and family. Older ELLs, for example, may be expected to earn money to help the family, which

detracts from time spent studying. Isolation and loneliness can deter the progress of language development. The older ELL has less time overall to achieve language equality with peers in the classroom and older learners face higher expectations. For these reasons, many older ELLs are frustrated in their language-learning attempts.

Error Correction

Error correction of ELLs is problematical. Parents of very young children generally do not correct the grammar of their children's utterances. They concentrate instead on the meaning of the utterance. When Anthony tells his Mom *Here pot*, she corrects him by saying *No, that's a scoop* and ignores the fact that his sentence lacks a verb form. Instead she models a fully correct sentence form, *That's a scoop*.

In school, however, teachers are torn by their desire to correct an ELL's incorrect grammar and an unwillingness to embarrass the student. Teachers might take a cue from Anthony's mom who responded to her son's utterances with grammatically correct, expanded sentences.

> STUDENT: *It go down.*
>
> TEACHER: *Yes, the metal sank in the water.*

Errors are best dealt with on a case-by-case basis—adapting our responses to the context of the utterance, the content requirements, as well as students' age, level, and need.

Oral language errors are frequently made because speaking gives little time to think about the grammar being used. The intent of the utterance is on conveying meaning to the hearer, and the speaker is not focusing on accuracy. For this reason, it is good policy for the teacher to respond to the meaning of the statement rather than to the speaker's grammar. Teachers can respond, however, by providing good modeling of an expanded grammatical utterance. When Marisol asked *Me go pee pee*? we restated her request and responded to it at the same time. *You want to go to the bathroom? Yes, go right ahead*. This response is similar to the responses of caretakers to children's first language grammatical errors. The correct modeling provides the ELL with the grammatical information at the moment when it is needed.

Some oral errors in young ELLs are developmental. Native-English speakers aged five to seven often make similar errors. The overgeneralization of the past tense *–ed* ending (e.g., *bringed*) and the addition of the *–s* plural (e.g., *mans)* are two examples. These errors will correct themselves as students grow and receive more input.

Older English learners need to develop oral accuracy quickly to be successful both academically and socially. For this reason, older learners may be ready to focus on accuracy in their oral language and may be grateful for feedback or lessons about frequent errors. Older learners are embarrassed by speech errors and they will want to learn how to avoid them. In addition, errors that are not corrected lead to **fossilization**, that is, they persist in speech and become impervious to change (Selinker, 1972). Teachers can attend to these errors in sensitive ways. For example, a teacher who notices that students are having trouble with subject-verb agreement might develop a task in which learners use language frames to answer questions about a picture. For example, the teacher might use a picture of family members making tamales (from *Making Tamales* by Carmen Lomas Garza in McCloskey & Stack, 1996, p. 136). Learners use a variety of verbs (*wear, wrap, stand, sit*, and *play*) to describe the picture in the present and past tense with different persons and numbers and receive specific feedback on how they use the language.

Errors that persist past the beginning stages of language acquisition are best dealt with in writing. Written errors can be responded to more analytically. Teachers can note constant errors and focus on them in small group minilessons.

Culture Shock

One factor that affects almost all newly arrived ELLs is culture shock. Culture shock occurs when the ELL begins to be aware of the mismatch between the second culture and first culture expectations. The identity of the individual is disrupted when old ways of thinking, feeling, and communicating are not available or severely taxed by the new culture. The result is a feeling of resentment at the new culture, anger, loneliness, frustration, profound sadness, and, occasionally, physical illness.

Four stages of culture shock are universally acknowledged.

- *Stage 1:* Brown (1992) describes the first stage as a time of excitement. The ELL feels euphoric about the new culture and is excited by all the new experiences in the surroundings.
- *Stage 2:* The second stage occurs as the learner experiences more differences between the first and second cultures. ELLs feel uncomfortable in their new surroundings where everything is difficult and frustrating. During this stage, learners cling to other students from their culture or those who speak the same language for a respite from the frustrations and unpleasant associations of the new culture. This stage is the most difficult for children in our schools. They are often absent or tune out instruction if they are in class. The teacher will notice that work was not completed, and many times classroom disruptions occur as the ELL's anger mounts. It is important to provide comfort in the form of a buddy who speaks the same language, if possible, or at least an accommodating friend.
- *Stage 3:* The third stage of culture shock may last for a long time. The ELL has made some gradual progress to adapting to the new culture, but not all problems have been solved. Some feelings of empathy for others in the second culture begin to develop at this time. Children who are accepted into peer groups in school are better able to pass through this phase of culture shock than those who are isolated from other students.
- *Stage 4:* The fourth stage of culture shock occurs when ELLs accept both cultures and combine them into their lives. They acculturate rather than assimilate into the new culture. At this stage, students enjoy being in the new culture and function well there. They may adopt the mainstream culture at school and follow the values of the home culture outside of school.

Christine Igoa (1995) helped her students to adapt to the new culture academically, psychologically, and culturally. The result was that many of her students were able to reach this fourth stage of culture shock—recovery. "If the new immigrant child can get over the emotional hurdle of accepting the new culture without rejecting his or her home culture, if the child can free himself or herself from the emotional burdens of loneliness, isolation, fear of ridicule, helplessness, and anxiety, it then becomes very easy to reach and teach the child" (Igoa, 1995, p. 146). Chapter three provides many practical ideas for easing children into acculturation. Table 2.2 highlights some of the factors affecting language development in positive and negative ways in school.

TABLE 2.2 What Are Positive and Negative Effects of Language Development in School?

	Positive Effects	Negative Effects
Language input	Student peers can help ELLs to acquire language even if the teacher is occupied elsewhere.	Language delays will occur without sufficient comprehensible input.
Classroom organization	Differentiated, student-centered classrooms promote language and content learning.	Teacher-centered frontal instruction limits the interactive possibilities of classrooms.
Content and language load	Teacher and community expectations hold ELLs to a high standard .	The heavy load can be overwhelming for ELLs unless the content is differentiated.
Academic vs. social language	ELLs are capable of acquiring a variety of language registers.	Academic language takes a long time to acquire/ learn but is essential for academic achievement.
Negative bias	ELLs bring diverse cultural and social perspectives to our classrooms.	ELLs are viewed negatively because they cannot speak English even though they may speak other languages.
Cognition, age, social, and cultural factors	Older ELLs bring literacy skills and prior education to help them acquire the language.	Older ELLs have less time to be successful students and may be isolated socially and culturally from their peers.
Error correction	Errors are sometimes an indication of language growth; teachers can use them as opportunities to model correct grammar.	Public correction of errors is embarrassing to students.
Culture shock	At first, ELLs will be euphoric about the new language and culture.	ELLs will experience an emotional roller coaster during the first three stages of culture shock.

WHAT STRATEGIES DO ELLs USE TO ACQUIRE LANGUAGES?

Children use problem-solving strategies to acquire and learn languages. Teachers who are aware of these processes can accelerate the language-acquisition process through support of these strategies, which fall into two broad categories: learning strategies and communication strategies. Language-learning strategies are "the conscious thoughts and behaviors used by learners with the explicit goal of improving their knowledge and understanding of the target language" (Cohen, 1998, p. 68). Communication strategies are used to help learners understand and express meaning for the purpose of communication (Piper, 2006). Children use similar strategies in both first language and second language acquisition environments. Some of these strategies lead children to create incorrect utterances in the new language. Rather than view these as errors, we can recognize them as the result of the child's generating hypotheses about the new language and testing those hypotheses in her or his communication.

Learning strategies are general cognitive strategies such as memorization, generalization, and inference. Learners use these strategies to gain meaning from oral language words and structures and then remember them for later use. Communication strategies include *overgeneralization, language transfer,* and avoidance or *simplification.* What are these strategies and how do they assist acquisition?

- **Overgeneralization** occurs when ELLs perceive patterns of language usage, generate a rule from many examples heard in the environment, and use the rule in a speaker-listener conversation. On occasion, the rule may be incorrect or partially correct. For example, when children perceive the *–ed* ending of English verbs, they often attach the ending to irregular verbs in incorrect ways: *runned, bringed*, and so on. The *–s* plural may be added to generate *sheeps* and *deers*. This strategy occurs in both first and second language acquisition. As we hear students use these overgeneralized rule forms, we realize that they have made important learning gains. In time, with more opportunities for meaningful input of the irregular forms, ELLs will acquire accurate grammar.
- **Language transfer** is a communication strategy by which ELLs use rules from their home languages to understand and speak the new language. Spanish-speaking children use language transfer when they place adjectives after nouns when speaking English (*truck big*). ELLs use transfer in a positive way when they anticipate that the new language will contain similar structures to the home language. Thus, learners will anticipate that English contains noun and verb forms because Spanish contains these forms. When the new language contains forms such as articles that do not exist in the target language (e.g., Chinese), students tend to eliminate those forms in their earliest utterances.
- ELLs use a **simplification** or avoidance communication strategy when they avoid speaking about complex topics, avoid using full grammatical utterances, or avoid using word forms that they do not yet know. Young ELLs, responding to questions such as *How old are you?* use a simplification strategy by responding simply *ten.* The learner answers the question very simply, and thus continues the conversation, which may in turn lead to additional meaningful input. Younger learners more easily use simplification than older students do. Classroom conversations may require older ELLs to speak about complex topics even though they are not yet capable of doing so in grammatically correct forms. Teachers can promote academic language use by providing a variety of formats to scaffold responses to teacher questions such as sentence frames, signal responses, written responses, or group responses.

ELLs who actively use learning and communication strategies are more successful as language learners and acquirers. Teachers who encourage and teach strategy use are providing children the tools they need to learn and acquire language while also learning classroom content.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO THE INTERVENTION (RTI) MODEL?

Response to intervention (RTI) models have been developed as a way to prevent academic failure for linguistically diverse students by providing them quality instruction and support (Klingner & Edwards, 2006). In the past, ELLs were disproportionally overrepresented in special education classes (Artiles, Trent, & Palmer, 2004; Donovan & Cross, 2002) as schools

struggled to find appropriate methods of educating students with limited English language skills. RTI provides a framework for assessing, instructing, and providing intensive interventions when needed for these students.

RTI models can differ in various ways, but the overall multitiered structure of these programs remains the same. A continuum of services that become increasingly intensive and specialized is provided to students. In Tier 1, the core curriculum is taught to all students in the general education classroom, and ELLs receive language instruction by an appropriately certified teacher. Tier 2 identifies students who require more intensive intervention to supplement classroom instruction. Intervention may be in the form of special instruction, small-group instruction, increased time for language instruction, specialized materials, or any combination of these. Tiers 1 and 2 are recursive in that students may move back and forth between these tiers at various points in the school year. Tier 3 may involve students who have an individualized education plan (IEP) and who receive specialized services for identified disabilities. These special interventions are more intensive than those possible in Tier 2 and are delivered by specially trained personnel.

RTI models that are effective with ELLs are culturally and linguistically responsive. They are characterized by (Echevarría & Vogt, 2011):

- High-quality, evidence-based, and language-rich classroom instruction that is consistent and effective, delivered by highly qualified content teachers who have received professional development to enable them to understand how to teach language to ELLs effectively.
- Frequent, continuous, and varied assessment for benchmark/screening, skill diagnosis, and progress monitoring of both language and content knowledge and skills.
- Documentation of assessment data in order to make decisions about placement, instruction, and nature/duration of interventions.
- Interventions that are implemented quickly with respect to cultural considerations and with fidelity to the specific research-based approach.
- Strong administrative support.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT FOR ELLs?

In an effective learning environment for English language learners, aspects of the first language environment are present: abundant and meaningful language input, atmosphere of trust and high expectation, and opportunities for output and interaction. In addition, teachers make connections to their students' cultures, prior learning, and learning styles. Instruction is differentiated in ways that will help ELLs to learn language as well as content. ABC language teaching and learning techniques combine aspects of first language acquisition and elements of school learning that help ELLs achieve success. RTI programs that encompass these aspects of language acquisition and language learning provide appropriate Tier 1 and Tier 2 environments for ELLs. Table 2.3 is illustrative of these effective learning environments.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE TIER 1 INSTRUCTION FOR ELLs?

Tier 1 instruction for ELLs has all of the characteristics of the effective classroom environment described previously. Teachers can enrich their classrooms linguistically by incorporating aspects of first language acquisition in their instruction in Tier 1. See the RTI Tier 1 Sampler for selected specific ideas.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE TIER 2 INSTRUCTION FOR ELLs?

After a few weeks, ELLs begin to understand basic commands and routines in the classroom. Soon they begin to speak in one to two word utterances to indicate personal requests, respond to greetings, and answer simple WH (what, when, where, who) or yes/no questions. In a few months, learners attempt to initiate language using simple sentence structures and comprehend one-step directions. If students are not making gains in their social language skills, a Tier 2 intervention may be appropriate. See the RTI Tier 2 Sampler for selected specific ideas.

TABLE 2.3 What Is an Effective Learning Environment for ELLs?

1. **Principles 1 and 2— Active Engagement and Cultural Relevance: A Positive, Supportive Learning Environment**
   - The teacher develops personal relationships with students and seeks to learn about their cultures, languages, ethnicity, family, and personal interests.
   - Multiple perspectives and viewpoints are honored so that students feel valued, supported, and respected in the class.
   - Classroom routines and rules are developed collaboratively and serve to help students feel secure.
   - The classroom climate enables students to feel comfortable when stating needs or requesting help, and the teacher fosters equal participation among all students in the class.
   - Students support each other's learning in small group and paired interactions.
   - All learners are actively engaged in the learning experience.

2. **Principles 3, 4, and 6—Collaboration, Learning Strategies, and Comprehensible Input with Scaffolding: Abundant Input and Output Opportunities**
   - The classroom is "language rich" in that many opportunities are structured for meaningful, comprehensible input from the teacher, peers, technology, texts, and other speaker-hearers in the school. Input is scaffolded to promote comprehensibility at an appropriate and challenging learning level.
   - The classroom is interactive with many structured opportunities for students to collaborate with academic language in partner conversations, small group assignments, teacher-supported conversations, oral reporting, role-plays, and debate.
   - Learners are taught strategies to increase their abilities to interact, collaborate, and share in the instructional conversation.

3. **Principle 5 Differentiation—Expectations of Success with Varied Approaches to Learning**
   - The teacher demonstrates a belief that all students are capable of learning academic language and content to a high level.
   - The teacher demonstrates that success is related to effort and praises students for effort and persistence.
   - Language lessons are structured to accommodate a variety of language, literacy, and cognitive levels to ensure that all learners will experience success.
   - The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies to respond to students' various readiness levels, language proficiencies, cultures, interests, and learning styles.
   - Student tasks and texts are culturally relevant, interesting, and challenging but scaffolded effectively to ensure successful participation and maximum learning.
   - Classroom space, grouping patterns, use of technology, and instructional strategies are planned but flexible.

4. **Principles 7 and 8—Prior Knowledge and Content Integration: Engaging and Comprehensible Content**
   - The teacher has prioritized the curriculum to focus on the essential knowledge, understandings, and skills of the discipline.
   - Students are aware of what they should know or be able to do with language and content at the end of the lesson.
   - Content instruction integrates the academic language needed to read, write, speak, and understand the essential knowledge of the discipline.
   - Content is meaningful and relevant to student cultures and experiences and promotes high levels of thought.
   - Content is scaffolded to enhance comprehensibility, retention, application, and transfer to other disciplines.

5. **Principle 9—Clear, Appropriate Goals and Feedback: Frequent and Varied Assessment to Inform Instruction**
   - Assessment occurs before, during, and after instruction in order to determine student understanding of content objectives and growth in language objectives.
   - Multiple forms of assessment are used frequently and systematically to monitor student progress and to enable students to better demonstrate what they know or are able to do as a result of instruction.
   - Frequent feedback empowers students while the teacher encourages goal setting and self-assessment to help students develop responsibility for their own learning.
   - Assessment data are analyzed frequently, providing the teacher with a holistic picture of each student's learning style and development and to aid in designing future instruction.

RTI TIER 1 SAMPLER

- Learn the preferred names of your students and pronounce them correctly.
- Speak to new ELLs even when they are unable to respond. Embed your language with gestures related to "here and now" ongoing actions.
- Establish personal relationships with new non-English speaking students by using nonlinguistic gestures such as a smile, a wink, a "thumbs up" sign, a wave of hello or good-bye, a head nod, an "A-OK" sign, and so on.
- Assign a trustworthy student to accompany new learners to the playground, the next class, and the cafeteria.
- Take the time to personally show new students the location of bathrooms and other important areas of the school.
- Provide new students appropriate school materials if necessary and demonstrate how they can be stored in a desk or cubby.
- Name items that are used frequently in the class. Point to these objects and use repetition with directed eye gaze to help new learners focus on the vocabulary. Provide sentence frames for asking and answering: *What's this? That's a _____.*
- Write the class schedule on the side of the board. Use pictures to show special classes or events. Point to these pictures when lesson changes occur.
- Identify two or three patterned phrases that you use routinely to signify activities: *Clean up time! Time for lunch/gym/music. Take out your _____.*
- Communicate with parents frequently on the emotional and social progress of new English learners.

RTI TIER 2 SAMPLER

- Schedule daily language input sessions between you (or the ESL teacher) and the child for approximately 15 minutes.
- Sit quietly with a new student apart from the class. Talk in simple, short sentences about "here and now" topics. For example, for a young child: *Oh, you're wearing new shoes today. Two new shoes* (pointing and gesturing). *Your shoes are brown and white. Here's the brown color. Here's the white color. Your shoes have laces. Can you tie the laces? (Nodding yes response.)* For an older child you might say: *Oh, look* (pointing out the window)*! It's snowing. Can you see the snow? The snow is cold. The snow is white. Snow is white and cold. I like the snow. Do you like the snow?*
- Show a picture and talk about it, pointing to objects as you name them or comment on them. Try to use pictures that are integrated with content learning or with the student's native culture.
- Share pictures of yourself and family with a new learner. Point to the people and tell who they are. Encourage the student to bring in pictures of his or her own family. Provide sentence frames to identify family members: *This is _____. _____ is my _____.*
- Use directional language requiring an action response from the learner (e.g., *Show me the board. Show me the window. Do you see the door? Show me the door. Write your name on the board. Erase your name from the board. Give me the _____.* Integrate content related items if possible.
- Provide paper and markers and direct the student to draw simple pictures using the names of shapes and colors. Provide sample shapes in varied colors and say *Draw a yellow circle on the _____. Draw it here in the corner* (pointing *). Now draw a green square. Draw the square in the middle of the paper* (pointing). Relate this language to content learning if possible.
- Dictate simple math computation for a new student following a model. For example, *Write the problem 2 plus 7. Write the problem 22 plus 3.*
- Work with two or three learners to model simple requests with action responses: *Put your hands on your head. Clap your hands two times. Turn around*.
- Work with two or three learners who can give each other simple directions with an action response. *Pick up the pencil. Put the pencil on the book*. Use content-related pictures or objects if possible with sentence frames.
- Provide opportunities for learners to use language-learning programs on the computer.

Questions for Reflection

1. Why will children learning a second language in school find that task so difficult when we know that all children learn their first languages with almost no effort?
2. Of all the factors affecting acquisition in classrooms, which ones do you feel are the most difficult to overcome? Why?
3. What suggestions would you give to a new teacher in your school who is trying to create effective classroom experiences for new English language learners?

Activities for Further Learning

1. We have seen that language input is critical to language development. Discuss this notion with your classmates. Cite opportunities for language input in a primary classroom, an elementary classroom, and a secondary classroom. What obstacles do you foresee in providing sufficient input for ELLs? What are some practical suggestions for overcoming these obstacles?
2. Observe two children at play for fifteen minutes. Take notes on the language the children use during your observation. Bring your notes to class and compare your observations with your colleagues. What have you discovered about the children's language? What verb tenses are used? What question words? Do the children use many nouns and adjectives? Does the type of play change the nature of the language?
3. With your classmates, use your observation notes to design an activity for ELLs in the classroom that can be accomplished with similar, simple language items. Create a different activity for older learners.
4. Design a content-based card game for children that helps them to learn the following English verbs: *pick up, put down, take,* and *give.*
5. Interview a person who has learned English while attending a public school in the United States. Ask questions as to the effect of the following on her or his language development: age, home language, the classroom environment, the teacher, friends and social group, error correction, and literacy in the first language. Be prepared to describe the positive and negative effects of the factors on your interviewee.
6. Look at Table 2.2 and consider how each of the language development factors will affect the organization of your classroom and the way in which you instruct children. Consider an elementary classroom and a secondary classroom. How would the grade-level differences lead to a change in your classroom organization and instruction?
7. Krashen's definition of comprehensible input and Vygotsky's (1962) zone of proximal development are similar notions. They presuppose a teacher or knowledgeable peer can assist in language development. Describe how these notions could be practically implemented in a classroom.
8. Cummins's definitions of social language (BICS) and academic language (CALP) are useful in helping teachers understand different registers of English. Identify examples of social and academic language that might be encountered in a classroom. Provide examples of ways to scaffold the academic language so ELLs can understand it.

Suggested Reading

Cameron, L. (2001). *Teaching languages to young learners.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Cowley, G. (1997). The language explosion. *Newsweek special edition: Your child:* 16–22. This is an informative and easy-to-read description of the first language acquisition process.

Cummins, J. (1992). Language proficiency, bilingualism, and academic achievement. In P. A. Richard-Amato and M. A. Snow (Eds.), *The multicultural classroom: Readings for content area teachers.* New York, NY: Longman. In this classic article, Cummins defines context-reduced academic language and offers implications for both teaching and testing.

Cummins, J. (1996). *Negotiating identities: Education for empowerment in a diverse society.* Ontario, CA: California Association for Bilingual Education. Cummins proposes a framework for analyzing the patterns of educational outcome observed in different world contexts. He argues that students in subordinated groups will succeed academically only to the extent that patterns of interaction in school challenge and reverse those of society at large that subordinate some communities.

Cummins, J. (2000). *Language, power, and pedagogy: Bilingual children in the crossfire.* Clevedon, UK and Buffalo, NY: Multilingual Matters. This is Cummins's latest effort to inform practice with theory and enable theory to be informed by practice. He searches here for coherence through an integrated interdisciplinary perspective that brings disparate fields into dialogue with each other.

Dudley-Marling, C., & Searle, D. (1991). *When students have time to talk: Creating contexts for learning language.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. An academic but readable text describing both first language acquisition in home and at school. Topics include strategic approaches for teaching language, encouraging extended conversations, and using language for a variety of purposes and audiences. There is also a chapter about second language learners and their unique learning needs.

Heath, S. B. (1992). Sociocultural contexts of language development: Implications for the classroom. In P. A. Richard-Amato and M. A. Snow (Eds.), *The multicultural classroom: Readings for content area teachers.* New York, NY: Longman. Heath discusses the role of home and family in the development of literacy skills for language minority students. She presents examples from major language groups on the differences between language usage in the home and mainstream language usage of the school. She argues that success in school depends on a wide range of oral and written language usage.

Krashen, S. D. (2003). *Explorations in language acquisition and use: The Taipei lectures.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Krashen, S. D., & Terrell, T. D. (1983). *The natural approach: Language acquisition in the classroom,* San Francisco, CA: Alemany Press. This gives Krashen's classic explanation of

natural language learning coupled with ideas for incorporating this approach in schools.

Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. M. (2006). *How languages are learned* (3rd ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. This clear and useful text explains language theory with the teacher in mind.

Scarcella, R. (1992). Providing culturally sensitive feedback. In P. A. Richard-Amato and M. A. Snow (Eds.), *The multicultural classroom: Readings for content area teachers*. New York, NY: Longman. This article provides many examples of the kinds of cross-cultural differences learners will encounter in our schools and communities. Scarcella offers ideas for giving helpful feedback to students in order to minimize cultural differences.

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