

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
CHAPTER ONE	
The Diversity of Students and Programs	5
EL Categories	5
English Language Proficiency Standards	7
Programs for ELs	7
A School's Commitment to Serving Every Student	14
CHAPTER TWO	
RTI and Quality Instruction	17
RTI Explained	17
Interventions in Dual-Language Programs	20
Attributes of Quality Instruction	23
Prepare to Prevent Failure	25
CHAPTER THREE	
The Educational Needs of Young ELs	27
The Process of Learning a Second Language	28
The Importance of the Primary Language	29
Preliteracy in English	30
Family Support	36
Reducing the Gaps	39
CHAPTER FOUR	
The Most Critical Year: Year One	41
Reading Instruction	42
ELs and Centres	44
The Importance of Conversation	48
Parental Partnerships	50

CHAPTER FIVE

Selecting Words to Teach	53
Academic Language	53
Strategic Selection of Words	54
Three Tiers of Vocabulary	56
Quick Tips for Selecting Words to Teach	62

CHAPTER SIX

Teaching Vocabulary	65
Levels of Word Knowledge	66
Preteaching Vocabulary	68
Teaching Vocabulary During Reading	74
Teaching Vocabulary After Reading	75
Vocabulary Strategies	76
Quick Tips for Teaching Vocabulary	80

CHAPTER SEVEN

Teaching Reading	83
Reading Skills and Processes	84
Preparing to Teach a Text	87
Reading Strategies	87
Grammar, Syntax and Pronunciation	99
Balancing Strategy Instruction	100
Quick Tips for Teaching Reading	100

CHAPTER EIGHT

Teaching Writing	103
Writing Strategies	103
Collaborative Writing, Revising and Editing	110
Differentiated Growth Plan	113
Quick Tips for Teaching Writing	114

CHAPTER NINE

Ensuring and Reinforcing Comprehension	117
Teaching Techniques to Ensure Comprehension	117
Anchoring Reading and Vocabulary	122
Assessment of Progress and Proficiency	122
Respect for the Primary Language	128

CHAPTER THREE

The Educational Needs of Young ELs

By María Trejo

Education reforms and interventions are needed for every year level. However, it is much easier to build a strong foundation with quality interventions in preschool and prep, when students' needs are much more manageable and educators are teaching new skills, not remediating gaps.

Reforms have been targeted to address the “year-four slump”, the “wasted middle years”, the “desperate secondary school years” and, most recently, a “preschool–prep readiness gap”. This early gap need not exist. It can be avoided with quality interventions that support early literacy development, the preparation and backing of more high-quality teachers, meaningful involvement of parents and a consistent infusion of necessary resources. These initiatives are essentially major reforms of curriculum and student outcomes across the year levels, from preschool right through to tertiary study.

Young ELs need to be taught both foundational concepts and the classroom English necessary to succeed academically, and teachers need to have the necessary skill sets, resources and tools to help these students acquire language and learn content. There are four distinct elements that educators must address when selecting materials, strategies and interventions for young ELs:

1. The process of learning a second language
2. The importance of the primary language
3. Preliteracy in English
4. Family support

A teacher's understanding of how children acquire languages, when and how to maximise the use of the primary language spoken in the home, and how to model academic discourse in the first and second languages impacts how children learn language and important content (Tabors, 2008).

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

The early years are when educators can influence not only students' knowledge and skills but also their attitudes and aspirations (Chamberlin & Plucker, 2008).

Neglecting the early years or treating them as optional undermines the [...] educational structure (Takanishi & Kauerz, 2008).

ELs begin their early years of schooling with educational needs that the majority population does not manifest (Ballantyne, Sanderman & McLaughlin, 2008).

Dual-language learners "are less likely than other children living in poverty to attend preschool, despite the fact that preschool attendance has more of a beneficial effect for Spanish-speaking dual-language learners than for any other comparable demographic group" (Ballantyne, Sanderman & McLaughlin, 2008).

In the early years, literacy skills in two languages can develop at the same time (Society for Neuroscience, 2008), but there are unique skills and social norms associated with each language.

Selected states report that high-quality, comprehensive preschools can significantly boost the school readiness and later school achievement of children (Gormley, Phillips & Gayer, 2008).

During the early years, children master foundational skills and concepts, develop attitudes towards school, and form ideas about themselves as learners (Shore, 2009).

The Process of Learning a Second Language

Knowing how a child develops a first language and acquires a second one helps teachers gauge what the student is ready to learn and what responses may be expected as he or she grows emotionally and acquires language(s). For example, second-language learners go through a period during which all they do is listen to

the new language. This is often referred to as the “silent period” because they may not reproduce or speak the new language. Those educators who understand this stage know that they should not expect any oral responses from the learner during this period. The second stage of acquiring a new language is when the speaker copies or mimics the responses of others. These two stages may last a few weeks to many months; educators need to be patient and respect this time.

Many teachers have interpreted the first two stages of second-language acquisition as a waiting period during which the student cannot be forced to respond or speak the new language. They either revert to teaching entirely in the primary language or to switching between the student’s primary language and English because they believe that this will ensure understanding and be more comfortable for the student. However, in such cases, the consequences may be that the student’s learning of the new language is delayed or not developed because:

- teachers lower their expectations of the EL’s learning abilities.
- teachers reduce the rigour and richness of the curriculum.
- teachers limit the use of rich academic vocabulary in both languages to shelter or protect the student.
- teachers fail to check for understanding or learning progress.
- teachers pass their low expectations, language-mixing practices and limited use of English on to parents.

Educators are encouraged to learn how a child acquires a first and/or second language. Many educational agencies and departments of education publish guides in this field.

The Importance of the Primary Language

Educators often hear directives such as “Honour the primary language and use it – if resources are available” and “We don’t have the time, money or materials in every language, so teach in English.” Overt efforts must be made to tailor the curriculum and strategies for ELs to facilitate second-language and literacy learning (Tabors, 2008).

It is not necessary for all teachers who work with ELs to be bilingual. What is important is the selection of the language of instruction, the designation of the adult who will be teaching in the primary language, the careful selection of materials and the assigned roles of other support staff. There are basically three

options for supporting the student's primary language and delivering instruction in the primary language:

1. In the first scenario, the classroom teacher is bilingual and biliterate. A teacher who is *bilingual* speaks both the language of the student and English. A teacher who is *biliterate* has had academic literacy training and reads and writes in both the primary language and English. This teacher can teach concepts in the primary language, as well as help the students learn English by keeping instruction in both languages separate during the day, without mixing languages, which is sometimes called *code switching*. Some students might code-switch, and that is fine, as long as they are progressing in the differentiation of both languages.
2. In the second scenario, the classroom teacher is monolingual English speaking but has the help of a biliterate instructional assistant who has the academic preparation in the primary language necessary to teach academic vocabulary and content. In this case, the teacher can plan with the assistant to ensure that the same concepts are taught in the primary language. The teacher in this scenario is the English-speaking role model.
3. In the third scenario, neither the teacher nor the assistant is biliterate. The teacher or assistant may be bilingual or have social language skills but not the academic vocabulary or professional preparation necessary to teach in the primary language. In this case, there are other strategies, such as: identify and invite community volunteers who are biliterate, ask the parents or older siblings to reinforce language and skills in the primary language at home, and seek the support of biliterate retired teachers or staff. However, the best solution is for these teachers to develop high language and literacy skills through intensive professional development.

It is critically important that students have the best language models possible in both the primary language and English, and that the educators do not mix languages, or code-switch, during the delivery of their lessons. The classroom may be the only opportunity for ELs to listen to academic vocabulary and learn preliteracy skills in English.

Preliteracy in English

Preschool and prep students need words and experiences to express their thoughts and to acquire new knowledge; they need oral language in both their primary language and English. Vocabulary and comprehension are intricately tied for these

children. Their need to understand and be understood is much stronger than their need to learn the alphabet or the sounds of letters. Not understanding teachers and peers creates an anxiety in students that often hampers their ability and interest in learning or playing.

Children do not find it fun to sing rhymes and songs when they have absolutely no concept of why the sounds or jokes are funny. It is difficult, if not impossible, for a student to retain the concepts of syllable segmentation and deletion, onset and rime, phoneme segmentation and manipulation, rhyming and alliteration activities when he or she does not know words like *cat*, *mat*, *mop* and *mat*.

Given these considerations, the recommended sequence for teaching early literacy in two languages is the following: introduce and develop vocabulary, teach concepts about print, introduce alphabet recognition and word/print recognition, teach comprehension and age-appropriate text features, teach more difficult and abstract concepts, and teach writing.

First, introduce and develop vocabulary. ELs learn best from using nonfictional materials, manipulating concrete objects and having hands-on experiences. A strategy that is popular with teachers when introducing new vocabulary or concepts is the total physical response (TPR) method, developed by James Asher, a professor of psychology at San José State University, in 1969 to aid learning a second language. Teachers and children act out the meaning of words through a simple game like Simon Says or a role-playing activity.

The five-step vocabulary strategy for young ELs follows:

1. Introduce the new word or phrase in a natural setting or with the use of concrete objects.
2. Explain the word using everyday language. Provide a child-friendly definition.
3. Give examples of the word in a variety of contexts. Use complete sentences.
4. Continue using the word at every opportunity.
5. Acknowledge the student's attempts at using the new word.

For example, during a unit on transportation and before visiting the train station, the airport or the bus stop, the teacher introduces several words, such as *passenger*, *transportation*, *fare*, *station*, *board*, *baggage* and *luggage*, by following the five-step process as outlined in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Example of the Five-Step Process for Teaching Words

Introduce the new word or phrase in a natural setting or with the use of concrete objects.	Holding a piece of luggage, the teacher says, "We always need to tag our <i>luggage</i> before we go on a trip. The <i>luggage</i> is stored in the belly of the plane." (Most likely, the teacher will also need to explain the word <i>belly</i> .)
Explain the word using everyday language. Provide a child-friendly definition.	The teacher explains, "The bags and personal things you take on a trip are your <i>luggage</i> ."
Give examples of the word in a variety of contexts. Use complete sentences.	In the pretend or play area, the teacher has the students pack small bags, write their name or draw a picture on a tag, and tie the tag to their <i>luggage</i> . The students show and tell others what is in their <i>luggage</i> . Students are asked to say, "I have ... in my luggage. I am taking my luggage to ..."
Continue using the word at every opportunity.	The teacher tells the students to ask their parents to show them what <i>luggage</i> they take on their trips, how many pieces of <i>luggage</i> they take on trips and what happens if they lose their <i>luggage</i> . The next day, students are asked to share the answers to these questions. The teacher reads a story about a trip during which the characters take <i>luggage</i> .
Acknowledge the student's attempts at using the new word.	The teacher gives the student a sticker or teacher-made luggage tag to put on his or her suitcase every time the student uses the word <i>luggage</i> .

Second, teach concepts about print. Implicitly and explicitly expose students to print. Students will learn that people around them use print for many purposes and that print words carry meaning. For example, a teacher takes students to the zoo and immediately after the visit shows books and reads stories about zoo animals. The teacher explains the association between the lion that the students saw at the zoo, the word *lion* and the picture in the book associated with the word *lion*. The teacher also explicitly explains to the students that printed words have meaning and that one can see and learn about many animals through books.

Third, introduce alphabet recognition and word/print recognition. As students become more confident with the oral language of the classroom, learn new words each day and understand key concepts being taught, they will develop the