

Chapter 1

Before you read the chapter

Think About:

- Does research play a role in your literacy teaching? In what ways is research useful to you? How could it be more useful? Do you ever engage in “classroom-based research” to help you evaluate the effectiveness of what you do?
- What are some big ideas that influence how you teach literacy? In other words, are there some general principles or “theories” that you use to help you plan and deliver literacy instruction?
- How do you think ELLs’ acquisition of literacy skills is the same or different from that of native English-speaking students?
 - Do you think that the home language of ELLs is a help or a hindrance when it comes to their learning to read and write in English? Explain your answer.
 - In your opinion, what background factors influence how and how well ELLs acquire literacy skills in English? Are there strategies that you use in the classroom that help you get to know your ELLs better?



Read the Chapter

Talk About:

- Review the “big ideas” on pages 8 to 12. Which of these ideas is new to you? Discuss how each of these new ideas would change the way you plan and teach literacy skills to ELLs.
- In this chapter, “bootstrapping” is an important idea that appears throughout the book. Discuss what you understand to be the importance of bootstrapping for ELLs learning to read and write in English. Then, identify ways in which you take advantage of bootstrapping or ways you could take advantage of it now that you understand its importance.
- Identify and discuss the key components of literacy development for all students and then discuss how these apply to ELLs.
- Discuss the difference between bottom-up and top-down processing in literacy development and the ways in which you engage students in each.
- Identify the four main findings that research has revealed about literacy development in ELLs. Which of these findings is new to you and which is familiar?
- On pages 20–31, we discuss characteristics of ELLs that can influence their learning. Which of these, in your experience, is most important? Discuss why they are important.

Explore and Apply

- Take one of your lesson plans and identify (a) the academic language that is embedded in those lessons and (b) some social language skills that you use to teach the lesson. What is the difference between them?
- Use the Literacy Development Framework on pages 24–25 to classify two or three of your ELLs with respect to their level of reading and writing proficiency in English. If your school or district has its own framework or benchmarks, use it to classify these students.
- To get to know your ELLs better, ask them to write a brief bio about themselves and their families. To make the bios relevant to literacy instruction, ask them to include anecdotes of how language, including reading and writing activities, is used in their families. If they are in the pre-literacy stage, interview them about themselves and their families, including questions about language activities. Then identify what you learned that you did not already know and, in particular, identify strengths that your ELLs have that you could use when individualizing instruction for them.
- After you interview your ELLs or read their brief bios, from above, identify specific ways in which they are using the native language to communicate in English and discuss how they use their native language to expand their communication skills in English.
- Select three ELLs who come from different language and cultural backgrounds. Identify ways in which their learning strategies or behavior in class are different because their backgrounds are different. Are there ways you can use these differences to individualize instruction and improve learning?
- Take an activity that you like to use with your students and consider if it includes both top-down and bottom-up processes and, if not, how it could be changed to include both.
- Take one of the big ideas about teaching literacy to ELLs that is new to you and design a lesson that would incorporate this idea into your plans. Now design a method of evaluating whether your efforts were successful or not.





WRAPPING UP THE CHAPTER

- Go back to your discussion of big ideas that influence your teaching in **BEFORE YOU READ THE CHAPTER**, and compare them to our big ideas in Chapter 1. How are your ideas and the ideas presented in Chapter 1 the same? How are they different?
- Talk with other members of your study group to compare ways in which they think teaching literacy to ELLs is the same or different from teaching literacy to native English-speaking students.
- Identify learning and background resources that your ELLs bring to your classroom that you have overlooked in the past.
- As a group, identify ways in which you can get to know your ELLs better and identify ways you can plan literacy instruction for your ELLs that takes account of their particular socio-cultural and language backgrounds.

Chapter 2

Before you read the chapter

Look at the right-hand panel on page 35.

Think About:

- What do you predict will be some important principles of emergent literacy instruction for ELLs?
- What topic do you most look forward to reading as you start this chapter?
- Tell your study group if you primarily work with early grade learners (K–2) or with older students coming from atypical schooling backgrounds who are at the emergent literacy stage.
- Rate your preparation to teach emergent literacy in a second language.

Do you feel well prepared, somewhat prepared, or relatively unprepared to teach emergent literacy in a second language?



Read the Chapter

Talk About:

- Why do the authors favor developing literacy in the home language first?
- Why are some of your learners introduced to literacy in the second language first (see p. 37)? How do you try to encourage literacy in the home language despite these realities?
- Write a profile of a student you work with according to the seven background characteristics listed in the box on page 38. Describe your learner to a partner. Are there any details you couldn't provide? If so, how could you obtain this information?
- After reading pages 38–39, work with a partner to list the knowledge and skills that make up the linguistic reservoir that L1 literate ELLs draw upon as they break into English.
- What do you know about the early literacy practices of the cultural communities you serve? Invite cultural brokers (parents and community members) to share additional information with your study group about their literacy practices.
- While there is widespread agreement as to the component literacy skills, how should these be ordered for ELLs in terms of their relative importance to literacy achievement? (pages 41–42)
- Discuss ways to encourage emergent writers to write.
- Compare the ways you have used poems, chants, rhymes, and songs to promote early literacy with those suggested in the chapter.

Explore and Apply

Do a Jigsaw Learning Activity: Assign the 8 Principles of Emergent Literacy Instruction on pages 43–44 to participants.

- Have participants read their related pages on pages 44–60 and present their principle to the group for discussion. Which are best honored in your literacy program? Which principles could be strengthened?
- Make a list of wordless picture books in your classroom, library, and community library. Share the list with all teachers working with ELLs and tell them how to use these books to promote emergent literacy (pp. 46–48).
- After you read pages 48 to 54, select a core book that is used to introduce a theme in your classroom. Create a planning template for that book like the one modeled in Figure 2.1.
- Using an assembled text set from your classroom or school library, do a text analysis (pp. 61–62). Choose one of the five areas: how you would work on this with students during guided reading.
- Discuss how mini shared reading differs from traditional shared reading and how collaborative text writing differs from traditional shared writing procedures.
- Assess how well your school links literacy at school with literacy at home and in the wider community. Give some suggestions for strengthening these links.
- Review the Curriculum Design principles (pp. 71–72). Plan steps to advance your classroom practices.
- Meet with school and community librarians. Show them samples of good books for emergent literacy ELLs that honor features listed on p. 73. How could you strengthen the collection?





WRAPPING UP THE CHAPTER

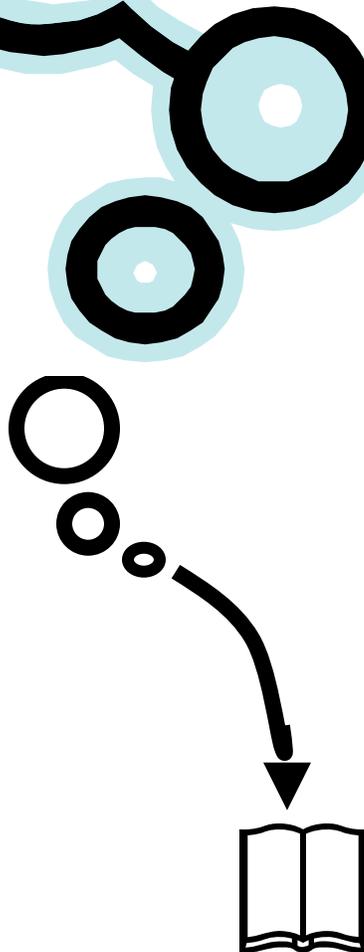
- Compare your literacy block with the one provided on pages 64–65. What’s the same and what’s different? What do you want to change about your literacy block schedule based on the recommendations provided in Chapter 2?
- How can you collaborate with others at school and in the wider community to strengthen emergent literacy instruction for your ELLs?
- Review the Resources for Teachers on pages 74–79. What interests you most and why? How do you plan to follow up?

Chapter 3

Before you read the chapter

Think About:

- What does the term “biliteracy” mean to you?
- How do you think one becomes biliterate?
- One of the premises of this chapter is that literacy in the home language helps develop literacy in English. In what way do you think it does?
- Another premise of the chapter is that regardless of what type of teacher you are, you can help promote biliteracy. What do you think you can do to help ELLs become biliterate?
- Regardless of the type of program you have for ELLs, do you think it is successful in promoting biliteracy? Why? Why not?



Read the Chapter

Talk About:

- Look at the list on page 83 entitled *ADVANTAGES OF DEVELOPING LITERACY IN THE HOME LANGUAGE*. Pick one of the points on that list and think of a concrete example that illustrates that particular point. Share it with the rest of the group.
 - Has the idea of developing metalinguistic awareness influenced the way you teach ELLs? If so, how? If not, how do you propose to promote metalinguistic awareness?
 - Look at the list of suggestions on pp. 94–95 entitled *Helping NHL Students Take Advantage of Their Home Language*. Have you tried any of these suggestions? What has worked well?
- Look at the list of suggestions on pp. 96–98. Have you tried any of them? What has been particularly successful?
 - How would you rate your school as far as the quality and availability of multicultural literature?
 - Based on the discussion in the section called *Social Aspects of Biliteracy*, starting on p. 104, what role does your school play in the community’s literacy landscape?

Explore and Apply

- Collect examples of cross-linguistic transfer from your students. Explain these examples using the discussion on pages 84–86.
- Take an inventory of the home literacy levels of your ELLs. Classify them into the three levels described on pp. 89–90. Once the inventory is done, can you say you have a fairly accurate picture of the state of literacy in the ELL community?
- Bring examples of bilingual books that you have found to be particularly effective and describe how you have used them to the rest of the study group. Use the list on pp. 102–4 to guide your discussion.
- Make a plan and start a project with a colleague or two to make books that are written by students in English and their home language, following the discussion on pp. 100–101.
- Assess how well your school accomplishes the “to-do” list on pp. 110–12. Come up with a plan of action that would help make the program/school more effective in promoting biliteracy.





WRAPPING UP THE CHAPTER

- Return to the questions you thought about before you read the chapter. How have your views regarding those questions changed after reading the chapter and discussing with your colleagues?
- Share your thoughts with study group members.
- Focus specifically on the last question: What needs to happen, if anything, in order for your school/program to be more successful in promoting biliteracy among ELLs?

Chapter 4

Before you read the chapter

Think About:

- What have you noticed about the language demands of science texts? Social studies texts? Mathematics texts?
- Tell some ways you currently support ELLs when they read content area texts.
- Tell ways you help ELLs write about academic topics of study in your classroom.
- Discuss the level of collaboration that goes on in your school/district among language and literacy specialists and mainstream teachers. Do you currently co-plan units of study for ELL students? If yes, how do you do this? If no, why is this not occurring?
 - How is teacher collaboration supported in your school or district?



Read the Chapter

Talk About:

- *Mainstream Teachers:* Read pages 118–20 then look at the teacher notebook page on pages 119–20. Which aspects can you target for improvement?
ESL and Reading Specialists: Read pages 120–21. Why should you target academic literacy for ESL or reading instruction with your ELLs?
- Review the tactics suggested to promote effective collaboration as given on pages 122–23. Which of these suggestions would your group like to investigate further?
- Review the teacher notebook page on pages 123–24, *Important Things to Co-Plan*. Which of these suggestions do you think would unify and strengthen instruction most for your ELLs? Defend your choice(s).
- Make a T-Chart. Distinguish academic language from social language. Compare your chart with your partners.

EXPLORE AND APPLY

Group Learning Activity (following pages 126–32): Form 3 teams: Social Studies, Science, and Math. Have each group collect sample textbook pages from a grade-appropriate unit of study. First, review the background knowledge needed by ELLs to understand the text sample. Then—

1. Using the first five bullets on the teacher notebook page on pages 127–28, find examples of each in your text samples. For bullet 3, you may also find the charts on pages 129–31 helpful to select good examples.
 2. Use the remaining five bullets to recommend some teaching strategies to use with the text.
 3. When each team completes their work, have them distribute copies of the sample textbook pages to other members of the study group and share their results.
- *Evaluate a Text Set*: Have one teacher volunteer to bring a text set that corresponds to a content area theme taught in your school/district. Evaluate the text set based on the criteria given in the shaded box on page 134.
 - Compare Figure 2.1 to Chart 4.4. What’s the same? What’s different? Which would you find easier to use and why?
 - After you read *Frontloading Vocabulary and Concepts* on pages 136–40, select a core student text for a particular unit. Bring enough copies of the text for all members of the study group (this can be a trade book).
 - Identify the vocabulary you would select to teach (See the teacher notebook page on page 136 to guide your selection).
 - For the five vocabulary-building techniques suggested on pages 137–40, assign one technique to each person or team to demonstrate, using the words you identified. Give time for each person/team to prepare and then allow all members to present their technique.
 - Which technique does the group feel would be ideal for the student text selected? Why?
 - Discuss vocabulary teaching strategies the group feels warrant further study and plan how you will follow up.
 - After you read *Using Scaffolds to Support Reading Comprehension and Written Production*,
 1. Select a graphic organizer that would work best with your text as well as transition words to highlight for your learners.
 2. Choose one or two strategies from pages 143–44 to model and teach during guided reading. Defend your choice.
 3. Create a template or writing frame that would support academic writing after the book is read. Share these with one another.
 4. Discuss how teachers could use cooperative learning to promote academic language and literacy development around your selected text.
 5. Decide which would go better with the selected text: a learning log or student journal. Why?
 - Which do teachers at your school use more to extend learning—projects or field trips? Why do you think this is the case?
 - Review the field trip ideas suggested on the teacher notebook page on pages 148–49. Which of these have you used? Which of these would you like to try?





WRAPPING UP THE CHAPTER

- Construct a unit of instruction for your classroom based on the model unit provided on pages 150–53. Share your units with one another for feedback and recommendations. *Or* Collect the books used in the model unit on pages 150–53 and use them to walk through the unit step-by-step. What activities in the unit does the group like best/least and why? Does the group feel all lesson objectives were met? Why? Why not?
- How can you extend your learning about the development of academic language and literacy? Which of the researchers/literacy experts cited in Chapter 4 would your group like to target for additional readings?
- Make a listing of some of the things you want to remember to do when teaching academic content to ELLs.
- Brainstorm several ideas to propose to your school improvement team to strengthen content instruction for ELLs based on the chapter.

Chapter 5

Before you read the chapter

Think About:

- We all know that language skills are connected to one another. Why make a fuss over it? As a teacher, how do these connections affect what or how you teach?
- What kind of writing activities do your students currently engage in? Do you think that what and how they write helps push their reading skills forward?
- We can make the connection between reading and writing in many ways. Some are effective, but others are not. What makes an activity that connects reading and writing effective?
- Do you (or would you) make the connection between reading and writing different for beginning level students and more advanced students? How?



Read the Chapter

Talk About:

- Pick an activity that you do often in class that makes the connection between reading and writing. Assess its effectiveness according to the key criteria listed on p. 157. For those criteria that are not clearly met, how can you change the activity so that it becomes more effective?
- Do your students spend any time doing meaningless copying as opposed to mimic writing? What can you do to make that activity more meaningful? (Eliminating the activity altogether is an option!)
- When making the connection between reading and writing explicit to students during a Language Experience activity, how important is it for the writing to be accurate (in the beginning, later when editing)?
- Which of the strategies described in the section entitled *Students as Authors*, on pp. 166–71, are most suitable for your students? Why?

Explore and Apply

- Organize a school-wide exhibition of stories based on photographs and videos (see pp. 164–65) and include the mainstream classroom or content-area teachers in the project.
- Collect some statements from students regarding how they feel about themselves as authors. Discuss what they represent and what they mean with study group members.
- Following the example of the teacher’s analysis of her response to the dialogue journal entry in Figure 5.4 (p. 174), pick one of your responses from an exchange with a student and analyze it. Should you have responded differently? How?
- As a writer yourself, how would you use the traits listed on pp. 177–78 and the section entitled *Using Text to Master Different Aspects of Writing* (pp. 180–81) to become a better writer?
- How would you prepare your students for meeting with a published author so that they get the most out of the experience?





WRAPPING UP THE CHAPTER

- Return to the questions you thought about before you read the chapter. How have your views regarding those questions changed after reading the chapter and discussing with your colleagues?
- Share your thoughts with study group members.
- Will you do things differently in developing literacy in your students? If so, what?

Chapter 6

Before you read the chapter

Think About:

- Does your school administer standardized tests? Do all students take the same tests? What decisions are made using these test results? Are the results from these tests useful to you as a classroom teacher? In what ways are they useful?
- What kinds of assessment procedures do you use in the classroom to assess your students' reading and writing skills? Do you use the same procedures with ELLs as with native English speakers? Do you make any adjustments or accommodations for the ELL students?
- Do you use the results of your classroom tests or assessments to modify your instruction? In what ways?
- Have you ever used reading/writing conferences to assess your students' reading and writing skills? In what specific ways are they useful for you? If you have used them with ELLs, how do you adapt them for these students?
- How do you assess the language and literacy skills of your ELLs at the beginning of the year or when they first join your class?



Read the Chapter

Talk About:

- Discuss how to distinguish between ELLs' reading/writing skills and their content-area skills and knowledge (as discussed on p. 189) during assessment. Are there additional ideas you have for assessing ELLs' literacy skills separately from their content knowledge, and vice versa? Share these ideas with your group.
- Take the case study in this chapter that is most similar to your own situation and discuss what you learned from it. Now, consider what is common among the case studies, despite differences in language proficiency and background among your ELL students.
- Discuss the assessment accommodations of Short (on pp. 193–94). Which of these have you used? Which have you not used? Which would you be interested in trying out?
- Using the Chart on p. 195 that describes the five Purposes for Classroom Assessment, consider Purpose (c) “to plan reading and writing instruction that reflects students' individual learning styles...” and discuss with the group how you get to know your ELLs, which methods you are most satisfied with, and which you are not satisfied with. What could you do to get to know your ELLs better?
- Using the summary of culture-specific factors on pp. 196–97, describe examples of each that you have observed among ELLs during assessment. Are there other culture-specific factors that can affect ELL performance during assessment that you have noticed? Discuss these with the other members of your group.

Explore and Apply

- Review Chart 6.2. Identify which elements of literacy you already assess in order to determine the starting point for teaching new ELLs in your classroom. Which ones do you not assess? Based on what you have read in this chapter, how could you assess the elements of literacy that you currently do not assess for new ELLs?
- If you are not already using reading and writing conferences, do reading and writing conferences with two or three ELLs. What behaviors were common among the students you conferred with? What differed among the students according to their level of proficiency in English, their language and cultural backgrounds, and their prior literacy skills?
- Try using dialogue journals with one ELL and one mainstream student, as described on pp. 203–4, for several weeks. What modifications did you have to make to get them to work with your ELL students in comparison with your English-speaking students? What did you learn from your students' entries that was useful for planning instruction?
- Get each member of your study group to review and think about the guidelines for a different assessment tool. Have each person identify steps that they are not doing and tips to remember when using each procedure. Then share your work with one another.
- Using a unit on literacy instruction that you already have planned, explore how the assessment tools discussed in Chapter 6 could be applied to evaluate the literacy outcomes of your students at the end of the unit. Choose an assessment tool from Chapter 6 that you are not currently using and try using it as part of your assessment of the unit of instruction. After you try it out, identify what worked well and what you would change so that it would work better. If you are using all tools, chose one that you would do differently based on what you read in the chapter.
- Collect a writing sample from one of your ELLs and analyze their writing using the example given in Figure 6.4 as a model. Pay particular attention to any influences from the home language to see how ELLs use their home language to help them write in English.





WRAPPING UP THE CHAPTER

- What are three key new things you have learned from this chapter?
- Are there new assessment tools or accommodations that you would use routinely in your classroom?
- What are some challenges in assessment with ELLs and how can you meet those challenges based on what you have read in this chapter?
- Identify and share useful books on assessment, Internet sites, and assessment tools designed for ELLs that you use or know about with other members of your group. Go to the web and see if you can identify additional assessment resources.
- Identify assessment needs that you and your group have and explore the possibility of getting local professional development to meet those needs.