Structured Literacy Among English Learners:
What Every Educator Should Know

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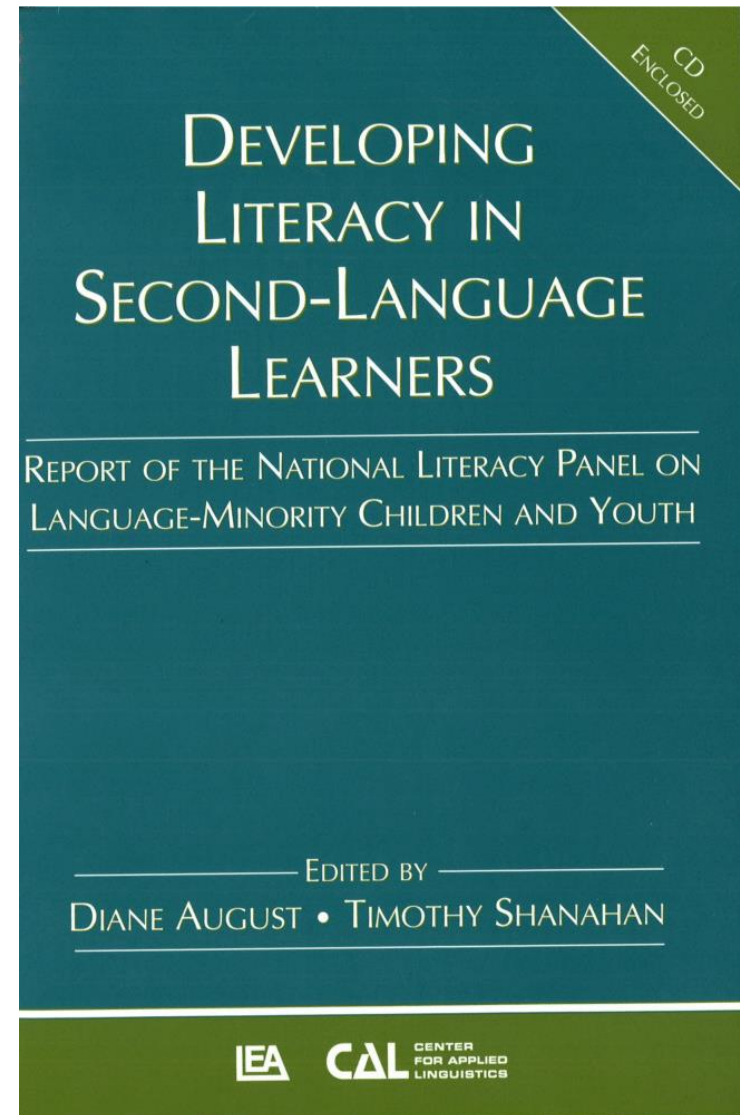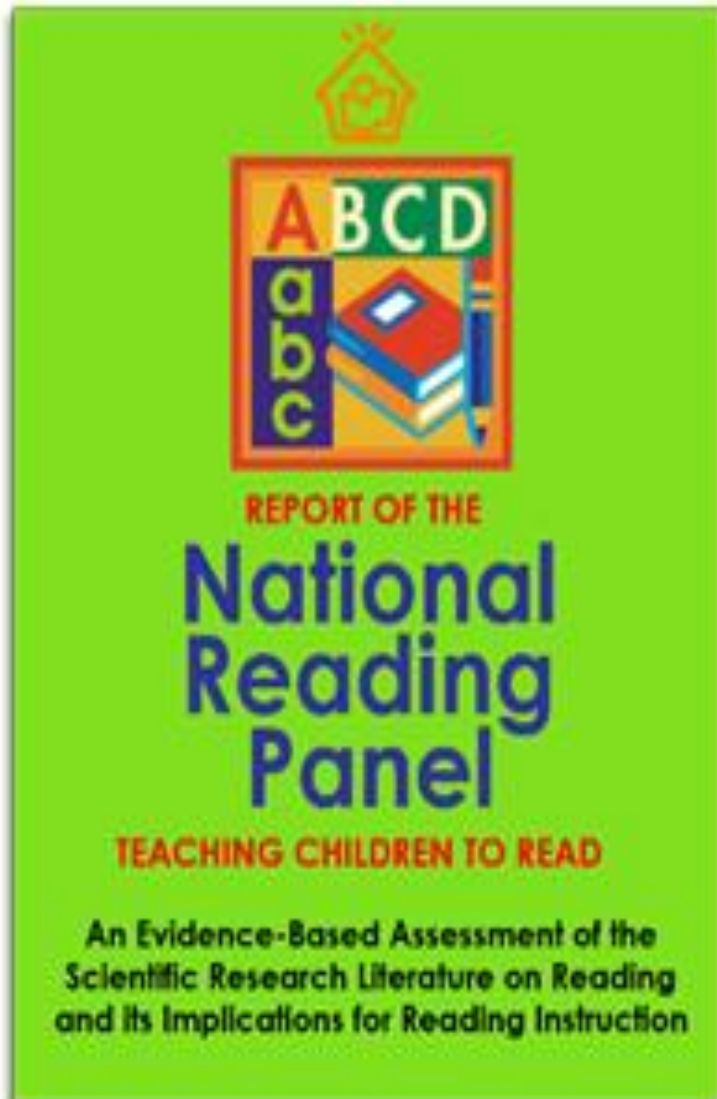
Thanks to Research Teams

Demographics of English Learners

- 5 million English learners
- Spanish is the most common language
- Close to 80% speak Spanish
- Arabic is second most common language with less than 3% of students
- Nation's Report Card shows this population lags behind monolingual English speakers in reading   (NCES, 2021)

Research Agenda Began with NICHD/IES

REPORT OF THE
National Reading Panel
TEACHING CHILDREN TO READ

An Evidence-Based Assessment of the Scientific Research Literature on Reading and its Implications for Reading Instruction

CD ENCLOSED

DEVELOPING LITERACY IN SECOND-LANGUAGE LEARNERS

REPORT OF THE NATIONAL LITERACY PANEL ON LANGUAGE-MINORITY CHILDREN AND YOUTH

EDITED BY
DIANE AUGUST • TIMOTHY SHANAHAN

LEA   CAL CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS

# Research Findings

NRP Summary

Key areas for reading instruction include:

- Phonological awareness
- Phonics
- Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Comprehension

National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth

- Adjust instruction to meet the needs of ELs
- Use native language and literacy knowledge for English literacy
- Cross-linguistic features are a resource
- Students with native language literacy skills perform higher in English literacy than those who were instructed in English-only

National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine
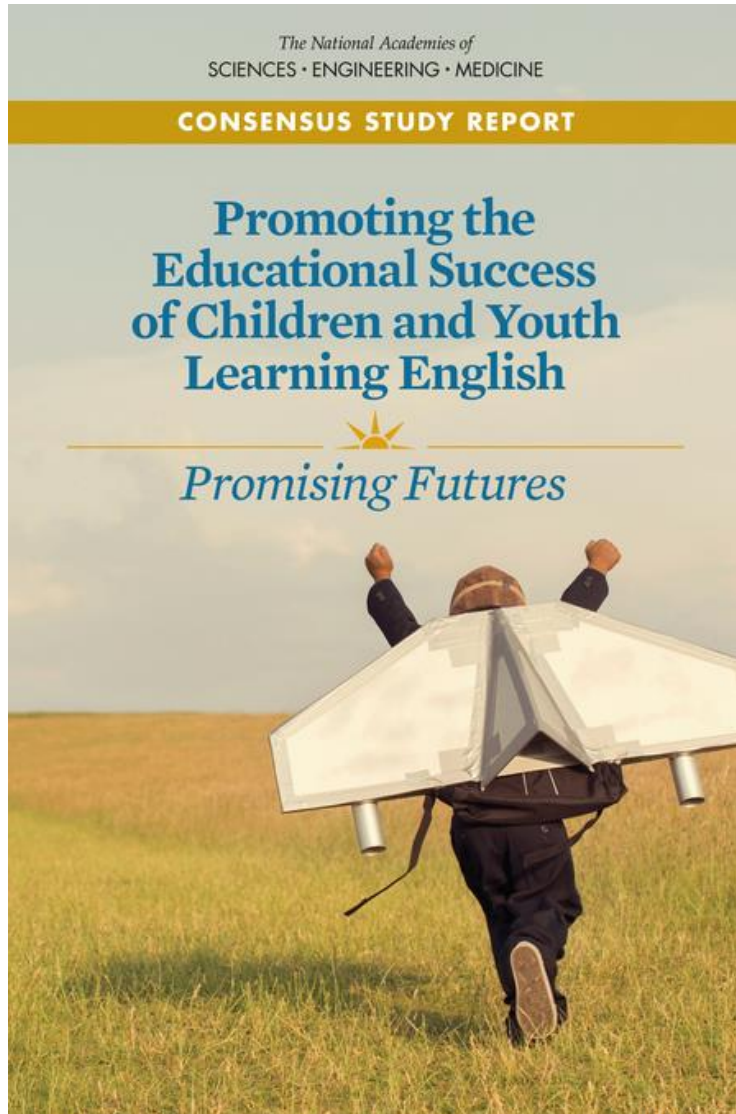
The National Academies of
SCIENCES · ENGINEERING · MEDICINE

CONSENSUS STUDY REPORT

Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English

Promising Futures

- **Consensus Study Report**
  Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English (2017)
  - Developing literacy among English Learners
  - Provide explicit instruction in literacy components that include phonemic awareness, phonics, oral reading fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension and writing
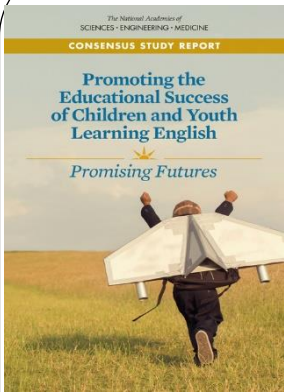
Guidelines for Educating ELLs in Kindergarten-5th grade

- **Provide explicit instruction in literacy components**
- **Develop academic language during content area instruction**
- **Provide visual and verbal supports to make core content comprehensible**
- **Encourage peer-assisted learning opportunities.**
- **Capitalize on students' home language, background knowledge, and cultural assets**
- **Screen for language and literacy challenges and monitor progress**
- **Provide small-group academic support in literacy and English language development for students**

(Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures. The National Academy of Sciences, 2017)

U.S. Department of Education – OSEP Model Demonstration Projects

- High-quality, differentiated language and literacy teaching that is appropriately scaffolded for students' linguistic and academic needs

- Culturally relevant principles applied to instruction and assessment

- Meaningful opportunities for students to practice in the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, & writing)

- Use of L1 supports during instruction

- Educator knowledge of native language development and second language acquisition

Project ELLIPSES,2016

mtss4els.org
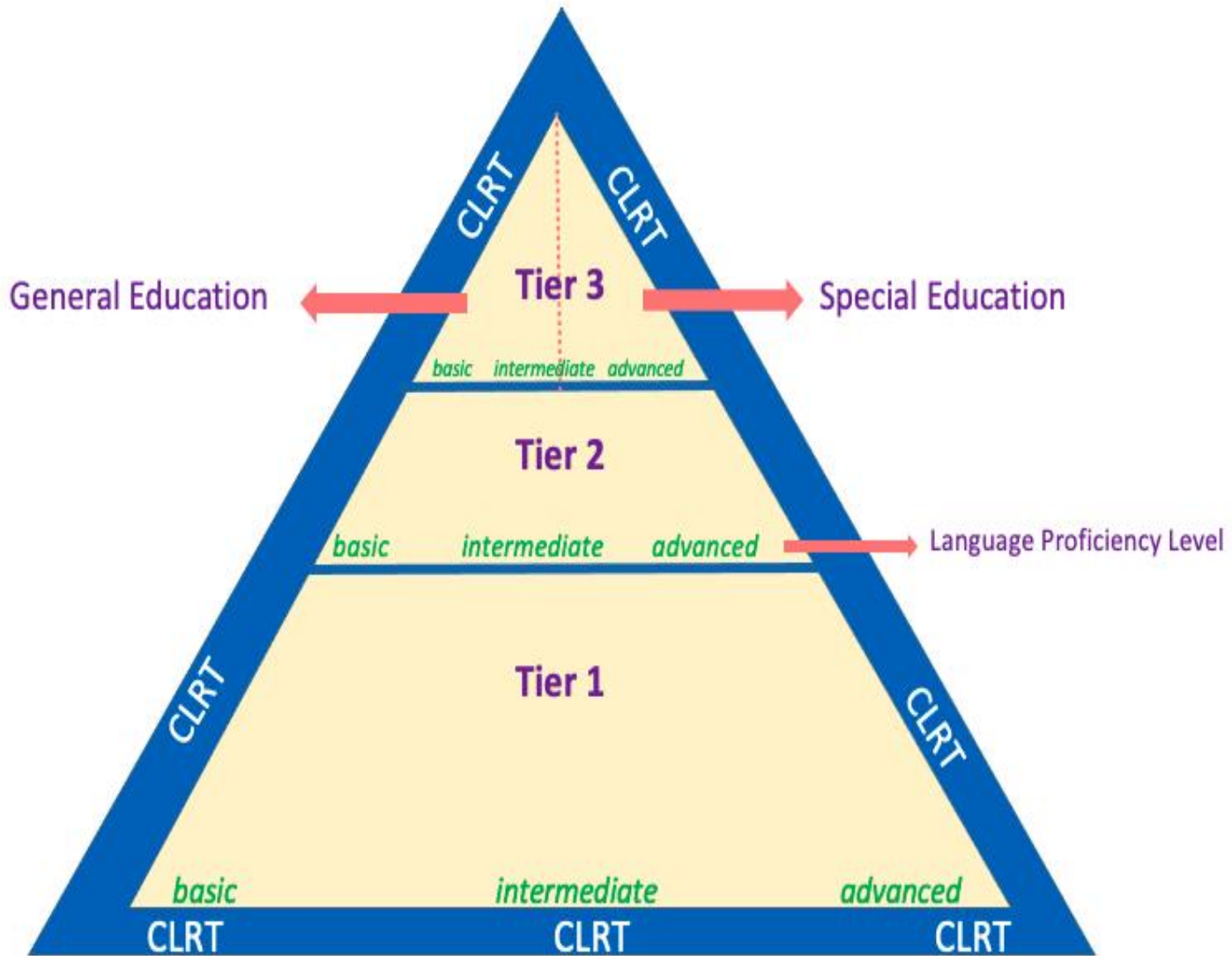
MULTITIERED SYSTEM OF SUPPORTS FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS:
LITERACY IMPLEMENTATION RUBRIC

Overview

This rubric is intended to be used by individuals or teams who are responsible for monitoring school-level fidelity of a multitiered system of supports (MTSS) for English learners, including MTSS, bilingual, literacy, and English language development specialists or coaches; school principals; and teacher leaders. The rubric is aligned with the essential components of MTSS for literacy and the infrastructure that is necessary for successful implementation. It is accompanied by a worksheet and action planning document with guiding questions. The worksheet can be used to record ratings and notes for each section, and the action planning document can be used to summarize strengths, areas of need, and goals, and to track progress. Use of each tool is described below.

Definition of "English learners (ELs)": Prekindergarten to grade 12 students who come from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on their English proficiency and whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English may prevent them from successfully achieving in classrooms where the language of instruction is English (ESEA Section 8101(20))

Using the Tools

Rubric: Teams rate the level of current implementation for each MTSS component on a scale from 1 to 5. Descriptors are provided for the 1, 3, and 5 anchor points. Practitioners read each statement and the anchor point criteria and highlight the features in place, partially in place, or not in place. Teams assign a rating from 1 to 5 for each component and note which features need to be addressed on the scoring worksheet and action planning document.

Scoring worksheet: Based on review of the rubric, teams choose the whole number rating, 1–5, that best represents their school's level of implementation, record that rating, and provide documentation of evidence for choosing the rating.

Action plan: Teams use their highlighting and ratings on the rubric and worksheet to identify and note strengths, areas of need, and goals. Teams complete all sections and ensure that actions are observable and measurable with timelines assigned. Practitioners use the action plan for regular check-ins (at least quarterly) to assess progress, ensure follow through on action items, and make adjustments as needed based on student data.

Components of Language

Phonology

Pragmatics
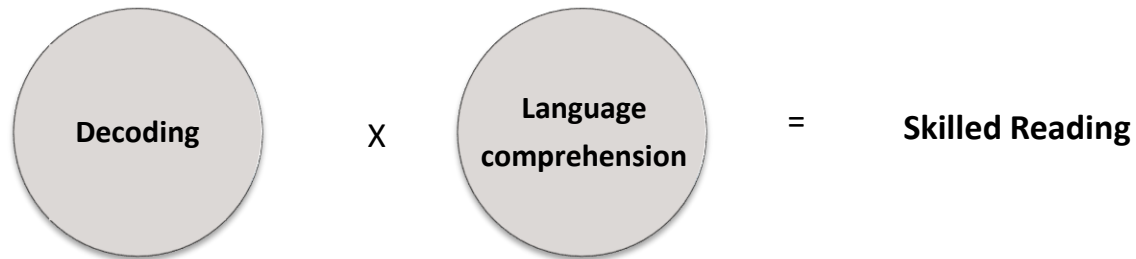
Semantics

Syntax

Morphology
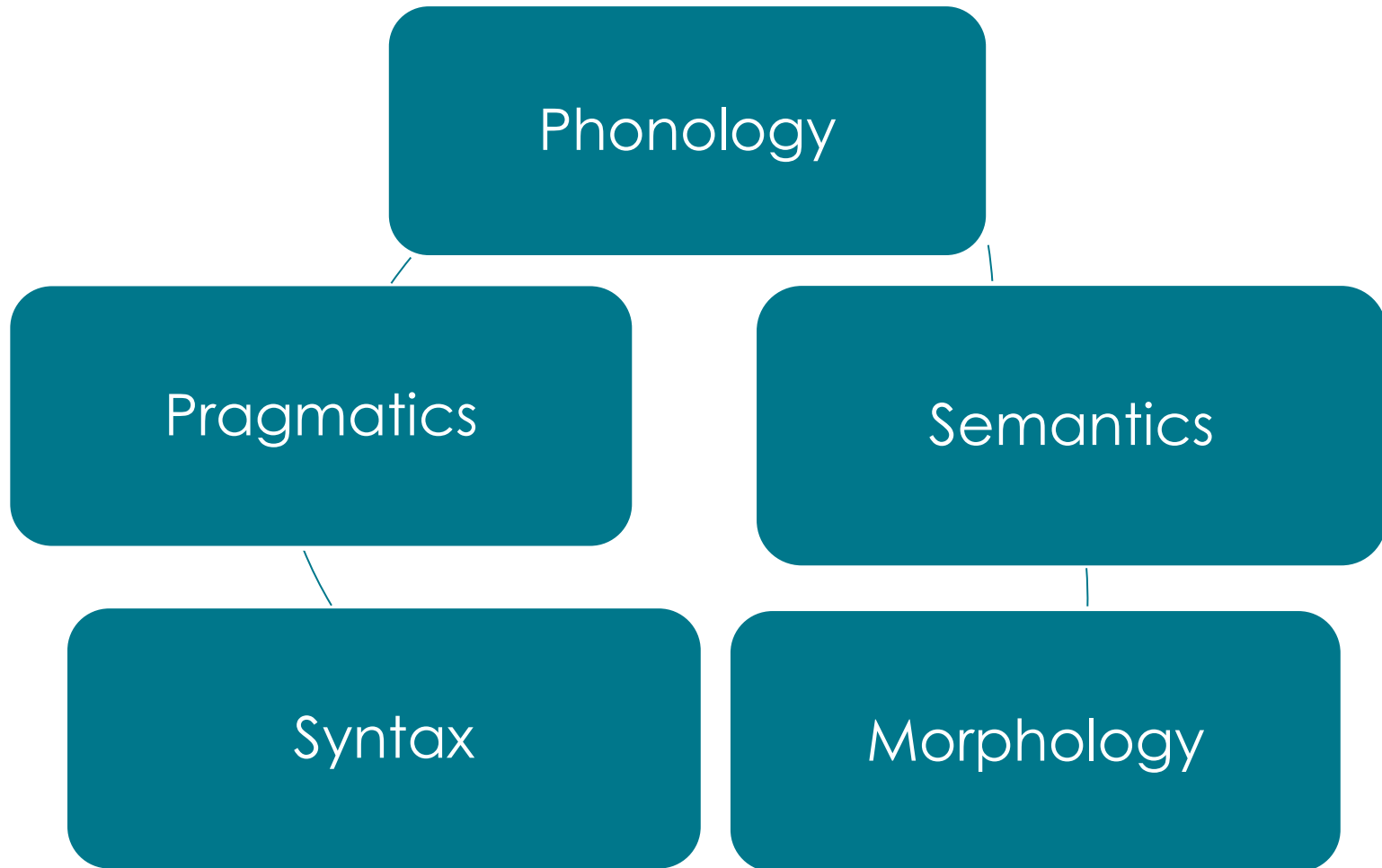
Bloom, L., & Lahey, M.,1978

MODELS OF READING DEVELOPMENT

Simple View of Reading (SVR)

- **Skilled reading involves two components – decoding and language comprehension**

Decoding   X   Language comprehension   =   **Skilled Reading**

(Gough & Tunmer, 1986)

MODELS OF READING DEVELOPMENT

Scarborough's Reading Rope (2001)

Language Comprehension

- Background Knowledge
- Vocabulary Knowledge
- Language Structures
- Verbal Reasoning
- Literacy Knowledge

SKILLED READING: fluent execution and coordination of word recognition and text comprehension.

Increasingly strategic

Word Recognition

- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding (and Spelling)
- Sight Recognition

Increasingly Automatic
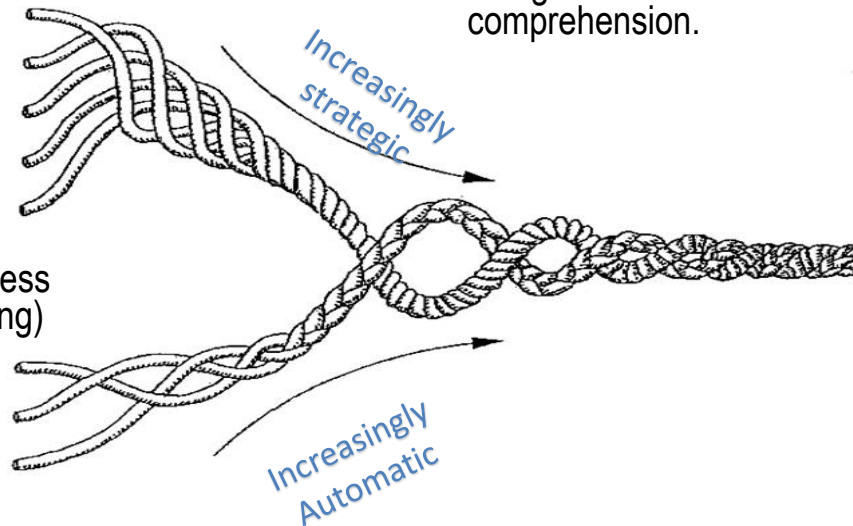
What is Structured Literacy?

Instruction that emphasizes:

- The structure of language

  - The speech sound system (phonology)

  - The writing system (orthography)

  - The structure of sentences (syntax)

  - Meaningful word parts (morphology)

  - Meaning (semantics)

- The organization of spoken and written discourse for deep reading and effective written communication

- Other aspects of cognition related to literacy acquisition

International Dyslexia Association, 2014

What is Structured Biliteracy?

Instruction that emphasizes:

- The structure of 2 or more languages using cross-linguistic and cross-cultural features as a strategy

  - The speech sound system in 2+ languages (phonology)

  - The writing system in 2+ languages (orthography)

  - The structure of sentences in 2+ languages (syntax)

  - Meaningful word parts in 2+ languages (morphology)

  - Meaning in 2+ languages (semantics)

- The organization of spoken and written discourse for deep reading and effective written communication using culturally and linguistically responsive practices

- Other aspects of cognition related to literacy acquisition

(Cardenas-Hagan, 2018))

Research Findings for English Learners

- Vaughn, S., Mathes, P., Linan- Thompson, S., Cirino, P., Carlson, C., Pollard-Durodola, S., Cárdenas-Hagan, E., Francis,D. (2006a). Effectiveness of an English intervention for first-grade English language learners at risk for reading problems. *The Elementary School Journal, 107*(2), 153–180

Early interventions for Spanish-speaking students at risk for reading difficulties in reading English.
Statistically significant results in literacy skills.
Interventions included 5 components of literacy with additional features for oral language proficiency and scaffolds for English language skills.

- Ehri, L.C., Dreyer, L.G., Flugman, B., & Gross, A. (2007). Reading Res- cue: An effective tutoring intervention model for language-minority students who are struggling readers in first grade. American Educational Research Journal, 44(2), 414–448.

Statistically significant results for literacy which included opportunities fo students to learn vocabulary and apply meaning to words as they read. Visual supports were also provided.

Literacy Supports:
What You Should Know

- The goal of the literacy support activity is to expand a student's expressive and receptive language skills.

- Oral language and vocabulary skills are specific targets for each lesson.

- This support is vital to an effective instructional or reading intervention program in any language.

- Struggling readers need instruction especially tailored to meet their literacy and language needs to maximize instruction.

Cross-Linguistic Features

Spanish and English Consonant Examples:

- b
- c
- d
- f
- g
- k
- l
- m

- n
- p
- s
- t
- v
- w
- x (ks)

Cardenas-Hagan, 2018

Common Consonant Sounds

Arabic and English Examples:

- b
- d
- f
- k
- l
- m

- J
- n
- r
- w
- y
- z
- sh
- th

Common Consonant Sounds

Vietnamese and English Examples:

- b
- d
- f
- k
- l
- m

- n
- p
- h
- w
- ng
- s
- v

Challenging English Sounds

- Short Vowel Sounds
- Schwa sound
- /j/
- /th/
- /sh/
- /ch/
- /zh/
- /er/
- /r/
- /w/
- /aw/
- /ng/

Making Connections: Spanish-English

- Ch-J which are voiced/voiceless pairs of sounds
- Spanish medial D and English Voiced Th sound
- Spanish Vowel U and English digraph OO as in *moon*
- Spanish trilled R and English sound R
- Spanish Soft R and English medial T and D between two vowels

Making Connections: Arabic-English

- No /p/ in Arabic but /b/ does exist and use the voiced/voiceless pairs of sounds
- No /v/ sound in Arabic but /f/ does exist and use of the voiced/voiceless pairs of sounds
- No initial s-consonant blends, so teach how not to add extra vowel

Making Connections: Vietnamese-English

- Mostly 1 or 2 syllable words and thus English words with more than 2 syllables challenging

- English consonant clusters are challenging for native Vietnamese speakers

- New sounds of /ch/ and /j/ can be obtained through sound approximations with /sh/ and /zh/

What Do We Know?

- Students who have strong phonological awareness skills in a native language are likely to have strong phonological awareness skills in a second language (Branum-Martin, Tao, Garnaat, Bunta, & Francis, 2012)

- It can be helpful during instruction to incorporate cross-linguistic connections

  (Cárdenas-Hagan et al., 2007)

Phonological Awareness: Making Connections

Focus on	Say	Say	Say	Say
Focus on the new sound /j/ and make connections to letters and meanings for English learners	Say the word ham. Change /h/ to /j/ (jam)	Say the word bet. Change /b/ to /j/ (jet)	Say the word pig. Change /p/ to /j/ (jig)	Say the word hog. Change /h/ to /j/ (jog)

(Adapted from *Working with English Language Learners* (WELLS) 2
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Letter and Sound Connection
J

- Listen as I say these words with the same sound.
- What sound did you hear?
- Let me write the words for you to see.
- What do you see at the beginning of each word?
- The letter is ____.
- The sound is ____.
- Our keyword to unlock the sound is ____.
- Do you recognize this letter or sound in your language?
- Do you recognize and understand the keyword in your home language and English? Tell me about this.
- Let's use it in a sentence.
- Say the letter name. Say the keyword. Say the sound.
- Now we will write the letter. You will also have an opportunity to read words and sentences with this letter.

- jam
- jog
- jet

(Adapted from *Working with English Language Learners* (WELLS) 2 Copyright © 2016 Elsa Cárdenas-Hagan
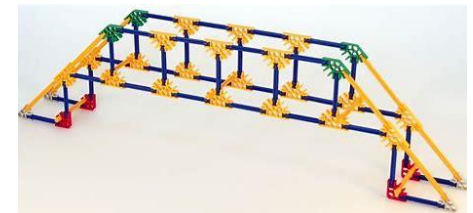
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Syllable Types
Making Connections

	English	Spanish
Closed	**ten**	**ten**
Open	**no**	**no**
Vowel-Consonant - e	**dame**	**dame**
Vowel Pair	**pie**	**pie**
Vowel r	**mar**	**mar**
Final Stable Syllable	**cable**	**cable**

Words look similar, but have different meanings and different pronunciations

Cardenas-Hagan, 2020

Reading and Language Connections

jam	jet	jig	jab	Jan
Jim	job	Jack	Jen	just
jet	jig	Jan	Jack	jab
just	jam	jig	jab	jet

phonology

vocabulary

grammar

pragmatics

Jam

Jet

Reading Fluency: Considerations for ELs

Many ELs will be able to learn the code and read with accuracy

They may, however, not understand what they are reading in the new language

Do not assume that their reading fluency will improve their comprehension

They will need extra work on phrasing, expression, vocabulary, and oral language

Reading fluency and comprehension is moderated by oral language proficiency of ELs (Crosson & Lesaux, 2010)

Incorporating Topics with Oral Language and Reading Practice

- Introduce Topic
- Naming/Brainstorming
- Use Cognates/Morphemes
- Retrieval Plan
- Describing

Artisans

Jim makes rings for his job. The rings are for men and women. Jim rubs the rings with a cloth. Jim is content with his rings. Zac is an artist. Zac makes red pots with zig-zags. Zac is content with his red pots. Ren sings songs for his job. Ren sings songs at the zoo.

Questions:

- What is Jim's job?
- Why does Jim rub the ring with a cloth?
- What does Zac do?
- What color are the pots that Zac makes?
- Where does Ren sing his songs?

Word Learning Connections

Cognate Awareness

Morphological Awareness

Making Connections

Multiple Opportunities for Use

Ramirez, G., et al., (2009)
Dressler, C., et al., (2011)

Cognate Awareness

- The ability to identify words from other languages that share similar spellings and meanings
- English shares cognates with many languages
- One example:

  canoe (English/Catalan), canoa (Spanish/Italian/Portuguese)
  canoė (French)
  kanu (German)

Examples of Cognates

Occupations

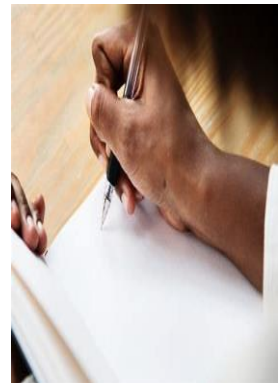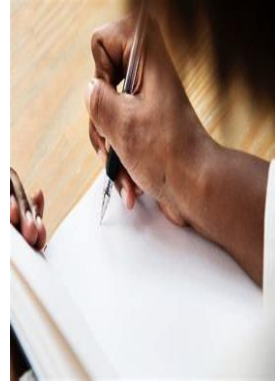| **Spanish**	**English**
carpintero	carpenter
arquitecto	architect
artista	artist
dentista	dentist
doctor	doctor
autor	author

Cross-Linguistic Example

- The word is *author* in English. Say the word.

- The word in Spanish is *autor*.

- How many syllables are in the Spanish word? How many are in the English word? How many sounds in Spanish? How many sounds in English?

- How many morphemes or meaning units? Let's discuss the meaning of the word *author*. Let's describe and then compare and contrast an author with an architect.

- Is the word a noun? Can it be used as a verb?

- Can you use the word in a sentence?

- Can you describe the similarities and differences in the spelling of *author* in English and Spanish?

Some Spanish Morphemes and Their English Correlations

Spanish Prefixes	Meaning	English Prefixes	Meaning
anti-	contra	anti-	against
ex-	afuera de	ex-	outside of

Spanish Roots	Meaning	English Roots	Meaning
audi	oír	audi	to hear
fono	sonido	phono	sound

Spanish Suffixes	Meaning	English Suffixes	Meaning
-ista	alguien que	-ist	one who
-itis	inflamación	-itis	inflammation

Sample Lesson

- We will learn a suffix today. A suffix is found at the end of a word and can change its form or meaning.

- Say *artist, pianist, dentist*.

- What did you hear that was the same?

- Look at the words as I write them. How do we spell -ist? Do any of these words look familiar to you in your first language? Tell me about this. Say the words in your language.

- If you draw pictures or create sculptures, you are considered an … artist.

- If you can play the piano, you are considered a … pianist.

- If you can fix someone's aching tooth, you are a ….dentist.

- So, what do you think the suffix *-ist* means?

- Can you think of other words with suffix *-ist*? For example, if you like to arrange flowers for a living you are a ___(florist) If you play the guitar very well you can be considered a(guitarist). If you know a person who provides therapy, they are known as a ___ (therapist). Do you know these words in your native language? Tell me about this.

- We will create a word wall for our word parts including suffixes.

- We will also add this suffix to your vocabulary journal. Good job.

- As you listen to people or as you read, please listen carefully to words with suffix –ist. We will add them to our word wall.

(Adapted from WOW 1- Cárdenas-Hagan, 2014)

3PV3RQ
Evidence-Based Reading Comprehension

- **P**urpose

- **P**repare/Connect

- **P**redict

- **V**ocabulary

- **R**ead

- **R**eview

- **R**etell

- **Q**uestion

(Cárdenas-Hagan, 2018)

Artisans

Jim makes rings for his job. The rings are for men and women. Jim rubs the rings with a cloth. Jim is content with his rings. Zac is an artist. Zac makes red pots with zig-zags. Zac is content with his red pots. Ren sings songs for his job. Ren sings songs at the zoo.

Questions:
- What is Jim's job?
- Why does Jim rub the ring with a cloth?
- What does Zac do?
- What color are the pots that Zac makes?
- Where does Ren sing his songs?

READ ALOUDS

Read Alouds are selected and related to the topic within the lesson

The topic is covered for a 5-day cycle

Students preview the book with the instructor

Scaffolds for language are provided as needed

Instructor guides the questioning and discussion, so students understand what they have heard

Books can also be provided in native language to make connections

The Read Aloud can incorporate various cultures and expand world knowledge

In Closing

When teaching ELs, be knowledgeable about L1-L2

Capitalize on native language literacy in an explicit manner for the development of second language

Consider language and literacy goals across content areas

Use cross-linguistic features of language

Use culturally and linguistically responsive practices

Resources

- www.mtss4els.org

- www.dyslexiaida.org

- www.colorincolorado.org

- www.meadowscenter.org

- www.cselcenter.org

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In Summary

"Literacy is the bridge to equity"

Be prepared to teach every student, including ELs

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