Study Group Discussion Questions

English Language Learners Day by Day, K–6:
A Complete Guide to Literacy, Content-Area,
and Language Instruction

by Christina M. Celic

Chapter 1

Setting Up a Classroom for English Language Learners

1. What do you feel are the most important aspects of classroom organization for helping ELLs develop linguistically and academically?

2. Consider each area of your classroom as a place for learning both language and content. Discuss what you already have in place that's supportive of ELLs. What can be altered to make it more supportive? You can use Chart 1 provided on page 228 to organize your thoughts.

   Pre-service teachers: How do you envision your classroom looking? Discuss what you could have in place in each area of the room to support your ELLs. You can use Chart 2 provided on page 229 to organize your thoughts.

3. Reflect on the potential changes that can be made to your classroom. Which ones are your top priorities for implementing? Are there any that could be grade-level or school-wide initiatives? Are there ways you can collaborate with colleagues to maximize time and effort?

   Pre-service teachers: Discuss your ideas for setting up a classroom. If you don't have the time and/or resources to have everything in place by the first day of school, what would your top priorities be?

4. As you consider the resources in your classroom library, discuss how you can provide multicultural and native language texts for ELLs in both the leveled and non-leveled book baskets.

5. Celic suggests ways to group ELLs based on their English proficiency levels. Reflect on how you currently seat your ELLs. Discuss the reasons for this placement and the degree of support it offers ELLs, both linguistically and academically.

6. This chapter provides examples of websites and computer programs that have supportive features for ELLs. Investigate other websites and programs you can incorporate in your instruction that have these features, as well as other ways you can use technology with ELLs.

Chapter 2

Getting Ready to Teach English Language Learners from Day One

1. What do you currently do to get to know your ELLs' abilities and needs before the school year begins? During the first weeks of school?

2. How can you get an understanding of your ELLs' abilities and needs, both academic and linguistic, in a timely way? You can use Chart 3 provided on page 230 to plan what you would like to do before the school year begins, as well as when you can fit in different assessments and instructional activities during the first weeks of school.

3. How can the idea of a whole-class profile, shown in Figures 2–1 and 2–2 (pages 29 and 30), be adapted to your classroom and/or school? What categories of important information would you include?

4. What differentiates each English proficiency level outlined in Figure 2–6 (page 40)? Think about ELLs you have worked with. Approximately where are they on this developmental chart?

5. Celic references Cappellini's work on the language structures that are typically developed at each English proficiency level. Discuss these language structures, outlined in Figure 2–6 (page 40), focusing in particular on those that are less familiar to you. How does this chart help you understand your ELLs' linguistic abilities and their developmental needs?

6. How is the development of conversational language proficiency different from academic language proficiency? What implications does this have for ELLs in the primary grades versus the upper grades? What implications does this have for former ELLs who are no longer receiving language services?

7. Writing samples are one indicator of an ELL's current English proficiency level. Using Figure 2–6, analyze several different writing samples from your ELLs.

   • What are the characteristic features of this ELL's writing in English?

   • What language structures are secure? What language structures are developing?

   • Based on this information, what English proficiency level does this one sample indicate? (Keep in mind that one sample of writing or speaking typically doesn't give a complete view of an ELL's capabilities.)

   • What does this writing sample tell you about the child's strengths as a writer? How can you support the child to continue developing as a writer?

   Alternatively, record an ELL's conversation with a teacher or with a peer during a learning activity. Do a similar analysis of the child's English proficiency level.

8. Using the Family Survey in Appendix C as a starting point, consider ways you can encourage your ELLs' families to be involved at school, including options for families who aren't proficient in English.

Chapter 3

Classroom Management with English Language Learners

1. Why is consistent classroom management particularly essential for ELLs?

2. Reflecting on what you've read in this chapter, are there any ways you can make your current daily schedule more supportive of ELLs?

3. What is the purpose of each balanced literacy component? How do they allow for a gradual release of responsibility from the teacher to the student?

4. Using the sample daily schedules in Figures 3–1 and 3–2 (pages 68 and 69), or your own daily schedule, list the routines that take place during each instructional component and during transition times. Be as specific as possible. How can you make these routines clear and consistent for your ELLs?

5. Choose a typical classroom routine and role-play how you could model and practice it with a group of ELLs.

6. What can you do to ensure that your ELLs are better prepared to complete their homework assignments?

7. Reflect on the homework assignments you are currently using. Are ELLs at different English proficiency levels able to complete them? If not, how could they be modified to be more effective?

8. Using Chart 4 provided on page 231, compile a list of appropriate homework assignments you could use for each subject area at your grade level. Draw upon homework assignments you already use that are supportive of your ELLs' needs, as well as the homework examples described in this chapter for each subject area.

Chapter 4

Integrating Instruction for English Language Learners

1. In what ways are you already integrating content area instruction with literacy components? What can you do to expand integrated instruction throughout the school day?

2. Examine the yearlong scope and sequence of your grade-level curriculum for each subject area.

    • Are there ways you can reorder certain content area and literacy units of study to maximize your ability to integrate these areas of instruction?

    • Using Figures 4–1 and 4–2 (pages 98 and 99) as a model, create a potential yearlong curricular framework that allows for the maximum amount of integration.

    Pre-service teachers: Create a similar yearlong plan for integrated instruction by identifying the programs that are used for teaching literacy and the content areas in your district. Focus on the specific units of study these programs include.

3. Choose a particular period of time in the school year and plan how you can integrate those specific content area and literacy units of study. You can use the blank planning template in Appendix E as a guide.

4. How can you maximize limited resources when integrating instruction by using them for multiple purposes?

5. Some balanced literacy components, such as shared reading, shared writing, and interactive writing, aren't commonly used in upper-grade classrooms. What are the benefits of these instructional components for ELLs? How can they be incorporated in an upper grade daily schedule in an effective, age-appropriate way?

Chapter 5

Teaching Academic Language Through the Curriculum

1. Celic provides a model for weaving language instruction throughout the school day. Compare this to the more traditional approach of teaching language during one particular block of time.

2. Share your thoughts about including language objectives for each content objective when teaching ELLs. How does this impact their ability to learn?

3. Discuss the logistics of planning for language objectives. How can you realistically incorporate this as part of your routine planning?

4. Take a content objective from a unit of study and brainstorm what your language objectives could be. Keep in mind the linguistic demands of the learning activities students will be doing and the linguistic needs of your ELLs.

5. Discuss the difference between content-specific vocabulary and general academic vocabulary. Do you agree that different teaching approaches are necessary for developing these two types of vocabulary?

6. Discuss how you could incorporate in your day-to-day instruction some of the techniques for developing language structures and vocabulary that are outlined in this chapter. From your teaching experience, are there other activities you have found to be effective for developing language with ELLs?

7. Consider what you are teaching in the content areas and in literacy at a particular time of year. Are there any language structures your ELLs would need to use across several of these subject areas? How can you model those language structures during different instructional components and how can your ELLs practice them throughout the unit of study? If you created an integrated unit of study after reading Chapter 4, you can use it as a basis for this discussion.

8. In one classroom ELLs often have a wide range of linguistic needs. Considering the examples in this chapter, how can each instructional component potentially target these different linguistic needs?

Chapter 6

Snapshots of Differentiated Instruction with English Language Learners

1. Throughout the book, Celic reflects on the *Keys to Success* that support ELLs in their academic and linguistic development. Discuss how ELLs can benefit from each one. Do you feel some are more critical to implement than others?

2. Which *Keys to Success* are you already implementing? Which would you like to use with more effectiveness in your classroom?

3. There are eight snapshots of instruction described in this chapter. Choose a snapshot and analyze the scenario. Identify the *Keys to Success* that are foundational to the instruction. (Consider doing this as a jigsaw activity where small

groups analyze different snapshots and share their thoughts with the whole group.)

4. Choose certain instructional components that you would like to focus on in your classroom. Discuss your current teaching methods and reflect on any new ideas that you gained from the snapshots in this chapter. How could you incorporate them into your teaching practice?

5. After reading *English Language Learners Day by Day*, create an action plan for implementing any ideas you would like to continue developing in your classroom, with your grade-level team, or as a school-wide initiative.
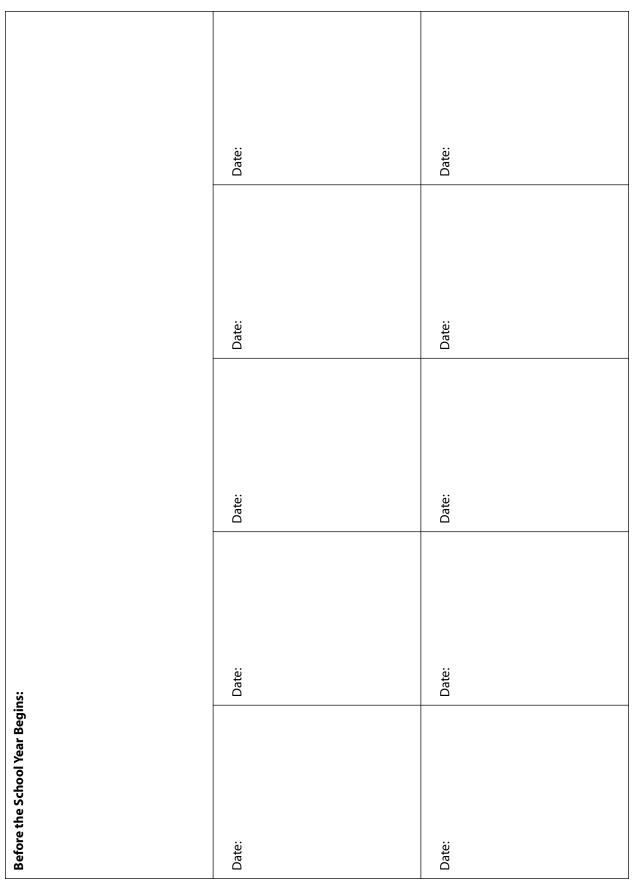
Area	What I Already Have in Place	What I Would Like to Implement for ELLs
Classroom Library/ Reading		
Math Center		
Writing Center		
Listening Center		
Science and Social Studies Centers		
Computer Center		
Desk/Table Areas		
Other		

Chart 1 © 2009 by Christina M. Celic from *English Language Learners Day by Day*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Area	What I Would Like to Have in Place to Support ELLs
Classroom Library/ Reading	
Math Center	
Writing Center	
Listening Center	
Science and Social Studies Centers	
Computer Center	
Desk/Table Areas	
Other	

Chart 2

Before the School Year Begins:

	Date:	Date:
	Date:	Date:
	Date:	Date:
	Date:	Date:
	Date:	Date:

Chart 3 *Getting to Know Your ELLs' Abilities and Needs*

Subject Area	Effective Homework Assignments for ELLs at Different Proficiency Levels
Reading	
Writing	
Math	
Science	
Social Studies	
Word Study	

Chart 4

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