

# Guidelines for Literacy Development in English for ESL Students



# Importance of *L1* in the Acquisition of *L2*



Children who enter our schools with a language other than English have a notable knowledge of their native language (*L1*) ...

*a “linguistic knowing” that they utilize unconsciously in their daily communications.*

The student’s *L1* serves as the foundation for English language acquisition.

# English Reading Development for ESL Students



Effective L2 reading instruction requires an understanding of and is guided by a knowledge base on:

- Second Language Acquisition
- Conventions of L1 and L2
- Key components in reading development

# Second Language Acquisition

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- Second language acquisition is a lifelong process with many parallels to first language acquisition.
- Error patterns are predictable across all learning regardless of the student's L1 or formal instruction in L2.
- Language acquisition is not a linear process; formal instruction does not speed up the process.
- Sequential curricula materials (mastery of each discrete point before moving on to the next point) are disastrous for second language learners.

# Stages of Second Language Development

- Pre-Production; Silent Period
- Early Production
- Speech Emergence
- Intermediate Fluency



# Second Language Acquisition

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*Second language acquisition ...  
a dynamic, creative, innate process*

*Best developed through ...  
contextual, meaningful activities  
that focus on language use  
combined with guidance along  
the way from the teachers.*

*(Collier, 1995)*



# Conventions of L1 and L2

**Languages differ in phonology, syntax, and semantics.**

For example,

- ◆ Spanish is more consistent between letter/sound correspondence than English:

**a e i o u**

- ◆ English phonics suggests patterns:

bit bite                      bat bate

ought bought

# L1 and L2

## Phonological Differences



### English Vowels

/ɪ/ meat		/u/ pool
/i/ mitt		/U/ pull
/ey/ mate		
/ɛ/ met	/ə/	/ow/ oat
/æ/ mat	/a/ pot	/c/ caught

### Spanish Vowels

/iy/ igual		/u/ uva
/ɛ/ me		/o/ oso
	/a/ mal	

# Consonants in L1 and L2



## English Consonants

- *b* ▶ boat /bowt/
- *v* ▶ vote /vowt/
  
- *th* that /ðæt/

Same sound →  
↙  
*th*

## Spanish Consonants

- *v*      ↘  
            ↙ → baca /φ/
- *b*
  
- *d*    dedo /ðeðo/

but different letter representation  
↙  
*d*

# Conventions of L1 and L2



## Consonant Clusters

**/sk/** combination in initial position of a word is an English occurrence:

**/skul/** school

**/spesifik/** specific

Spanish breaks up the **/sk/** cluster with an **/e/** in initial position forming a syllable:

**/es•kuela/** escuela

**/es•pesífiko/**  
específico

# What this means for the English Language Learner



- Sounds in L1 that transfer to L2
- Sounds in L2 that are not part of the phonology of L1
- Letter sound correspondence may not be the same

# Spanish Literacy Development



## Spanish

- The natural process utilizes the syllable as the pivotal point of departure for literacy development.
- Spanish is a syllabic language ... that is how reading is developed and taught.

ma me mi mo mu

*Mi mamá me mima.*

# Spanish Literacy Development



## Spanish

The syllable is the nucleus for defining how to read words, how to spell words, where to divide words, where to accentuate a word, and how to make simple sentences.

# “Sounding Out”



## English

In English, “sounding out” is done by separating individual sounds.

ca t → /k/ /æ/ /t/

## Spanish

When “sounding out” in Spanish it is done through syllables:

Mamá → ma - má

manzana → man - za -na

sol → sol

# Literacy Development in English for ESL students

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- ◆ It is important to understand that ESL students are faces with many phonological, syntactical, and semantic differences in going from L1 to L2.
- ◆ It is also important to understand that the less proficient a student is in English, the more the student will rely on L1 cues.

# Second Language Learners



Second language learners are doing twice the cognitive work of native speakers during reading instruction because they are

- ◆ acquiring new literacy concepts and skills and
- ◆ attending to the sounds, meanings, and structures of a new language.

# Key Components in Reading Development



- Oral Language
- Phonological Awareness
- Print and Book Knowledge
- Alphabetic Principle
- Fluency
- Comprehension
- Written Expression

# Oral Language Phonological Awareness



Oral language and phonological awareness are key to the development of reading, and because

- Sounds in L1 that transfer to L2
- Sounds in L2 that are not part of the phonology of L1

*oral language development and phonological/phonemic awareness are critical components for the second language learner.*

# Oral Language Phonological Awareness



*Oral language development and phonological/ phonemic awareness are critical components for the second language learner.*

*ESL students must develop these areas in order to succeed in reading development in English... They need to have the phonology of L2 before they can make connections between letter and sound.*

# Oral Language Phonological Awareness



## ESL Strategies:

*Songs \*Chants \* Rhymes \* Stories \* Modeling*

### *Minimal Pairs*

bat	vat
berry	very
base	vase

Chip	ship
Cheap	sheep
Chop	shop

teen	tin	ten
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# Print and Book Knowledge

## Alphabetic Principle



- **Writing systems** as well as Letter sound correspondences vary from language to language:  
Alphabetic (Spanish//English)  
Logographic (Chinese)  
Syllabic (Japanese; combines with logographic)
- **Directionality**  
TOP -> DOWN  
LEFT -> RIGHT

# Fluency \* Comprehension \* Written Expression



A student's progress in fluency, comprehension and written expression depends on their knowledge base of oral language, phonological awareness, print and book knowledge and the alphabetic principle.

# Fluency \* Comprehension \* Written Expression



For ESL students,  
oral language, phonological awareness,  
print and book knowledge and the  
alphabetic principle are best developed  
when students are provided with ample  
opportunities to engage in meaningful,  
purposeful, and relevant contexts.

*Best developed through contextual, meaningful activities that focus on language use combined with guidance along the way from the teachers.*



- Provide comprehensible instruction; use graphic organizers; visuals; concrete examples
- Monitor language; paraphrase; repeat; provide examples; make connections to students' L1.
- Create a safe environment where students take risks and are supported throughout the process

# Guidelines for Teaching Second Language Learners



- ◆ Have high expectations for learning
- ◆ Facilitate the development of essential language and literacy skills at a student's level of oral proficiency in English
- ◆ Develop literacy through instruction that builds on language, comprehension, print concepts, and the alphabetic principle
- ◆ Use language during instruction that is comprehensible and meaningful to the students

# Guidelines for Teaching Second Language Learners



- ◆ Create an instructional program that meets the needs of your students:
  - design a plan for new students
    - readjust schedules, make decisions based on data, and make instruction comprehensible
  - provide opportunities for students to engage in extended dialogues
  - assess students' progress frequently
  - incorporate community expertise into the curriculum

# Guidelines for Teaching Second Language Learners



- ◆ Integrate ESL strategies in content area instruction
- ◆ Activate background knowledge and connect content to students' lives
- ◆ Use graphic organizers, charts, and other visuals to enhance comprehension

# Guidelines for Teaching Second Language Learners



- ◆ Provide opportunities for discussions of texts
- ◆ Recognize and value the different discourse (speaking) patterns across cultures

# Enhancing Academic Success for English Language Learners



- ◆ A training manual developed by Region IV Education Service Center in collaboration with the Texas Education Agency
- ◆ Contents of the manual
  - Introduction
  - Administrative Overview
  - English Literacy Development
  - Spanish Literacy Development