Addressing the literacy needs of adolescent English Language Learners.

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University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
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Texas A&M International University
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Addressing the Literacy Needs of Adolescent English Language Learners

GEORGIA EARNEST GARCÍA
HERIBERTO GODINA

> If the teacher feels there is no hope in an immigrant child, then the
> child will think, "Well, if the teacher who's helping me thinks that I
> can't go anywhere, then I might as well give up myself."
>
> —QUOTE FROM AN IMMIGRANT STUDENT (in Igoa, 1995, p. 100)

The English literacy performance of adolescent English language learners
(second-language learners of English) is a topic that researchers and educa-
tors generally have overlooked. Yet, as the opening quotation indicates,
school life for English language learners in grades 5–12 can be difficult,
both instructionally and emotionally. Dropout statistics for this group of
students also are high, highlighting the importance of developing effective
programs to address their needs. In 1995, English language learners with
limited English proficiency accounted for 44% of the students who did not
complete high school (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997). Although English
language learners come from a range of ethnic, national, and language
backgrounds, over two-thirds of this population are Latino, with the
majority from Mexico (Kindler, 2002). Some of the other language groups
include speakers of Vietnamese, Hmong, Cantonese, Korean, Arabic, Man-
darin, Polish, Russian, and Hindi (Kindler, 2002).

Adolescent English language learners vary considerably in their educational backgrounds (DevTech Systems, 1996; Waggoner, 1999). Some may have participated in U.S. schools at the elementary school level, but their English needs may not have been appropriately addressed. These students may be orally proficient in English, but may not have been given the length of time and type of instruction necessary to develop their academic English proficiency (reading and writing skills, along with content knowledge) to further their learning in English (Collier & Thomas, 1989; Cummins, 1981). Others may have participated in school in their home countries and immigrated to this country with their families. This student population frequently enters U.S. schools with a high level of literate and cognitive development in their native (home) languages. They also may have acquired some instruction in English as a foreign language. Once they acquire oral proficiency in English, they often can transfer what they have learned in their native language to their English learning. Still others may have been refugees. These students frequently have had serious interruptions in their schooling. They may not be very literate in their native language and may enter U.S. schools with very little or no English and limited academic knowledge.

Many English language learners at the middle and secondary school levels are of low socioeconomic status (DevTech Systems, 1996). They often have to work while in school or move with their families, so that their parents can find work. As a result, the education of some English language learners is characterized by high student mobility and student disappearance for lengthy periods of time (DevTech Systems, 1996). Because parents and students frequently have immigrated to the United States from countries with a centralized system of education, they may not understand that it is not unusual for each state or district in the United States to have its own graduation requirements. They often do not understand that course credits acquired in one district for graduation do not always transfer to another district.

Valdés (1996) reported that educational dissonance sometimes occurs between school personnel and English language learners' families due to different cultural expectations. She found that low-income parents from Mexico had minimal involvement in the U.S. school setting but were inclined to attend ceremonial functions, such as graduation ceremonies. The parents' working-class status limited the amount of time that they had available to visit schools and interact with teachers. School personnel assumed that parents did not care about their children's education. However, school personnel did not understand that parents tended to defer control and authority over educational issues to their children's teachers.

Two sets of researchers found that Mexican American high school students were more inclined to drop out of school due to school practices rather than parental influences (Falbo, 1996; Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990). Falbo sampled 100 Mexican American 15-year-olds who were labeled "at risk" and found that their parents were positively oriented toward their children's completion of high school. He reported that grade retention, exit-level standardized testing, and tracking negatively influenced the students' attitudes toward school, lowering their self-esteem and expectations. Students in the lower tracks were most likely to drop out of school because of repeated failure on exit tests.

Unfortunately, few school districts have developed coherent programs of instruction at the middle and high school levels to address the various needs of English language learners (Faltís, 1999). Although some instruction in the native language would allow English language learners to continue to develop their content knowledge as they acquire English, less than 25% of middle or high schools provide instruction in the native language (Kindler, 2002). Instead, most adolescent English language learners receive instruction in English as a second language (ESL) or all-English classrooms. Many school districts place English language learners together in the same ESL classroom, irrespective of their previous educational experiences and literacy levels in their native languages. Students typically receive 1 or 2 years of pull-out ESL instruction that is not coordinated with instruction in content-area classes. Although they may receive specialized instruction in the ESL classroom, their instruction in the content classrooms generally has not been changed (Harklau, 1999). Often, their ESL instruction focuses on oral English proficiency, not academic English proficiency. Sometimes tutors who speak the same native languages as the students are assigned to help students in the all-English-content classrooms. However, tutors rarely receive training in ESL techniques, may not be knowledgeable about the content-area classrooms, and rarely are provided with opportunities to coordinate their efforts with those of the classroom teachers.

The lack of coordinated planning is complicated by the fact that adolescent English language learners face high academic and cognitive demands, especially at the high school level. For example, they have to acquire English at the same time that they are supposed to use it to develop and further their academic knowledge in a range of domains (e.g., history, science, mathematics, literature). They not only have to further their cognitive development, but they also have to learn the discourses, or ways of thinking and talking, that characterize each of the academic domains. Collier and Thomas (1989; Thomas & Collier, 1996) report that English language learners at the secondary level who already are highly literate and knowledgeable in their native languages generally need 4–6 years of in-

struction in the United States before they can perform at grade level (50th percentile) in English. They note that it takes a much longer period of time for English language learners who do not already have high levels of literate and cognitive development in their native languages.

Unfortunately, the number of researchers who have investigated the literacy development or instruction of adolescent English language learners is relatively small. To provide guidance to teachers and administrators, we have organized this chapter so that we first review key research findings that either add to our knowledge about the literacy performance and instruction of English language learners in grades 5–12 or that raise important issues. Next, we present a brief review of the effective schools' literature for English language learners and propose guidelines for the effective literacy instruction of English language learners. We conclude the chapter by summarizing key issues that still need to be investigated relative to the literacy performance and instruction of English language learners.

RESEARCH ON THE LITERACY PERFORMANCE AND INSTRUCTION OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

A few researchers have investigated the reading–writing performance and instruction of adolescent English language learners. In this section of the chapter, we first review findings from several key studies related to adolescent bilingual or English language learners' reading and writing performance. Then, we focus on instructional literacy programs that specifically have been developed for English language learners in grades 5–12. Due to the dearth of research on this age group, we also have reviewed findings from multiage studies with younger students, as long as fifth graders are included in the studies.

Literacy Performance of English Language Learners

Findings from a qualitative, think-aloud study conducted by Jiménez, García, and Pearson (1995, 1996) shed some light on the effective reading strategies of Spanish-speaking English language learners. Jiménez et al. compared the reading strategies (cognitive and metacognitive) of bilingual, Latino sixth and seventh graders who were successful and marginally successful English readers with those of monolingual, native-English-speaking sixth and seventh graders who were successful English readers. They found that both groups of Latino students faced more unknown vocabulary and unfamiliar topics in their English reading compared to the monolingual, native-English speakers. However, the Latino students who were successful

English readers had a repertoire of high-level reading strategies (e.g., invoking prior knowledge, making inferences, using context, asking questions, summarizing) that they used strategically to monitor and repair their reading comprehension. In contrast, the Latino students who were less successful English readers tended to use a limited range of low-level strategies (e.g., decoding, restating, identifying unknown vocabulary). Although they could identify comprehension problems, they infrequently repaired them.

The Latino successful English readers also had a unitary view of reading across Spanish and English that focused on comprehension (Jiménez et al., 1995, 1996). They not only utilized knowledge and strategies acquired while reading in one language to approach reading in the other language but also employed several types of strategies unique to bilinguals. For example, to figure out the meaning of a vocabulary item, they sometimes tried out an English word in a Spanish text (code mixing), or while discussing the meaning of a text, they sometimes switched between Spanish and English while referring to the text (code switching). Occasionally, they translated the text into the other language or made use of a cognate (ancestrally related words in Spanish and English that look similar and have similar meanings, such as *climate* and *clima*) to figure out an unfamiliar word in the other language. In contrast, the less successful English readers thought that they had to keep reading in their two languages separate or they would become confused. They rarely used any of the strategies unique to bilinguals.

Other researchers also have reported that Spanish-speaking English language learners in fifth and sixth grade sometimes make use of cognates in their English reading to enhance their English reading comprehension. For example, Nagy, García, Durgunoğlu, and Hancin (1993) reported that fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-grade Spanish-speaking English language learners' knowledge of specific Spanish cognates and their recognition of cognate relationships significantly predicted their comprehension of unknown English cognates while reading in English, after their knowledge of English vocabulary had been controlled. The fifth and sixth graders' recognition of cognates was significantly greater than that of the fourth graders, suggesting that recognition of cognates might be developmental. Because none of the students made full use of the Spanish cognates that appeared in the English readings (García & Nagy, 1993), Nagy and his colleagues (1993) thought that the students, especially those in fifth and sixth grade, could benefit from instruction on how to use cognates in their English reading.

Not too many researchers have analyzed or described the writing performance of English language learners at the middle or high school level. In a study of Latino high school students from limited school backgrounds, García (1999) pointed out the importance of finding out what students can

do in the native language, and of building on that expertise. In a survey of home reading and writing practices, she and her colleagues reported that the students wrote more in Spanish than they read. Although the students were verbally articulate in Spanish, their oral reading lacked fluency, and they did not always comprehend what they read. However, when the female students were given the opportunity to write in journals, they demonstrated the ability to write and comprehend *pensamientos,* or love poems, in Spanish. García thought that the *pensamientos* presented more complex and appropriate text for the students to read than the simple texts that were provided in the Spanish or ESL classrooms.

Valdés (1999) analyzed the writing performance of three middle school Latino students who started school in the United States with no English. She was concerned that the structural emphasis of some of the ESL classrooms, with a focus on students' correct use of grammar in speaking and writing English, seriously limited their English writing development. Students in the structurally oriented ESL classrooms tended to write according to what they could say orally, and, in some cases, seemed to transfer their knowledge of writing from Spanish to English. Because the students were not strong writers in Spanish, cross–linguistic transfer, in this situation, was not particularly helpful. The teachers tended to use "guided composition strategies" or "controlled composition" techniques (p. 147), in which students completed sentences by selecting the appropriate phrases. Valdés attributed students' lack of voice in their English writing to their lack of experience with process writing approaches. Given the limited writing development of the English language learners, and the ESL classrooms' focus on linguistic structure, Valdés questioned whether the students would be able to develop the writing skills needed to attend college if they continued to be placed in these types of ESL classrooms. She raises the issue of an "ESL ghetto," in which English language learners ironically become marginalized by the very ESL programs that are supposed to help them to communicate in English.

Other researchers have pointed out that teachers need to be aware of the challenges that adolescent English language learners often face when they are asked to participate in all-English instruction in content domains, such as history, literature, and science, or to comprehend academic English text. García (1991) conducted a study that compared the English reading test performance of Spanish-speaking, Latino fifth and sixth graders and their native-English-speaking Anglo classmates. She reported that the Latino students, regardless of English reading level, were less familiar with the range of topics on the standardized test passages and knew much less of the vocabulary in the passages and test items compared to their Anglo classmates. Latino low- and average-performing readers also tended to

interpret the passages literally compared to the low- and average-performing Anglo readers. Because the students had not received instruction adapted to their needs as second-language learners of English, García speculated that they had not fully benefited from current and past instruction in all-English classrooms to the same degree as their native-English-speaking peers.

Adamson (1991) reported that English language learners from a variety of language backgrounds and proficiency levels needed additional help before they were able to participate effectively in the type of instruction that characterized all-English academic classrooms at middle, high school, and college levels. For example, the students particularly had difficulties in classrooms that were teacher fronted and emphasized teacher lecturing, note taking, textbook reading, and multiple-choice tests. Students benefited when they were interested in the topics being studied, and when individual tutors provided them with *realia* (photos, objects, illustrations) and hands-on experiences to increase their background knowledge about key topics covered in the classes.

In a series of case studies, Adamson (1991) revealed the types of strategies that English language learners used to accomplish academic tasks. Those students who could "tolerate less than a complete understanding of the text and just concentrate on the main points" tended to do better than other students, who overrelied on dictionaries to look up unknown English vocabulary (p. 84). Adamson concluded that much of the material that students were assigned in the all-English academic classrooms was beyond their comprehension, and, as a result, students often hid their lack of comprehension by memorizing and copying material. He noted that English language learners benefited when they received ESL instruction related to the academic domains that took into account the problems he reported.

Literacy Instruction of English Language Learners

Several experts in second-language literacy have advocated process literacy approaches for English language learners (Peregoy & Boyle, 2001; Pérez & Torres-Guzmán, 2002). Some basic characteristics of process literacy approaches include the use of trade books; writing from multiple drafts; integrating reading and writing activities; peer interactions; a student-centered curriculum, or students' choice for reading and writing, along with inquiry-based projects; and open-ended activities in which students are encouraged to explore the various meanings of texts (Atwell, 1987; Graves, 1994; Hiebert & Fisher, 1990). Valdés (1999), in particular, thought that the middle-school English language learners she observed would have benefited more from the writing process approaches that their English-speaking

classmates received in the all-English classrooms than they did from the structural linguistic approach used by some of their ESL teachers. She noted the success of one teacher who combined writing process approaches with structured writing opportunities to scaffold English language learners' writing in English. In this instance, the teacher assigned the students an essay about themselves, entitled "A Decade of Differences." She provided a general frame for the essay and encouraged students to write in their journals about topics that they could include in the different parts of the essay. She also showed them how to take notes about themselves and to cluster their ideas for paragraph development. With this type of help, students participated in the different stages of the writing process, including writing conferences and peer-response groups.

Other researchers have warned that strict adherence to process writing approaches often fails to provide students from diverse linguistic backgrounds with specific information about the code of Standard English, which they need, if they are to participate successfully in the "culture of power" (Delpit, 1988; Reyes, 1991, 1992). In an analysis of the literacy development of 10 fifth-grade Latino students enrolled in a bilingual education classroom, Reyes (1991) noted that the students did not benefit as much as they should have from a process literacy approach, because the instruction was not adapted for second-language learners of English. For example, the students did not know how to select appropriate English texts for their independent reading; rarely understood the complex events that took place in their English texts; and did not improve their use of Standard English writing conventions, even though they participated in daily writing conferences, peer conferences, and minilessons. Although the students were allowed to write in dialogue journals in Spanish or English, they were required to use English in their literature responses, limiting their ability to respond to or communicate what they were reading in English.

Several educational researchers have specifically developed instructional programs for English language learners based on what is known about their literacy and academic performance in U.S. schools. For example, once English language learners are exited from a bilingual education or ESL program, they rarely receive additional services, even though their academic English proficiency still may not be developed enough to perform at grade level in English. Saunders and Goldenberg (1999) have tried to offset this problem by developing a transitional literacy program for Spanish-speaking English language learners in grades 4–5, who previously were enrolled in transitional bilingual education (a program that initially presents students with instruction in Spanish as they acquire ESL proficiency). Their literacy program is based on the experience–text relationship (ETR) approach (Mason & Au, 1986) in which the teacher uses themes to help

students make connections between assigned texts and personal experiences. Saunders and Goldenberg's literacy program is characterized by two key elements: (1) the use of literature logs, in which students write, in response to prompts, about a text being read; and (2) instructional conversations, in which small groups of students discuss and reflect on a text by critically analyzing the text and relating it to their own personal experiences. Other components of their literacy program include explicit strategy instruction, teacher read-alouds, writing projects, independent reading, weekly dictation, explicit instruction on writing conventions, and pleasure reading.

Saunders and Goldenberg (1999) were especially interested in evaluating the impact of the literature logs and instructional conversations on students' English reading comprehension. They used factual, interpretive questions and thematic essay writing to compare the pre- and poststory comprehension of four groups of students who, over a period of 10–15 days, were randomly assigned to participate in one of four groups: literature logs, instructional conversations, combined literature logs and instructional conversations, or a control group. The students in the instructional conversation group and combined literature log and instructional conversation group significantly outperformed the other two groups on the factual and interpretive questions, with the students in the combined group doing slightly better than the instructional conversation group. No group had a significant advantage on the essay writing, because students' performance on this measure tended to vary according to their English proficiency. The fluent English speakers in all three experimental groups outperformed the control group, whereas the limited-English-proficient students in the combined literature log and instructional conversation group outperformed the limited-English-proficient students in the other three groups.

Igoa (1995) describes the type of instruction that she provided in a pull-out Sheltered English Classroom for fifth- and sixth-grade English language learners from a range of countries (among others, Afghanistan, American Samoa, China, Mexico, the Phillipines, Romania, and Vietnam). Through ethnographic portrayals of the children's experiences in her classroom, she demonstrates how she combined the use of the native language; the integration of English reading, writing, speaking, and listening; and explicit individualized instruction on English vocabulary, phonics, mechanics, and grammar with authentic literacy tasks. One of the most effective activities was individual children's development of filmstrips in English, complete with illustrations, narrative, and sound effects, which they shared with other students in the class. Igoa points out the anxieties that many immigrant students experience as they try to appear knowledgeable in all-English settings when they do not fully understand what is occurring. She

also reveals the psychological importance of valuing students' native languages and home cultures, and of helping them to make home–school connections.

Based on his earlier findings on bilingual reading (Jiménez et al., 1995, 1996), Jiménez (1997) conducted a formative experiment with 5 low–literacy seventh-grade Latino students that previously had been designated English language learners. After observing the students' reading instruction and performance in English, he designed eight cognitive strategy lessons, which he taught to the students over a period of 2 weeks. His strategy lessons emphasized improving students' reading fluency by having them repeat oral readings of culturally familiar text, as well as teaching students how to figure out unknown vocabulary, ask questions, make inferences, search for cognates, and use knowledge acquired in one language to approach the other. He also wanted students to talk about and reflect on what they were reading. He reported that the students were more engaged with the instruction, talked more about the text, and improved their inferences when culturally relevant text was used, and when the students were encouraged to use Spanish and English to discuss English text.

Klingner and Vaughn (2000) investigated the effect of Collaborative Strategic Reading on the science reading vocabulary of 37 fifth graders (35 of whom were Spanish–English bilingual but of varying English proficiency). Collaborative Strategic Reading emphasizes a variety of comprehension strategies: how to preview text; identify difficult concepts and words in a passage and figure out repair strategies; restate the most important idea in a section or paragraph; and summarize what was learned, as well as generate teacher–like test questions. It involves cooperative learning, teacher modeling, role playing, think–alouds, and peer assistance. After a month of Collaborative Strategic Reading instruction, Klingner and Vaughn compared the students' ability, prior to the study and after the study, to write definitions for words in two science book chapters. Although all of the students made significant gains on the pre–posttest measures, the students with greater English proficiency did the best. Their findings suggest that students with low levels of English proficiency may need more explicit vocabulary support than what the intervention provided.

Based on a longitudinal analysis of immigrant students' performance in U.S. schools, Thomas and Collier (1996) reported that secondary students who entered U.S. schools with grade-level performance in their native language had the best opportunity for success when they received content-based ESL instruction, which involves teaching subject matter, such as science and social studies, by utilizing ESL techniques that shelter (support) students' comprehension of the material (see Peregoy & Boyle,

2001). In content-based ESL instruction, students acquire English in the context of furthering their knowledge or acquiring knowledge about a specific domain. Teachers integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the same time that they use gestures, physical action, visuals, dramatizations, and *realia* to make instruction comprehensible. Some teachers also modulate their speech for beginning ESL students by slowing down the pace, enunciating clearly, and reducing the use of paraphrasing until they are sure that students understand what is being said.

Chamot and O'Malley (1996) have developed a content-based ESL program of instruction for intermediate ESL learners that they call the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA). They argue that when students are taught content material through the use of sheltered English, they acquire not only the domain knowledge but also the necessary vocabulary, syntax, and discourse relevant to the domain. Their method specifically teaches students how to use three types of strategies to interact with content-area material in mathematics, social studies, science, or literature. Students explicitly are taught metacognitive strategies, such as how to plan and monitor their comprehension of a content domain, cognitive strategies, which include strategies to process text and material (e.g., taking notes, summarizing, making inferences), and social strategies, such as asking questions for clarification or about how to cooperate with each other. Although ESL programs sometimes are based on Chamot and O'Malley's rationale for content-based ESL instruction, the use and evaluation of their specific program has not been extensively investigated.

PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE LITERACY INSTRUCTION OF ADOLESCENT ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

In this section, we first present new information on effective schools for English language learners, then draw on these findings and those from our previous discussion to delineate guidelines that we think can be used to provide high-quality literacy instruction for English language learners. We draw on the effective schools' literature, because our earlier discussion revealed the importance of providing English language learners with a coherent and coordinated program of instruction.

Effective Schools for English Language Learners

Lucas et al. (1990) identified the consistent features of high schools deemed successful at teaching English language learners. These were high schools that state and federal agencies had identified as sharing high standards for

academic excellence in the effective education of English language learners. Criteria for success included high-standardized test scores, low dropout rates, and subsequent college attendance. Unfortunately, not very many high schools met the exceptional criteria, although Lucas et al. did develop profiles for six high schools that were considered successful.

Lucas et al. (1990) reported that everyone at the successful schools, both students and school personnel, recognized and embraced high academic goals and expectations. Staff development was linked to instructional strategies specifically designed to benefit English language learners. School counselors placed special attention on the unique needs of English language learners. Parents were encouraged to participate in their children's education through contact with bilingual staff and by enrolling in ESL night classes held at the schools. The school curricula included a variety of programs that integrated English language learners' social and cultural knowledge, as well as capitalized on their native-language abilities. Instruction stressed high academic standards in both the students' native language and English. English language learners also were able to take Advanced Placement examinations for college credit in their native language as readily as fellow students who took the examinations in English.

In a study of the academic performance of immigrant students who entered U.S. schools at the secondary level, Thomas and Collier (1996) shared similar findings. They found that English language learners already literate in their native language benefited when instruction emphasized higher order thinking skills, students' prior knowledge, cooperative groups, respect for students' native languages and cultures, inquiry- and discovery-based learning, and multiple assessments.

Although continued instruction in the native language may seem counterintuitive, it is important to remember that what makes a difference in the academic learning of English language learners in U.S. classrooms is their academic proficiency in English, not their oral proficiency in English. Cummins (1981) reported that it may take English language learners only 2–3 years of English instruction to develop their ability to communicate orally with others, or what Cummins calls *basic interpersonal skills*. However, it often takes them 4–7 years to develop the type of *cognitive academic proficiency* necessary fully to comprehend and learn new material through English. In his interdependence hypothesis, Cummins also points out that bilinguals who have developed a cognitive base in one language should be able to transfer knowledge and strategies acquired in that language to a second language. When adolescent English language learners are provided with continued content-area instruction in their native language, as they acquire English, they are provided with the opportunity to continue their learning at the same time that they are in the process of developing their

oral and academic proficiencies in English. They do not have to put their knowledge development on hold, until they have acquired enough academic English to be able to learn through English.

Guidelines for the Effective Literacy Instruction of English Language Learners

• Given the diversity of experiences that characterize adolescent English language learners, it is important for educational personnel to find out who these students are in terms of their language and sociocultural backgrounds, educational experiences, literacy levels in the native language, and levels of oral and academic English proficiency. Differences among the students should be taken into account in the development of a coherent instructional program for them.

• A coherent program of instruction needs to include continued instruction in the native language when at all possible; high-quality ESL instruction; and targeted placement in all-English classrooms, based on the assessment of English language learners' academic English proficiency, not their oral English proficiency.

• The type of instruction provided to English language learners in the native-language, ESL, and all-English classrooms needs to be coordinated, so that coverage of the school's curriculum standards occurs. Ideally, students should be introduced to new and difficult cognitive areas in the native-language and ESL classrooms before being expected to work in such areas in the all-English classrooms.

• Teachers who work with English language learners in ESL and all-English classrooms need to know how to shelter students' comprehension of English instruction through the integration of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, and the use of visuals, gestures, drama, physical activity, and *realia* (Peregoy & Boyle, 2001). They need to understand that English language learners will do better in classrooms that emphasize inquiry-based learning and small-group instruction or cooperative learning than they will in lecture-oriented, teacher-fronted classrooms (Adamson, 1991). They also need to open up their instruction, so that they become aware of how English language learners are interpreting and responding to instruction, and know when they need clarification, help with English vocabulary, or explicit instruction (García, 1991). Several researchers have pointed out that a bridging of home and school also needs to occur, so that English language learners are comfortable using their native language, prior knowledge, and previous experiences to approach topics presented in English (García, 1999; Igoa, 1995; Jiménez, 1997; Saunders & Goldenberg, 1999).

- The primary focus of ESL instruction should be on content-area instruction tied to the same content standards that guide the instruction of native-English speakers at the school. This type of instruction should integrate reading, writing, listening, and speaking in a particular academic domain (ESL language arts, ESL algebra, ESL biology, etc.). It should provide English language learners with the necessary vocabulary and discourse structures needed to further their learning in the specific domain. Sheltered techniques and native language support (such as, native-language reference materials, bilingual dictionaries, opportunities for students from the same native-language backgrounds to confer in their native languages) also should be provided. A strategic approach, such as that proposed by Chamot and O'Malley (1996), may be useful in helping students to acquire the metacognitive, cognitive, and social strategies needed to interact in specific academic domains.

- English language arts as a content area needs to be offered as an ESL course. Enough time needs to be allotted for this course, so that teachers can provide English language learners with opportunities to hear, read, discuss, and write about age-appropriate literature, as well as improve their English speaking, listening, reading and writing skills through their interactions with texts and writing activities. To motivate students and help them develop strong inferencing strategies, students should be provided with opportunities to read culturally familiar/relevant texts, as well as texts that are part of the all-English curriculum. Saunders and Goldenberg (1999), in particular, pointed out the importance of helping English language learners identify relationships between their personal experiences and texts that they read.

- Within the ESL language arts classroom, we recommend strategy instruction, in which the teacher models and gives students' guided practice in using cognitive strategies to monitor and repair their comprehension in English. Jiménez and his colleagues (Jiménez et al., 1995, 1996) pointed out that specific strategies—questioning, summarizing, making accurate inferences, using context to figure out unknown vocabulary—are characteristic of Spanish-speaking students who are successful English readers. We also recommend that teachers encourage English language learners to use knowledge and high-level strategies (e.g., invoking prior knowledge, noticing novelty) acquired while reading in their native languages to reading in English, as well as bilingual strategies (code mixing, code switching, cognates, etc.) (see Jiménez, et al., 1995, 1996; Nagy et al., 1993).

- Process writing approaches, in which students are given the opportunity to communicate their thoughts authentically through writing, seem important (see Valdés, 1999). However, Reyes (1991, 1992) also points out

that this type of instruction should be combined with explicit instruction on topics/conventions unfamiliar to many English language learners (e.g., how to edit English writing, how to write specific genres). Valdés (1999) notes that some structured writing opportunities also may be helpful for beginning English writers.

• Finally, we think that process literacy approaches, combined with strategy instruction and explicit instruction, especially on topics/skills not automatically known to English language learners (e.g., how to select books in English for independent reading or English writing conventions), may be particularly helpful to English language learners. We note that a number of researchers (Igoa, 1995; Jiménez, 1997; Saunders & Goldenberg, 1999) have developed programs that emphasize this type of combined instruction.

KEY TOPICS THAT NEED TO BE ADDRESSED

Clearly, we need to know much more about the literacy performance and instruction of English language learners in grades 5–12. Longitudinal studies that track the literacy development, performance, engagement, and instruction of adolescent English language learners are imperative. In addition, we need experimental studies that develop and test instructional literacy programs for English language learners based on what we know about second-language acquisition, second-language literacy, and bilingualism; adolescent English language learners; and the demands of literacy instruction at the middle and high school levels. Given the high dropout rate of English language learners (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1997), this is a research agenda that, as a nation, we cannot afford to delay and that we should give the highest priority.

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Edited by

Tamara L. Jetton

Janice A. Dole

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