Mc Graw Hill Education

McGraw-Hill Education's Guiding Principles for Supporting English Learners

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McGraw-Hill Education is committed to providing English Learners appropriate support as they simultaneously learn content and language. As an organization, we recognize that the United States is a culturally and linguistically diverse country. Moreover, this diversity continues to increase, with corresponding growth in the number of English Learners (ELs). In 2012-2013, an estimated 4.85 million ELs in were enrolled U.S. schools; this subgroup now makes up nearly 10% of the total public school enrollment (Ruiz-Soto, Hooker, and Batalova, 2015). In fact, ELs are the fastest growing student population in the country, growing 60% in the last decade, compared with only 7% growth of the general student population (Grantmakers for Education, 2013).

The vast majority of English Learners were born in the United States.

Perhaps most interesting of all, the vast majority of ELs – 85% of prekindergarten through fifth grade ELs, and 62% of high school ELs – were born in the United States (Zong & Batalova, 2015). These US-born ELs may be first, second, or third generation students with strong ties to their cultural roots.

A great many English Learners come to school with a variety of rich linguistic and cultural backgrounds from Spanish-speaking countries in South and Central America. In addition, schools experience native speakers from numerous other backgrounds and languages—the most common other languages being Cantonese, Hmong, Korean, Vietnamese, and Haitian Creole. While over 70% of English Learners come to school speaking Spanish as their native language, as a group, ELs speak nearly 150 languages (Baird, 2015). The experiences and identities acquired in the context of ELs' homes and communities can transform the simplest classroom into a unique cultural and linguistic microcosm.

English Learners' success in learning a second language is influenced by a variety of factors besides the instructional method itself, including individual, family, and classroom characteristics; school and community contexts; the attributes of the assessment used to measure progress; and whether the language acquired is a national or foreign language (August & Shanahan, 2006; Genesee, Lindholm-Leary, Saundes, & Christian, 2006). For instance, children's initial levels of proficiency in their home language(s), along with English, influence new language acquisition (August, Shanahan, Escamilla, K., 2009) as does the quality of school support (Niehaus & Adelson, 2014) and the characteristics of the language learners' first and second languages (Dressler & Kamil, 2006).

Given these factors, there is a pressing need for fundamental principles that guide the support of ELs as they acquire content and develop language. Drawing upon extensive research in the field, McGraw-Hill Education has developed and followed nine guiding principles for supporting English Learners at all grade levels and in all disciplines.

9 Guiding Principles

- Provide Specialized Instruction
- Cultivate Meaning
- Teach Structure and Form
- Develop Language in Context
- Scaffold to Support Access
- Foster Interaction
- Create Affirming Cultural Spaces
- Engage Home to Enrich Instruction
- Promote Multilingualism

Provide Specialized Instruction

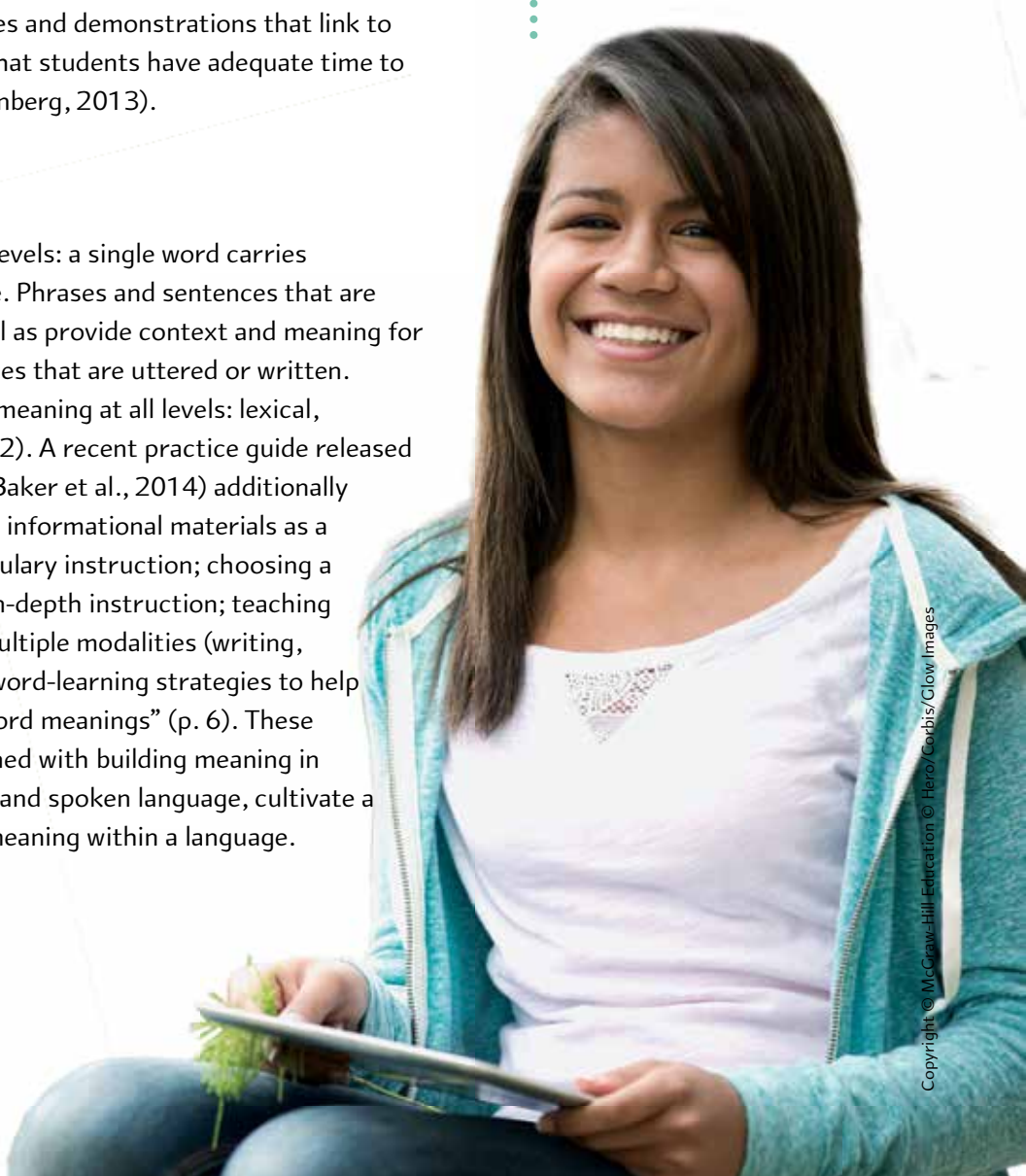
The provision of well-implemented, specialized instruction that is focused on the acquisition of English is more effective than simple exposure to English (Saunders & Goldenberg, 2010; Norris & Ortega, 2000). In an extensive review of research in second language acquisition, Dixon and colleagues (2012) examined the optimal conditions for learning, and found that specialized instructional models are more likely to lead to improved outcomes throughout the course of a student's school career than programs that don't provide additional support for ELs learning English as another language.

It is important to note that these specialized instructional models acknowledge the need of EL students to learn grade-level academic content *at the same time* as they are learning the language (Echevarria, Short, & Powers, 2006). That is, such models provide targeted instruction in English that does not come at the expense of academic learning. Examples of specific instruction strategies include ***(a)*** providing students with background knowledge, ***(b)*** using graphic organizers (e.g. Venn diagrams), ***(c)*** integrating pictures and demonstrations that link to skills and concepts, and ***(d)*** ensuring that students have adequate time to practice oral and written tasks (Goldenberg, 2013).

Sheltered instruction models are more likely to lead to improved outcomes throughout the course of a student's school career.

Cultivate Meaning

Languages carry meaning at multiple levels: a single word carries meaning, as does a phrase or sentence. Phrases and sentences that are strung together carry meaning, as well as provide context and meaning for individual words, phrases, and sentences that are uttered or written. As such, instruction should attend to meaning at all levels: lexical, grammatical, and discourse (Ellis, 2012). A recent practice guide released by the US Department of Education (Baker et al., 2014) additionally recommends "identifying content rich informational materials as a platform for intensive academic vocabulary instruction; choosing a small set of academic vocabulary for in-depth instruction; teaching academic vocabulary in depth using multiple modalities (writing, speaking, and listening; and teaching word-learning strategies to help students independently understand word meanings" (p. 6). These activities, separately and when combined with building meaning in discourse with larger amounts of text and spoken language, cultivate a deeper understanding of all levels of meaning within a language.



The cultivation of meaning must also include making meaning, by highlighting meaning within pragmatic, or practical, communication (Ellis, 2005). That is, learners should be given numerous opportunities to focus on meaning in situations in which it is needed in order to successfully communicate. Ellis suggests that this approach is what leads to the success of language immersion programs. Not only is pragmatic meaning key to language acquisition, it has also been found to be intrinsically motivating.

Instruction should focus on meaning at all levels: lexical, grammatical, pragmatic, and as part of larger discourse.

Teach Structure and Form

Acquiring another language also requires learners to focus on the structure and form of language, and how they inform meaning (Ellis, 2012).

Most research indicates that learners must be explicitly taught the structural rules of a second language. Ellis (2005) and Rodriguez (2009) suggest that effective form-focused instruction should include a mixture of strategies such as : *(a)* teaching grammar through input/output activities (e.g. viewing a model of a grammatical form, working through an example with an instructor, and placing additional examples into the correct form; *(b)* providing activities that encourage learners to notice form (e.g. "find examples of prepositions"); and *(c)* incorporating individualized, corrective feedback.

By incorporating a focus on form as well as on meaning, educators ensure that learners acquire the grammatical competence needed for effective written and oral communication across all domains.

Developing oral language in the context of content area instruction is most effective for ELs and can improve comprehension.

Develop Language in Context

Numerous studies have highlighted the importance of developing oral language in the context of content area instruction (cf. de Oliveira, 2016; Baker et al., 2014). Research has validated this approach – studies indicate that high quality instruction for English proficient students that focuses on literacy components (e.g. phonics, fluency, comprehension) but not on the oral language was less effective for ELs than for English proficient students and rarely led to improvements in ELs' comprehension (August & Shanahan, 2006).

Specific findings from the practice guide referenced above (Baker, et al., p. 6) call for "teaching academic vocabulary, integrating oral and written English language instruction into content-area teaching, and providing regular structured opportunities to develop written language skills."

Scaffold to Support Access

It is critical to provide ELs with comprehension support for academic content, as mastery of subject matter content is one of the most important criteria for success in school (August, Shanahan, & Escamilla, 2009; Ryoo, 2009; Silverman & Hines, 2009; Vaughn, et al., 2009). To achieve this, educators can implement scaffolding strategies that connect language to visual or written information in ways that clarify language (e.g. pictures, videos, and graphic organizers). Other strategies include modeling, defining language in context (Crevecoeur, Coyne, & McCoach, 2014), asking guiding questions (August, Artzi & Barr, 2016); and capitalizing on home language culture, language, literacy, and content-area knowledge (Llosa, et al., 2016). Such supports are not only vitally important for ELs, but provide the added benefit of helping all learners access grade-level core content.

In support of these strategies, Banks (2008) notes that teachers "can modify their instruction so that it draws upon students' linguistic and cultural strengths" (p. 35) through what he terms content integration. Powell and colleagues (2016) elaborate further by defining content integration as "the extent to which teachers use information and knowledge from a variety of cultural groups to teach concepts in their particular subjects" (p. 2). In essence, content integration allows learning to take placed in meaningful ways that are contextualized with students' lives (Kuhlthau, Maniotes, & Caspari, 2015). This practice unlocks new opportunities to engage students in collaborative, equitable, and culturally congruent discourse, while simultaneously integrating both language and content objectives (Meyer & Crawford, 2015).

Foster Interaction

For both second language acquisition and content learning, it is important to provide ELs with abundant opportunities to interact (via speaking, listening, reading, and writing) using the second language with bilingual and English-proficient partners (Gersten, et al., 2007). Speaking is particularly important because it generates feedback, forces syntactic processing, and challenges students to engage at higher proficiency levels (Johnson & Swain, 1998; Saunders & Goldenberg, 2010). Further, it generates more input, and substantial differences in the rate of second language acquisition are related to the amount and quality of input students receive (Ellis, 2012). Research also indicates that while opportunities to engage in discussion with peers in the classroom are positive for both ELs and English-proficient students with regard to reading comprehension, the magnitude is small and insignificant for English-proficient students but large and significant for ELs (O'Day, 2009; Gallagher, 2015).

It's important to provide ELs with abundant opportunities for interaction using a second language, both with bilingual and English-proficient partners.

Create Affirming Cultural Spaces

To create social and cultural spaces that affirm students' social and cultural identities, teachers must implement linguistically and culturally responsive teaching practices. Responsive practices reflect students' cultures and experiences, including their values, customs, backgrounds, and home languages (Banks, 2008; Gay 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Taylor & Sobel, 2011).

Culturally responsive teaching strives to validate a student's cultural knowledge and prior experiences, while connecting those experiences to academic knowledge and skillsets (Gay, 2010). Ladson-Billings (1994, 2009) further elaborates, stating that "teachers must recognize students' cultures and home languages as essential elements of learning" and that teaching must include cultural references in all aspects of learning.

ELs' home language and cultural experiences must be recognized, utilized, validated, and celebrated as essential elements of learning in more than superficial ways.

In sum, ELs' home language and cultural experiences must be recognized, utilized, validated, and celebrated as essential elements of learning in more than superficial ways (Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1994). Teachers should nurture these experiences and connect them to new knowledge (Powell, 2016). In fact, there is evidence that the use of a home language to develop the academic skills of ELs is the best way of helping them avoid cognitive deficits and achievement lags in school performance (August & Hakuta, 1997; August & Shanahan, 2006). If the purpose of literacy, for example, is meaning, and meaning is tied to what readers know, then it follows that a relevant curriculum for ELs will build on information from home, community, and school (Cummins, 2000; August & Hakuta, 1997; Goldenberg, 2013). Learning is most effective, then, when it naturally extends from the world knowledge that students bring with them from their home environment to school. Therefore, when instruction helps ELs "take meaning" from their own reservoir of sociolinguistic experiences, it not only establishes continuity between home and school, but also validates the linguistic and cultural identify of these students (Pardo & Tinajero, 2000).

Engage Home to Enrich Instruction

Research has demonstrated that one of the keys to successful EL teaching and learning is the creation of personal connections with students' lives and prior experiences inside and outside of school (Ada, 1993; McLaren, 2015; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004). The most effective schools and educational programs recognize the vital roles of family and community. These institutions develop effective, creative approaches to bridging any cultural and language differences by integrating family and community into education (Tinajero & Munter, 2004).

Such initiatives reflect advances in the educational community's understanding that all families are important - and that the family plays a critical part in intellectual and social development. To enrich EL instruction, it is important to view families as assets to the school program and welcome them as partners in the education process. Families have talents and experiences that can inform classroom instruction. Indeed, linking school programs and curricula with the lived experiences of students' families renews the classroom (NCCRES, Fall 2015). Knowledge acquired from families can enhance student achievement in all subject areas and contribute to the overall educational environment (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

Teachers are also encouraged to engage families in classroom activities and events to enrich classroom instruction in the content areas. In so doing, teachers enrich the curriculum with a wealth of information based on the values of students' families (Norton, 2012). For example, parents can read books in Spanish and tell stories from their oral tradition. When children see their parents providing valuable learning experiences for their peers, they not only feel a sense of pride but also share positive feelings about their language and culture.

Similarly, students whose parents read to them at home develop superior literacy skills and demonstrate higher academic achievement (National Education Goals Panel, 1997; Saracho, 1997; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Sonnenschein, Brody, & Munsterman, 1996). The frequency and quality of these interactions are also critical to the positive effect on students' emergent literacy (Bus, 2002). To promote these interactions at home, teachers can provide specific strategies and activities. For example, one activity may involve students and parents writing books together with themselves and their families as the main protagonists (Ada, 1993). The knowledge and experiences that students gain in the home in their native languages promotes the development of intellectual capacity and literacy skills in both the native language and English (Cummins, 2007); thus, time spent at home developing knowledge and skills in the home language works to the advantage of both first- and second-language literacy and content area achievement. Moreover, the skills needed to think, speak, read, and write in another language are also needed to think, speak, read, and write in English (Cummins, 2000). A high level of proficiency in a home language leads to accelerated cognitive growth and hence to positive academic outcomes in English (August & Shanahan, 2006). All told, what ELs learn at home helps them to appreciate their linguistic heritage, develop positive literacy and content area experiences, and achieve competence in both academic home language and English. The family environment and home language, in important and sometimes intangible ways, are keys to unlocking pathways to enhanced student achievement.

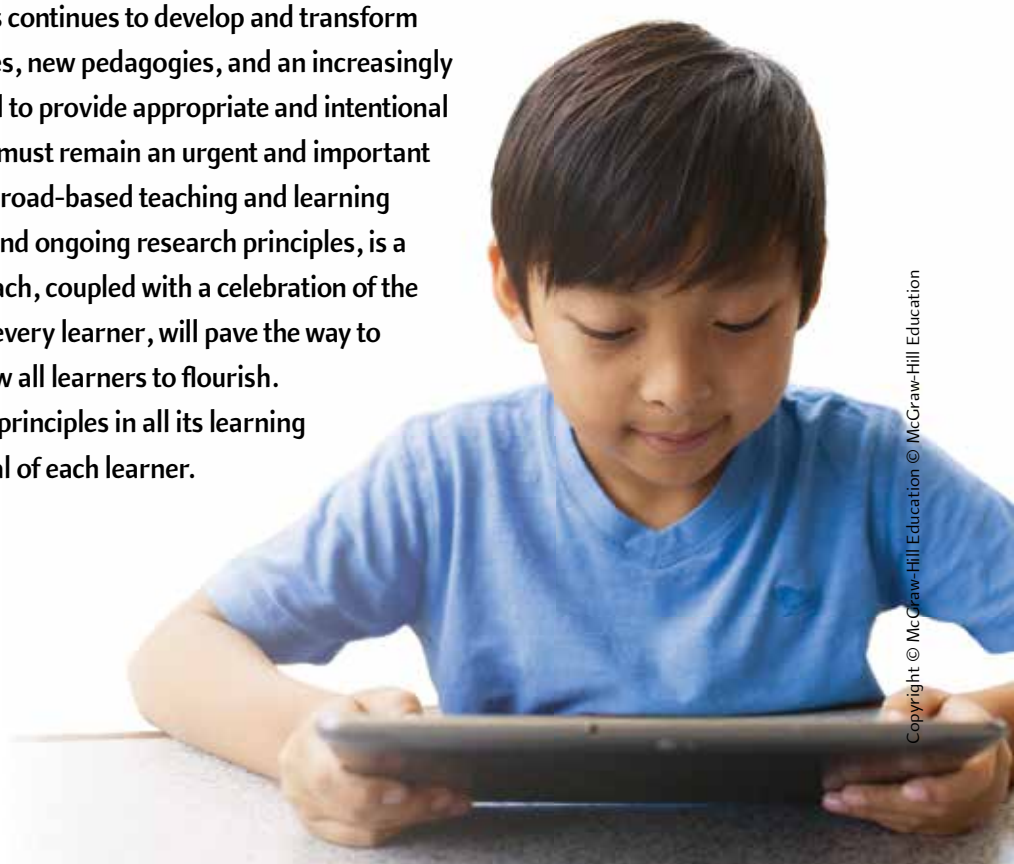
The most effective schools and educational programs recognize the vital roles of family and community.

Promote Multilingualism

Bilingualism or multilingualism is an asset, an intellectual accomplishment, and a national treasure! Schools are in a position to capitalize on a student's native language to create opportunities for all students, ELs and non-ELs, to acquire two or more languages. ELs come to school with a wealth of knowledge about their native languages that can be used to enrich two-way dual language programs. The goal of these programs is to "help students from two or more language background develop high levels of language proficiency and literacy in both program languages, attain high levels of academic achievement, and develop an appreciation and understanding of multiple cultures" (Boyle, August, Tabaku, Cole, & Simpson-Baird, 2015). Valentino & Reardon (2015); Lindholm-Leary (2001, 2004); and Lindholm-Leary & Block (2010) hold that, compared to other program models, two-way dual language programs provide opportunities for English learners to reach high levels of academic achievement in both English and a partner language (most often Spanish but also Chinese, Vietnamese, and other partner languages) while providing students with access to 21st Century Skills—bilingualism, biliteracy, and global awareness. Data from the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) show that two-way dual language programs have grown dramatically since the late 1980's. Only 25 such programs existed in 1989 compared to 425 in 2011 (CAL, 2016). This number continues to grow. Two-way programs are considered additive models of bilingual education because students retain their home languages while acquiring proficiency in English (Collier & Thomas, 2009; Boyle, et. al, 2015) and benefit all students.

Bilingualism or multilingualism is an asset, an intellectual accomplishment, and a national treasure.

As the educational landscape in our schools continues to develop and transform because of new standards, new technologies, new pedagogies, and an increasingly dynamic and diverse student body, the need to provide appropriate and intentional instructional supports for English learners must remain an urgent and important focus for all of us involved in education. A broad-based teaching and learning approach, based in rigorous foundational and ongoing research principles, is a critical part of the equation. Such an approach, coupled with a celebration of the rich cultural and language backgrounds of every learner, will pave the way to the creation of school experiences that allow all learners to flourish. McGraw-Hill Education incorporates these principles in all its learning solutions in order to unlock the full potential of each learner.



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