Contents

	Foreword, ***by Edmund T. Hamann***	vii
	Acknowledgments	ix
	Introduction	1
1	**Taking Current Perspectives to *i* +1**	4
	The Influence of Politics on CLD Student Education	5
	Existing Programs and Models Provide a Starting Point	6
	Highlights of Effective Instructional Models	6
	Bringing CLD Students to the Center of Instruction	7
	Making It Happen! How This Book Can Guide Your Next Steps	17
2	**Biography-Driven Instruction**	19
	Biopsychosocial History	19
	The CLD Student Biography	22
	The Sociocultural Dimension	22
	Reflections on the Sociocultural Dimension	29
3	**Language of the Heart**	31
	The Linguistic Dimension	31
	Reflections on the Linguistic Dimension	41
4	**Culture-Driven Thought and Learning**	42
	The Cognitive Dimension	42
	Reflections on the Cognitive Dimension	56
5	**Academics: More Than a Grade on a Test**	57
	The Academic Dimension	57
	Reflections on the Academic Dimension	68
6	**Biography-Driven Planning, Teaching, and Assessing**	69
	Contextual and Situational Processes	69
	Contextual and Situational Teaching	71
	Biography-Driven Instruction: An Action Model	74
	Reflections on Valuing the Student in Teaching	84

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7 **A Canvas of Opportunity** 86
A Social Constructivist Approach 86
Transparency in Teaching 87
How Vocabulary Fits into the Picture 91
Creating Opportunities for Disclosure 98
Reflections on Activating What Students Know 102

8 **Navigating from the Known to the Unknown** 104
Comprehensible Input 104
Activities Versus Strategies 106
Navigating States of Mind 110
Scaffolding from Student Words/Thoughts to New Learning 117
Students Negotiate Meaning 121
Reflections on Connecting Lessons to Our Students' Lives 124

9 **Gallery of Understanding and Knowledge: Assessing to Make Knowledge Transparent** 125
Emotion, Cognition, and Assessment 125
Formative Assessment 127
Learning Strategies as a Bridge to Summative Assessment 132
Review, Rehearsal, and Retrieval 134
Reflections on Affirming Student Learning Through Assessment 139

10 **Culturally Responsive Teaching: Voices of Care, Hope, and Academic Achievement** 140
A Different Type of Agenda 141
Standards Set the Path 141
Voices from the Field 143
Final Reflections 148

Appendices 149
Appendix A: Court Cases and Legislation That Impact Services for CLD Students 150
Appendix B: CLD Student Biography Card: Template 153
Appendix C: DOTS Chart (Determine, Observe, Talk, Summarize) 154
Appendix D: Mind Map 156
Appendix E: Vocabulary Quilt 158
Appendix F: Ignite, Discover, Extend, Affirm (IDEA) 160
Appendix G: Thumb Challenge 162
Appendix H: Uncover, Concentrate, Monitor, Evaluate (U-C-ME) 164

References 167

Index 174

About the Author 180

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CHAPTER 1

Taking Current Perspectives to *i*+1

THE POPULATION of English language learners (ELLs) has increased nationwide. Between the academic years of 1995–1996 and 2005–2006, the ELL student population increased by 57.2 percent, while the total student enrollment increased by only 3.7 percent (NCELA, 2007). The diversity of the ELL population makes these students' educational dynamics more complex. Students who speak a language other than English come with biographies as unique and varied as the more than 400 languages represented in our classrooms today. Currently, Spanish speakers make up the highest percentage of ELL students in U.S. schools, constituting 79% of the ELL population; speakers of Asian languages represent the second largest group, although with a much lower percentage (Kindler, 2002).

Labels for students who are acquiring English as an additional language have shifted over time. Labels that describe the student's language skills from a deficit perspective have ranged from limited English proficient (LEP) to English language learners (ELL). Both of these labels have been used by the U.S. Department of Education primarily to describe students whose native language is something other than English and who have difficulty performing academically in the classroom with regard to speaking, reading, and writing. Terms such as these limit the way we think about teaching and learning. By focusing solely on the acquisition of English skills, we devalue the role of the student's native language in the entire learning process.

Students often are given the label of ELL, or a similar designation as defined by the state in which they are receiving services, based on a point-in-time test that tells very little about their capacities to be successful in school. Moreover, this kind of labeling disregards the great variance that exists among students of this population. By contributing to the tracking of learners in lower-level classes that may not hold the same level of expectations as those held in grade-level or content-area classes, such labeling furthers the marginalization of these students within our school system.

Each student who arrives in a classroom brings with him or her a history or biography that is much more meaningful than points scored on one test. These students carry with them experiences, native languages, academic backgrounds, and other resources that can inform the decisions made about placement and programming. Within this population we find students who speak perfect social English when they arrive, but converse in another language at home. We have students whose parents refuse services to avoid the stigma of a label, and we have students who are exited too soon from services and not monitored for performance in the grade-level classroom. Yet, due to insufficient professional development specific to the needs of ELL students, many teachers I meet have learned about the linguistic and cultural needs of their students only after they have already pre-referred the students to a special education program. Figure 1.1 presents the range of labels used to describe CLD students.

For the purpose of this book and the work I do in the field, I find the term *culturally and linguistically diverse* (CLD) to be much more representative and inclusive of this population. For teachers, it serves as a reminder that when the student's culture differs from that of the school, there is a high probability that their language may also be in conflict with that of the school curriculum. It also reminds us that in our efforts to address language acquisition processes and challenges, we can draw upon a diverse range of knowledge, skills, and talents that students already possess.

As the number of students from diverse backgrounds continues to grow in our schools, it is more important than ever to find ways of providing equitable educational opportunities for all learners. Although we can choose from among multiple paths to take on this quest, answers to many challenges already exist within our own classrooms. At times, however, influences beyond our control can affect our efforts to provide CLD students with a high-quality education that promotes both their linguistic and their academic development.

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FIGURE 1.1
Labels for Students Learning English as an Additional Language

Term	Definition/Connotation
CLD: Culturally and Linguistically Diverse	This term emphasizes the multiple dimensions of bilingual and multilingual students who are in the process of acquiring English. ***CLD*** has a more positive connotation than many other terms used to refer to these learners.
ELL: English Language Learner	This term has a more positive connotation than ***NEP*** or ***LEP*** because it highlights the *process* of acquiring English rather than the lack of English having been acquired. However, ***CLD*** is still preferable to ***ELL*** because it emphasizes the cultural and linguistic assets that students contribute to the classroom, school, and community.
ESL Student: English as a Second Language Student	This is a generic term applied to students who are in the process of acquiring English. However, it can sometimes be a misnomer, as English is the third, or even fourth, language acquired by some students.
FEP: Fluent English Proficient **FES:** Fluent English Speaker	While ***FEP*** and ***FES*** have more positive connotations than the terms defined below, they de-emphasize/neglect the cultural and linguistic assets of students, focusing solely on the English skills that students possess. ***FEP*** and ***FES*** are terms frequently found in government documents.
LEP: Limited English Proficient **LES:** Limited English Speaker	These terms refer to students who are in the process of acquiring English. However, they focus on the "lack" of English that a student possesses rather than valuing the totality of students' linguistic knowledge and skills. In this way, ***LEP*** and ***LES*** emphasize the perceived linguistic inadequacies of learners when compared with other students. ***LEP*** and ***LES*** are terms commonly used in government documents.
NEP: Non-English Proficient **NES:** Non-English Speaker	***NEP*** and ***NES*** are used to refer to students at the beginning stages of English language acquisition. These terms de-emphasize the process of acquiring English and highlight what students are not able to do versus what they *can* do. These terms are commonly found in government documents.

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The Influence of Politics on CLD Student Education

Politics have long defined what education should look like for CLD students, beginning with the landmark case *Lau v. Nichols* (1974). In this case, the Supreme Court ruled that we do not ensure an equitable education "merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education." Since then, the debate has continued, with no consistent finding that would give educators the answer to the question they are asking: *What is the single best way to educate CLD students?*

The debate instead has followed the political winds of elected officials. More than a decade ago, bilingual education programs were largely removed from schools, even those where students were outperforming their peers across the country. This shift in educational programming was driven by the politically charged Unz Initiative of California (also known as "English for the Children"), which resulted in the state's passage of Proposition 227 in 1998. Current agendas push for a more rushed approach, limiting the time services can be provided to CLD students before they are sent to classrooms with teachers who are likely to have limited understanding of their linguistic and academic needs. Disregarding everything that has been learned to date through rigorous, longitudinal research (e.g., Thomas & Collier, 2002) about the best programs for CLD students, the debate continues to revolve around the politics of the day and leaves many students behind in the process. Meanwhile, legislative and judicial decisions continue to affect the efforts of administrators and teachers. Appendix A presents a brief overview of the

cases and decisions that have affected the education of CLD students.

One result of this nationwide movement of students as quickly as possible into heterogeneous grade-level and content-area classrooms is that many teachers who are unprepared for teaching CLD students now need perspectives and strategies to help them make these students successful. This book was written for those classroom and content-area teachers, as well as for English as a second language (ESL) professionals. So what then does it take to educate CLD learners? First, it requires the recognition that there is no *one* answer to this question. Rather, we see positive academic results when whatever programs and instructional models we provide also take into account the unique population being served, the human resources available, and the best interests of the student, family, and teacher.

Existing Programs and Models Provide a Starting Point

The wide range of language programs in the United States speaks not only to the linguistic diversity in the country, but also to the overabundance of names for these programs. Particular terms can be used to describe a wide variety of program types. Current academic programs for students who are learning English, although clearly described by the literature, come to life based on the interpretation of the people who implement them. Figure 1.2 (see pages 8 and 9) provides an overview of current program types, along with a description of how the biography-driven instructional approach described in this book can inform and enrich each of them. Each of these programs selects and implements curricula based on the needs of the population being served or the politics of the school, district, or state in which they operate. Models of instruction differ within each of these programs, and such models are described later in this chapter.

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While looking at Figure 1.2, keep in mind that there are many benefits of each program type that are additive in nature, as highlighted in a report by the Center for Applied Linguistics, entitled *Guiding Principles for Dual Language Education* (Howard, Sugarman, Christian, Lindholm-Leary, & Rogers, 2007). In this report, the authors differentiate between *additive bilingual programs,* where the goal is for students to "add on" English as an additional language, and *subtractive programs,* where the primary purpose is to transition students from their native language to English, thereby "subtracting" their first language from their knowledge base.

The authors of the report underscore the benefits of additive programs, stating that additive bilingual programs are associated not only with student achievement in the content areas, in both English and the native language, but also with increased self-esteem and more positive cross-cultural attitudes (Howard et al., 2007). On the other hand, subtractive language programs have been shown to have detrimental effects on CLD students' school performance and on their learning of a second language. Subtractive programs that lead to native language loss correlate with lower levels of second language proficiency, diminished academic achievement, and even with the development of psychosocial disorders (Howard et al.).

At this point, you might be saying to yourself, "I understand that research supports additive program types, but I teach in a subtractive one. What am I supposed to do?" While program type can be a constraint, it need not dictate all aspects of instruction. By focusing on the holistic development of our CLD students and by using their biographies to guide instruction, we can respond to their sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive, and academic needs in a more comprehensive manner, despite the program type in which we work.

Highlights of Effective Instructional Models

Current models of practice offer great promise for teachers' work with CLD students and provide a helpful backdrop for conceptualizing the pedagogy I propose in this text. These models frame what a lesson should look like during delivery and outline teacher skills necessary for implementation. The following is an introduction to each model, including references that can guide you to additional information and a more complete understanding of how the models are designed to work in the classroom.

Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA)

CALLA emphasizes the need for CLD students to develop the academic language skills and knowledge of content-area concepts needed for success in the grade-level classroom. This model incorporates instruction of multiple types of learning strategies that students can use as they make personally relevant connections to the lesson, monitor and assess their learning, and practice their English language skills. Figure 1.3 (see pages 10 and 11) provides a more in-depth look at this model.

Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE)

SDAIE originated in the state of California (California State Department of Education, 1994). This model focuses

CHAPTER 3

Language of the Heart

THERE IS no greater magic than having someone listen to and validate what we have to say. In Spanish, there is a saying, "cada cabeza es un mundo"—every head is its own world. When we communicate effectively, we succeed in crossing the distance from our world to the world of another. However, we do not always succeed in crossing that distance. Much gets lost in schools, where the culture and thought of educators often depart from those of CLD students. Currently, educational institutions tend to focus on learning about the linguistic proficiencies of students through the narrow lens of formal language assessment. This chapter first reviews school-situated aspects of language and then takes the educator into the heart of communication by exploring how language is inextricably tied to culture.

The Linguistic Dimension

My life made a complete turn.
Un cambio radical.
Questions rushed through my head.
Tengo que hacer un extra esfuerzo.
Para speak and read in English.
I felt like a part of myself was missing.
I am here today.

—BESITOS/Herrera Terry (2004)

As demographics have shifted and the number of CLD students has grown, great attention has been paid to what teachers should understand to be successful with these students. College courses and professional development trainings abound that aim to provide pre-service and in-service teachers with the fundamentals of second language acquisition and demonstrate how this process is relevant to classroom practice. Yet before we explore the process of second language acquisition, let us first briefly look at the way we acquire our first language.

We do not begin life as fluent speakers of our first language. With much encouragement and support, we spend our early years acquiring the basic sound patterns, vocabulary, sentence structures, and communicative skills that we later take for granted. We then continue to improve our linguistic capabilities through formal schooling and our interactions with others. Although by age six we have completed 50% of the process of acquiring our first language, we continue to spend the rest of our lives acquiring additional vocabulary and refining our language skills (Herrera & Murry, 2005).

The process of second language acquisition is markedly more difficult than that of first language acquisition. Second language learners rarely have the opportunity to spend years merely becoming acquainted with the sounds and structures of the new language. Rather, they are expected to quickly acquire enormous amounts of vocabulary, recognize and use complex sentence structures that may be very different from those used in their native language, and grasp subtle nuances of the new language that are key to in-depth comprehension and effective communication. Continuing the discussion of the four interrelated and complex dimensions of the prism model, I will now review the most commonly known aspects of teaching linguistically diverse students.

Traditional School-Initiated Responses

Both pre-service and in-service professional preparation provide information related to the fundamental concepts and theories, which set the stage for understanding second language development and teaching:

- Distinction between basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)
- Krashen's theory of second language acquisition (SLA)

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- Acquisition–learning hypothesis
- Monitor hypothesis
- Natural order hypothesis
- Input hypothesis
- Affective filter hypothesis
- Stages of second language acquisition
- Distinction between common underlying proficiency (CUP) and separate underlying proficiency (SUP)
- Formal assessment of oral language proficiency
- Communicative and sociolinguistic considerations

The sections that follow provide a brief discussion of each of these concepts and theories as well as suggestions for their application in classroom practice.

FIGURE 3.1
BICS and CALP

Language as an Associative Function	Language as a Cognitive Function
BICS: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills	**CALP: Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency**
Social communication/ playground language	Academic communication/ classroom language
Language processing and production are less cognitively demanding.	Language processing and production are more cognitively demanding.
The brain is focusing on ideas.	The brain is focusing on ideas and language production.
Similar to discussing familiar topics in one's first language.	Speaking in a second language requires a greater degree of mental effort.
The language learner's schema fits the experiential and conceptual knowledge as well as the linguistic and/or cultural context of the situation.	The language learner's schema does not fit the experiential and conceptual knowledge and/or the linguistic or cultural context of the situation.

Adapted from Herrera (2007), p. 30. Used with permission of KCAT/TLC, Kansas State University.

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BICS and CALP

When considering students' levels of proficiency in both their first and second language, we must take into account their listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities in those languages. We must also differentiate between their level of basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), commonly described as conversational playground language, and their level of cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP), which refers to the more decontextualized, abstract language that is often used in academic settings (Cummins, 1981). This distinction explains why the fact that CLD students might be able to converse quite effectively with their peers in English does not guarantee that they will grasp the English vocabulary needed to comprehend an academic lesson.

The BICS/CALP distinction has generally been associated with the need to teach academic language in systematic ways in order to increase students' academic achievement. The BICS/CALP distinction also has implications for planning instruction, interpreting assessment data, and understanding the reluctance of some students to fully participate in classroom activities. Figure 3.1 provides basic information about BICS and CALP that may be helpful in understanding CLD students.

Consider the following two tasks: (a) Tell me about your last family outing or vacation, and (b) Write a paragraph describing the solution formed in a chemistry experiment using the words *solute, solvent.* and *concentration.* Which task would require academic vocabulary, complex cognitive processing, and background content knowledge? The second task represents the type of work we often require of CLD learners in the classroom without providing adequate *scaffolding* that would support their CALP development and thus increase the likelihood of their academic success. As teachers, we can support students' CALP development by:

- Providing visuals to support the required task
- Teaching and posting the academic vocabulary
- Allowing peer-to-peer collaboration to paraphrase what was learned
- Using grouping configurations that allow practice of English vocabulary and concepts
- Allowing use of the native language in structured ways to pre-teach, clarify, or elaborate on critical academic vocabulary and concepts

Krashen's Theory of Second Language Acquisition

By shattering old myths, introducing new subtleties, and challenging the conventional wisdom, Stephen Krashen changed the way we think about language in the classroom. In his seminal works, Krashen (1981, 1982) describes his theory of second language acquisition by outlining five key hypotheses.

Acquisition–Learning Hypothesis. "A person cannot learn by grammar alone." Krashen distinguishes between the pro-

cesses of *acquiring* and *learning* a second language. Acquiring a language is a largely subconscious process in which the learner picks up the language in a natural environment by using the language for a variety of real communication purposes. In contrast, learning a language requires conscious effort and involves being able to understand and apply grammar and other formal language rules.

Monitor Hypothesis. "Usage is the only path to fluency." Krashen demonstrates how it is only by *acquiring* a language that the learner gains fluency. For this reason, it is crucial to create a school environment that allows CLD students to hear and use the English language in meaningful contexts. Language *learning* merely assists individuals in self-monitoring and correcting their language production; it does not help learners use the language with natural ease.

Natural Order Hypothesis. "Errors are normal and often disappear on their own." Krashen describes how English language learners acquire the rules of the English language in a predictable order. He finds that regardless of age, students make certain grammatical errors as they progress through the stages of acquiring English. These errors are developmental and highly predictable. They are usually temporary and begin to disappear with modeling of the language. Therefore, it is important for educators to avoid "error correction" of CLD students' language production. An emphasis on mistakes can lead to student apprehension and prevent learners from moving forward in acquiring the English language. If an error persists for a long time (becoming what has been referred to as "fossilized"), then it may become necessary for the teacher to use explicit techniques to address the grammatical error.

Input Hypothesis. Beginning where they currently stand, learners advance step by step. First and second language learners need to receive *comprehensible input* as they acquire literacy skills. Comprehensible input is new language material that learners are able to understand, in spite of its unfamiliarity, because measures have been taken to ensure that connections are made between the new information and what the learners already know. Krashen's "i+1," discussed in Chapter 1, describes this kind of comprehensible, new material. The "i" represents the learner's existing linguistic capabilities and the "+1" signifies that the new material is one step beyond where the learner currently stands (Krashen, 1985).

Tying language and content to meaningful experiences is crucial because students cannot learn something that they do not understand. Consequently, successful educators focus their efforts, regardless of students' literacy levels, on the attainment of meaning. Teachers do this by actively engaging students in the learning environment and by using strategies that contextualize content (e.g., role playing, experiments, field trips, visuals). As students learn from and about language embedded in rich and varied contexts, they develop their language proficiency.

Affective Filter Hypothesis. "It's hard to learn when you're scared." Learning a second language can be more difficult than acquiring a first language because second language learners often are inhibited by what Krashen refers to as an *affective filter.* CLD students are aware that they are not as proficient in their second language as their native-speaking peers. Therefore, they may struggle with anxiety about saying the wrong thing, making grammatical errors, or incorrectly pronouncing what they say. The affective filter controls the extent to which students are able to actually take in what they are supposed to be learning. If students feel comfortable in their learning environment and know their language efforts will be met with support, they are more likely to comprehend the material and take risks with their language production. However, in stressful situations, the affective filter of students is raised (much like a defense mechanism), and the result often involves a decrease in student motivation, engagement, and language production.

Stages of Second Language Acquisition

The process of second language acquisition mirrors the process of acquiring a first language in many ways. In both processes, the learner goes through a silent period—a period during which the learner is trying to internalize the common sounds, words, and patterns of the language. Although students in the silent period are actively acquiring language skills, they might use only nonverbal forms of communication (e.g., nodding, shrugging, or pointing) until they feel adequately prepared to take on the challenge of verbal communication. This preproduction stage of language acquisition may last for several months (Ovando, Combs, & Collier, 2006). Students then pass through the early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency stages as they gain proficiency in the second language (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). (These stages are discussed further—in the context of assessing a student's progress in language acquisition—later in this chapter.) Figure 3.2 compares and contrasts first and second language acquisition processes.

CUP and SUP

The optimal learning environment for CLD students is one that leads to literacy skills in both the student's native language and in English. Why is it necessary to use students' native language when building their academic knowledge? In short, skills and knowledge gained in the native language transfer to the second language. The student's core of knowledge that is accessible through either language can be

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FIGURE 3.2
Comparison of First and Second Language Acquisition

L1 Acquisition	L1 and L2 Acquisition	L2 Acquisition
• Parents or caretakers are the primary language models for first language learners. • First language learners have innumerable opportunities to interact with language models. • Most first language learners acquire a high level of first language proficiency. • First language acquisition is arguably internally motivated by an innate cognitive process, although environmental factors shape development. • Most people develop a first language.	• Through a process called overgeneralization, a language learner may indiscriminately apply a language rule to many different situations (e.g., *He goed to the store yesterday*). • Learners acquire language by interacting with others. • Learners go through a silent period. • Learners need comprehensible input. • A highly contextualized, language-rich environment will facilitate language acquisition. • Language acquisition is cognitively demanding. • Language acquisition involves conceptualizing information in new ways and developing new ways of processing information. • Language acquisition occurs in predictable stages. • Language acquisition is a dynamic process during which learners actively construct meaning using prior knowledge, experience, and context.	• Second language learners already have a language for communication and thought. • Second language learners can transfer knowledge about language (metalinguistic awareness) and thought processes from the first to the second language. • Peers and teachers are the primary language models for second language learners. • Second language learners have a greater repertoire of language learning strategies. • The second language learner may make language mistakes in the second language because he or she is applying rules from the first language to the second language. • Second language learners can code switch, which involves using both languages to create greater meaning than could be achieved by relying on only one language. • Second language learners can use cognates to comprehend new words in the second language. • Second language learners often need more time to process information. • Second language learners have greater prior knowledge and experience to rely on as they acquire the second language. • Second language learners often have fewer opportunities to interact with second language models. • Second language acquisition is arguably externally motivated by sociocultural factors, although innate cognitive processes facilitate the acquisition process. Not all people develop a second language. • Second language learners can lose a first or second language if they do not use that language. • Many people do not acquire a high level of second language proficiency. • Second language learners who reach high levels of bilingual proficiency tend to have greater cognitive abilities than monolingual language learners.

Source: Herrera & Murry, *Mastering ESL and Bilingual Methods,* Table 3.1 "Ways in Which First and Second Language Acquisition Compare and Contrast," p. 63, © 2005. Reproduced by permission of Pearson Education, Inc.

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illustrated through the concept of *common underlying proficiency* (CUP) (Cummins, 1981). For example, regardless of the language educators initially use to teach the process of addition to students, the students will be able to perform the mathematical operation. The iceberg metaphor depicted in Figure 3.3 illustrates that while CLD students may not possess the English surface features to effectively explain how addition works, they might completely understand the concept of addition. They do not need to learn the concept twice, only the language to express their understanding in a new language. Unfortunately, some educators misunderstand students' background knowledge as being a *separate underlying proficiency* (SUP). The SUP viewpoint regards access to knowledge as limited to the specific language in which students originally learned the concepts or skills (Cummins, 1981). As a result of this misunderstanding, such teachers believe that curricular material must be retaught in English, and they often fail to notice the wealth of content knowledge that CLD students already possess.

Formal Assessment of Oral Language Proficiency

Ask a group of educators who are not ESL teachers what the formal assessments of their CLD students have shown in relation to their level of language proficiency, and often there will be silence in the room. With further prompting, the responses of those present likely will range from, "That is top secret information only available in the office for official use," to "That is the ESL teacher's information. I have too many students to keep up with that. I have the scores but I don't know what they mean," or "The students in my class have been exited so their scores don't really matter any more." My response is, "How will you know where you're going with your students if you don't know where they have been?"

Every district that has CLD students is required by law to administer a language test prior to assigning or placing a student in a program. These tests vary in the types of information they gather, yet whatever information is gleaned from the process can serve as a window into students' linguistic abilities. Figure 3.4 provides a list of the tests most used by states across the country to assess the linguistic and literacy abilities of CLD students, along with brief information that can guide you in understanding what the scores on each test mean. Often states choose to use tests that have been developed to meet the needs of students within their districts. We as educators can benefit from learning how CLD students are assessed and from using the results of those assessments to inform our understanding of each student's biography.

Standardized tests, along with informal observation of students' second language acquisition (SLA), help us to more effectively plan instruction. Thus, we need to be familiar with tools used to observe language development and get into the habit of using them daily in our classroom. Figure 3.5 provides an overview of the stages of SLA and student actions that may be observed by the teacher during each stage. As students progress through each stage, it is important that we recognize the steps of that progression so that we can appropriately scaffold and support their learning through our teaching strategies. Figure 3.6 illustrates what student production for a Thanksgiving activity can look like for each stage of SLA. Understanding the linguistic biographies of our CLD students increases our chances of successfully differentiating instruction to aid the progress of each student. In later chapters, we explore how knowledge of SLA stages is used to plan, teach, and assess student learning during every lesson.

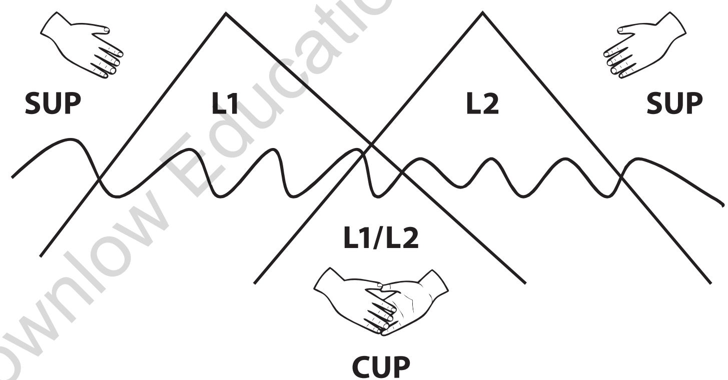
FIGURE 3.3

The Iceberg Metaphor

Academic language starts with basic literacy skills, and the demands increase as a student continues through school. Fluency and literacy in the native language (L1) allow the optimal ***transfer of skills*** to the second language (L2). Therefore, the more literate and schooled a student is in his or her L1, the easier it is for the student to transfer skills and concepts from the L1 to the L2 with appropriate instruction and support. This is where the interdependence and relationship between the L1 and L2 can clearly be seen.

SUP: Separate Underlying Proficiency (L1 and L2 do not interact)

CUP: Common Underlying Proficiency (L1 and L2 do interact to promote L2 acquisition)



Source: Adapted from Cummins (1981), p. 24. Used with permission.

Communicative and Sociolinguistic Considerations

Just as the sociocultural dimension encompasses students' implicit, often unverbalized, rules for loving, laughing, and living, the linguistic dimension relates to their internal guide for comprehending the world of verbal communication, with all its hidden cultural messages. Before a student enters the classroom, avenues of communication already have been paved for appropriate ways of asking a question, responding, and making sense of what is communicated in different contexts. Hymes (1972) referred to this as "communicative competence." Teaching is often contextualized within the "norms" of the English language. These subtle aspects may differ from the modes of communication used by CLD students. Our students have learned how to express what they know, resolve conflict, react to nonverbal cues, and navigate their emotional state based on the cultural context to which they have been socialized. Effective cross-cultural communication is essential to the teaching and learning process.

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