

Contents

Foreword, by Ester J. de Jong	vii
Preface	ix
PART I Theoretical Foundations, Framework, and Action	1
Why It's Important	1
But Say It Isn't So: No Ruby Slippers Within Political Contexts	2
Making It Happen	2
The Framework: Activating, Connecting, and Affirming Student Learning	6
The Strategies Versus Activities Debate	7
Meeting of the Minds: Students and Teachers as Equal Partners	9
Transformative Comprehensible Input	9
Putting All the Pieces Together	11
Transformative Thinking: Letting Go of Our Socialized Self	13
Conclusion	14
PART II BDI Strategies: Creating an Ecology of Care and Rigor	15
1 Images as Catalysts for Culturally Driven Connections	17
Linking Language	19
Picture This	28
Pictures and Words	36
Mind Map	44
Listen Sketch Label	50
Story Bag	58
2 Rigor: Leveraging Words Toward Academic Achievement	65
DOTS	68
Foldable	79
Pic-Tac-Tell	87
Vocabulary Quilt	95
Thumb Challenge	105
Magic Book	111
IDEA	118

3 Comprehension: It's Not Real Until It's Rehearsed and Written	124
U-C-ME	127
Extension Wheel	137
Hearts	145
Active Bookmark	154
Mini Novela	163
Tri-Fold	169
Word Drop	177
PART III Empowering Ourselves to Dismantle Both Visible and Invisible Walls	185
Why Are We Stuck?	185
Teachers as Agents of Change	185
A Glimpse of What's Possible	186
Change Begins with Each of Us	187
Student Knowledge Is ALWAYS Evolving	188
Lesson Planning and Lesson Delivery Are Not Mutually Exclusive	188
A Final Word	189
Appendix: Strategy Rubrics and Checklists	191
1 Images as Catalysts for Culturally Driven Connections	
Pictures and Words: Student Academic Behavior Checklist	192
Mind Map: Student Assessment Rubric	193
Listen Sketch Label: Student Academic Behavior Checklist	194
Story Bag: Student Assessment Rubric	195
2 Rigor: Leveraging Words Toward Academic Achievement	
DOTS: Student Academic Behavior Checklist	196
Pic-Tac-Tell: Student Assessment Rubric	197
Vocabulary Quilt: Student Academic Behavior Checklist	198
Thumb Challenge: Student Academic Behavior Checklist	199
3 Comprehension: It's Not Real Until It's Rehearsed and Written	
U-C-ME: Student Assessment Rubric	200
Extension Wheel: Student Assessment Rubric	201
Active Bookmark: Student Academic Behavior Checklist	202
References	203
Index	208
About the Authors	214

Preface

IN RECENT YEARS, the growth in the numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students in schools, as well as increasing diversity of all kinds among students in classrooms, has raised awareness of the need to differentiate both classroom instruction and instructional strategies for varying student populations. In our prior texts, especially *Biography-Driven Culturally Responsive Teaching* (Herrera, 2016), we have argued that an explicit focus on instructional strategies is needed in today's complex classrooms. As educators, we often have to be reminded that it's not all about the lesson plan or structured strategies for talk—although talk is essential to learning. However, students often lack the words to be full participants in making their voices heard. Having a tool in their hand to scaffold the language not only increases participation but also increases learning. The foundation of the strategies described in this book is the teacher's efforts to be intentional in providing opportunities for students to make public the language and knowledge they have in relation to what is being taught. Teachers plan and deliver lessons keeping the biography of the learner as a central tenet of their teaching. They document what students are producing and weave it into the existing curriculum. Such attention to the CLD student's biography reduces both inaccurate assumptions about what students know (and do not know) and redundancies in teaching.

Early, extensive, and ongoing attention to the dimensions of students' biographies—the sociocultural, the cognitive, the linguistic, and the academic dimensions—encourages student-teacher partnerships in the attainment of rich learning and literacy development objectives. The value of the sociocultural dimension, in particular, cannot be overestimated, as it often tends to determine what students find meaningful in classroom strategies for differentiated instruction. Moreover, this dimension speaks to the social/emotional needs of learners and to the imperative

for us as teachers to support each child's development of a positive self-concept that reflects:

- Confidence in his or her academic abilities to learn and succeed,
- Assurance that his or her perspective matters,
- Conviction that his or her culture and native language are inherently valuable, and
- Belief that he or she is a contributor to the learning of the classroom community.

Students' engagement in school-based learning increases when they see tangible actions on the part of teachers to build relationships with them and address these foundational social/emotional needs (Guthrie, Rueda, Gambrell, & Morrison, 2009). Their sense of personal belonging in turn promotes students' ability to make meaningful connections to the content (Boston & Baxley, 2014). Educational neuroscience especially stresses the importance of such *meaningful learning* to the student's success in the classroom and beyond (Sousa, 2011).

This text, like our earlier resource for secondary educators (Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2011), offers K–8 teachers strategies for academic learning and literacy development that are grounded in, and build upon, the four dimensions of the student biography. Each of the strategies is intentionally designed to *explore students' hearts and minds* as a means of creating a learning experience that is both meaningful and authentic. Each strategy has been *classroom tested with CLD students* in grade-level and ESL classrooms. A systematic, classroom observation-based study of 239 teachers in 41 different schools in one Midwestern state suggests that when teachers deliberately incorporate such strategies into their lessons, those teachers demonstrate higher-quality instruction (Herrera, Perez, Kavimandan, Holmes, & Miller, 2011). Specifically, teachers using a biography-driven instructional strategy showed

significantly higher levels of meeting universal standards of effective pedagogy (Tharp & Dalton, 2007). These standards are emphasized throughout the book and include instructional practices such as these:

- Drawing on students' prior knowledge and background experiences related to language and literacy development.
- Leveraging student assets to facilitate a community of learners in which individuals' personal connections with the content are shared, respected, and used to advance learning.
- Communicating clear standards and expectations for challenging activities while also monitoring students' affective responses and providing scaffolds to support success.
- Prompting students to articulate their thoughts and then revoicing student connections in ways that promote elaboration, critical thinking, and a shared sense of community.

This book offers both teachers and teacher educators a valuable resource and reference for their ongoing efforts to enhance their teaching and professional capacities for delivering highly differentiated classroom instruction that maximizes biography-driven strategies. In addition to detailed descriptions of the research-based rationale and methods for enacting each strategy, printed and online resources are provided. For many strategies, templates for use in the classroom, as well as rubrics and checklists to assist the teacher in assessing student progress, appear in the book and are available for free download from the Teachers College Press website: tcpress.com/accelerating. Real-world implementation of six of these biography-driven strategies with diverse learners in grade-level classrooms is illustrated in video clips that are available for viewing online at coe.k-state.edu/cima/biographycrt.

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The Center for Intercultural and Multilingual Advocacy (CIMA) is filled with colleagues, graduate students, and undergraduates who all, in one way or another, shared a part of their lives to make this project possible. Throughout this process, our colleagues have provided us with valuable insights and feedback. Special thanks go to Melissa Holmes and Sheri Meredith, who were steadfast in their attention to detail as they provided constructive criticism, helped us refine and clarify our thoughts, and encouraged us through to the end. Without their support, this project would still be an unfinished dream. We are indebted to Ray Martinez, whose creative photographic outlook allowed us to capture in both pictures and video teachers' successful use of these strategies.

We also owe special thanks to the many administrators and teachers across the state of Kansas and in numerous other states who opened their school and classroom doors to us for extensive conversations regarding cultural and linguistic diversity in America's classrooms. Their unwavering dedication to the field was a constant source of motivation. Their perspectives and their willingness to discuss both their challenges and their successes contributed tremendously to the heart and soul of this book.

Finally, to the many BESITOS students who have passed through the College of Education at Kansas State University and are continually striving in the field to provide all students with the education they deserve, regardless of current or past political agendas, your willingness to share your lives as advocates for students and families has certainly paved the way for generations of students to turn their dreams into reality.

PART I

Theoretical Foundations, Framework, and Action

AS SCHOOLS AND DISTRICTS across the country race toward a continually moving target of increasing academic achievement for all, the students most in need of effective classroom instruction continue to be left behind with regard to both opportunity to learn and community membership. These realities manifest themselves in demonstrated gaps in learning and achievement among certain groups of students. For the last 2 decades, the Center for Intercultural and Multilingual Advocacy (CIMA) has posed the following questions in an attempt to identify what often keeps professional development from accomplishing its intended goals: educators' application of theory to practice or, more specifically, their higher levels of implementation of scientifically based strategies that support content and language learning for all students.

- What explicit supports do teachers need in order to be successful in diverse classrooms where students vary in level of language proficiency, cultural background, and academic foundations to learn?
- What do “opportunity” and “respect” look, feel, and sound like in classrooms that hold high expectations for all?
- In what ways can conditions be created for all learners to be active participants in the learning community?
- What implications do lesson activities and strategies have for student interaction, higher-order thinking, and academic achievement?
- What instructional strategies have the greatest potential—through effective teacher implementation—for assimilation by students as personal learning strategies?
- How can a teacher utilize students' languages, cultures, and academic backgrounds to promote their higher-order thinking and support them in reaching high levels of participation, discussion, and learning?

These are but a few of the questions for which we have gathered data across the country for nearly 20 years. These data have informed our own teaching and learning and have provided us with evidence from classroom practice that gives us the confidence to say, “What you will find in this book works in classrooms!” This book was written for teachers, with teachers, and by teachers. Herrera (2016) details the scientific underpinnings of the instructional method that is the focus of our work: biography-driven instruction. The theory that frames actions in classroom practice has been documented clearly for decades. Our work in this book represents the next step in planning and delivering lessons that are grounded in and guided by the biography of the learner. Biography-driven instruction supports teachers in holding the highest expectations for students and in nurturing citizens of the future who will use their own agency to achieve their highest potential. The comprehensive method provides the framework and tools needed for bridging between students' biographies and grade-level vocabulary and academic concepts. This framework and an array of field-tested strategies and tools for ensuring equal community participation, individual accountability, and the academic advancement of all learners comprise the essence of this book.

Why It's Important

Now, more than ever, there is a need to ensure that educators become decision-makers within their classrooms and that they are equipped with the best research, reflective about their practice, and dedicated to not just teaching but *knowing* and *reaching* their community of learners. Teachers are charged with implementing ever-increasing levels of rigor in instruction, resources used, and assessment, and with promoting higher-order thinking in every classroom, every day! These expectations are imposed at the same

time that our classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse in language, culture, socioeconomic status, mobility, and so much more.

For example, more than 400 languages in addition to English are represented in U.S. schools (Goldenberg & Wagner, 2015). Although Spanish-speaking students make up 77% of the total K–12 culturally and linguistically diverse student population, Arabic, Chinese, and Vietnamese are among the other top languages, each constituting approximately 2% (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The diversity of languages and cultures will continue to impact educators across the United States, as an estimated 40% of school-aged students are expected to speak a language other than English by the year 2030 (Bhattacharya & Quiroga, 2009). We choose to use the term *culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD)* to describe the students for whom this book is targeted. This term, for us, provides the reader with a more realistic picture of what classroom diversity looks like across the country. Within any classroom, one will find students who “wear” different labels and receive different services. For these students, and particularly for those whose first language is not English, the strategies in this book provide essential support systems that ensure critical scaffolding for their linguistic and academic learning.

But Say It Isn’t So: No Ruby Slippers Within Political Contexts

Teaching as a form of political action has often limited the execution of best practice since the dawn of the modern era. Bound by school culture, as well as district, state, and national agendas, the life of educators is always in flux waiting for what we call the “flavor of the day,” that is, the new curriculum or new program that often touts what educators need to do to respond to the changing needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students. However, the end results are limited to short-term bumps on standardized tests, which leave students anxious, frustrated, and believing that they will never be good enough. At the same time, such initiatives leave teachers feeling overwhelmed and disillusioned with the results and, oftentimes, the damage. We wait for the next super solution or quick fix, hoping that the next program or set of re-envisioned standards will emerge as the saving grace for all our system’s failings. These agendas are often superimposed on teachers—professionals who have the knowledge, skill, passion, and commitment to think for themselves. When provided with a general roadmap, strong leadership, and the freedom to teach, teachers bring learning to life and all learners benefit. This book is about taking the next step and doing what’s best for students in our classrooms, despite the political contexts that surround us.

The Common Core State Standards (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices & Council of Chief State School Officers [NGA & CCSSO], 2010) have set the bar that “all students must be able to comprehend texts of steadily increasing complexity as they progress through school” (p. 2). Every classroom must be focused on ensuring that all students, regardless of background, spend more time reading in the content areas. The key to achieving these goals is an explicit focus on instruction in academic vocabulary in ways that move learners beyond being passive recipients of word explanations and definitions to being active constructors of word knowledge who understand how words work in different contexts and for different purposes. This type of academic language learning requires teachers to have a deep understanding of not only the instructional content but also their students’ biographies. Teachers must create classroom conditions in which all members of the learning community see both their own background knowledge and ongoing discourse as central to generating ideas, testing hypotheses, reaching consensus, and applying their knowledge to the future. Although the future of the Common Core standards is unknown, a quick glance at national and state standards of the past provides us with clear evidence that standards change very little over time. Each set strives to provide a clear guide, a roadmap of where our journey in the classroom should take us. Therefore, regardless of which academic standards we use—those of the past or the reconfigured standards of the future—the overarching goals will continue to be the same. For teachers, the question becomes: *How will we set conditions that promote reaching these standards for ALL students, especially those who do not learn from traditional ways of teaching?*

At the end of the day, increasing student achievement is as much about the *how* of teaching and learning as it is about the *what*! The goal of this book is to provide pre-K–8 teachers with an explicit framework for lesson delivery and a set of strategies within a biography-driven method of instruction (Herrera, 2010, 2016). These biography-driven instructional strategies assist teachers in providing all learners with the tools, skills, and knowledge necessary to support their own learning within a grade-level, standards-based, and standards-driven curriculum.

Making It Happen

Fundamental to moving forward in meeting the academic, linguistic, and social needs of all learners is understanding the paths they have traveled before they arrive in our classrooms. The “histories” they bring serve to inform our instructional practice in ways that allow us to better establish the necessary conditions for all learners to be part of a

classroom learning community that together negotiates meaning, challenges positions, and constructs new meaning from text. This type of teaching and learning dynamic begins with the single step of our creating opportunities for learners to make public both their personal and academic experiences, perspectives, and knowledge.

CLD students come to school with a wealth of knowledge and experiences (Rea & Mercuri, 2006). As educators, we realize this, but we often fail to plan for opening the lesson from a building background, asset perspective. We need to let go of the assumption that the content and language we are going to introduce are completely new or beyond the students' reach, because otherwise we wouldn't need to teach it. Often we assume a deficit perspective and begin to teach based on our assumptions about what the learner is missing, language limitations, or academic gaps. We attempt to build background by filling in the perceived gaps using our own cultural experiences and language. An experience Socorro Herrera had while observing a class illustrates the problem:

I once observed a teacher who was teaching about the importance of sequence in writing. She proceeded to lecture her students about a cooking show she watched everyday. During the show, she shared, it was important for the chef to follow the sequence of the recipe if he was to understand it and ensure that what he was cooking would turn out as planned. She had the group repeat the word *sequence* and then repeat why it was important to follow the sequence if you wanted your writing to be organized and to turn out as planned. This lesson took more than 20 minutes, with a thumbs up response at the end to check for understanding.

As I watched the lesson and observed the students, I knew that they were on autopilot. All of the students were Mexican American, and if they were watching television at home, I was pretty certain they would not be watching a cooking show—maybe a telenovela, but not a cooking show. I also knew that if the teacher had just provided a few minutes for the *students* to generate instances when a person would have to use sequence for something, she could have harvested a bounty of ideas from which to make connections to the writing process.

Key to our work is providing a strategy that invites the learner in when we open our lessons. Asking students to share the knowledge they already possess related to the topic or vocabulary we are going to introduce is essential. When asked, most teachers agree that using prior knowledge in the lesson is critical for “hooking” students into learning. Yet we educators often fall short of holding every

student accountable for sharing and documenting what he or she knows so that this knowledge is available for our joint use when we cross the bridge into the lesson with our students.

In our work with teachers, most share with us that they generally incorporate isolated, and at times fragmented, activities and strategies into their teaching, and they cite time constraints and scripted programs as the reason for not taking time to listen to every student's voice. They realize that they are missing opportunities to invite the learner into the lesson, yet they struggle to see how providing such opportunities will translate to greater learning outcomes. In this book, we challenge teachers to think of the “activation” of background knowledge systems (Herrera, Kavimandan, & Holmes, 2011) as a nonnegotiable phase of the lesson that validates the potential of every learner. The process of activating and accessing students' background knowledge throughout the lesson is as important as interaction during the lesson and assessment of student learning at the end of the lesson.

We ask teachers to re-envision the opening moments of a lesson, moving beyond the typical KWL (know/want to know/learned), picture walk, or whole-group response to visuals and toward strategies that provide insights into every child's multiple layers of background knowledge. Applying strategies that provide a forum for every student to be an active participant at the beginning of the lesson increases the likelihood that teachers will use what students already know to take every learner to the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978), as well as to validate, respect, and invite every learner into the lesson. When teachers have knowledge of what students know both in and out of school, they are better prepared to create conditions and situations that scaffold learning socioculturally, linguistically, cognitively, and academically.

Biopsychosocial Histories, Communication, and Cognition in Action

Grounded in the communicative and cognitive approaches of teaching and learning, the biography-driven instruction (BDI) method (Herrera, 2016) situates teaching and learning within the biopsychosocial histories of the learner and the teacher. That is, it asks teachers to consider the biological, psychological, and sociological influences at play for each person in the classroom learning community (Herrera, Cabral, & Murry, 2013). Student learning is a complex and dynamic process that has been the focus of study for hundreds of years. Science and practice-based theory has documented core or foundational principles for effective instruction within any classroom setting. Among these is the need to be student centered (Dewey, 1938; Marzano &

Toth, 2014; Tomlinson et al., 2003), to build relationships (Boston & Baxley, 2014; Guthrie, Rueda, Gambrell, & Morrison, 2009; Noddings, 2005; Sleeter, 2011) and contextualize instruction within the lived experiences of the learner (Gay, 2010; Tharp & Dalton, 2007; Wyatt, 2015). These are just a few of the first critical concepts that teachers need to understand in order to be effective in classroom practice. Who the student is, where he or she comes from, and how she or he fits into the culture of the school are essential factors to understand before effective lessons can be planned and delivered.

Building on the work of Thomas and Collier (e.g., 1995, 1997), Herrera and Murry have developed the concept of the *CLD student biography* (see Herrera, 2016; Herrera, Cabral, & Murry 2013; Herrera & Murry, 2016; Herrera, Perez, & Escamilla, 2014). This concept accounts for the challenges and processes associated with each of the four dimensions of the student: the sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive, and academic dimensions. These dimensions are interrelated and influence the individual child's way of viewing, interpreting, and interacting in the world. Biography-driven lessons incorporate structured opportunities for students to articulate their perspectives and to make connections between the past and their present learning. Because lessons are connected to each dimension of students' biographies, they promote lasting, meaningful links to the content and language as well as students' future applications of learning. Following is a brief overview of each of the dimensions of the CLD student biography.

Sociocultural Dimension

The sociocultural dimension is at the heart of the CLD student's biography, as it reflects the student's funds of knowledge (home) and prior knowledge (community). It consists of the intersection between social institutions (e.g., home, school), affective influences (e.g., self-esteem, anxiety, motivation), and social interactive phenomena (e.g., bias, prejudice, discrimination). In short, the sociocultural dimension is about a student's life, love, and laughter (Herrera, 2016).

Socioculturally, the family and community in which the CLD student is being raised have a huge impact on how he or she initially defines literacy (Herrera et al., 2014). For example, a CLD student raised in a family where oral story-telling practices are woven into the fabric of traditions is no less literate than a student who spends hours each week at the library. Educators in schools, where the tapestry of learners is as rich and as varied as the stories they know, must begin to define "literacy" in ways beyond the act of reading from a book.

Teachers in biography-driven classrooms respect students for the varied backgrounds they bring and provide all learners with a "canvas of opportunity" for sharing the literacy opportunities they have at home. These opportunities may include visual representations of knowledge and learning. At the opening of the lesson, during the lesson, and at the close of the lesson students are provided with multiple opportunities to "make public" their connections to the academic language and content being taught. Students' depth of understanding thus becomes transparent not only for the learner but also for the teacher, who can then use these insights to guide each learner to higher levels of linguistic and academic development. In short, a teacher's working knowledge of the sociocultural dimension is contingent upon the classroom conditions that he or she creates to encourage students to share their knowledge and experiences and know that such contributions will be respected, valued, and built upon in the learning process.

Linguistic Dimension

Educational perspectives that overlook or minimize the role of students' linguistic assets in their development of English language proficiency and learning have led to classroom practices such as "teaching to the test" and drill-and-practice techniques to increase language knowledge, vocabulary development, and conceptual understanding. Tests and more tests have been developed to monitor, sometimes on a weekly basis, the language growth of English language learners. Such an emphasis on testing leads to a narrowed curricular focus and frequently results in students remaining at the lower levels of thinking and learning. Resulting classroom practices do little to maximize L1 (native language) to L2 (target language, English) transfer, rarely allow students to use their native language to build a conceptual foundation for learning, and seldom focus on meaningful interaction. A shift in thinking can open doors for educators to understand how the native language, which is intertwined with a student's culture, influences how students comprehend, communicate, and express their knowledge, their process thinking, and themselves.

The native language reflects the core of each student, as it is the vehicle he or she first used to communicate and express his or her needs. Depending on the individual school and classroom, this native language is either acknowledged and validated as an essential part of the CLD student biography or is ignored and disregarded based on the belief that it inhibits the student's acquisition of English. However, research has shown that when the native language is used as a foundation for English language development, we are able to accelerate our students'

acquisition of English (Collier & Thomas, 2009; Cummins, 1981, 1989; Thomas & Collier, 2002, 2012). By encouraging students to draw upon their native language in their academic endeavors, we affirm their personal identities, support their expression of content understanding and learning, and promote the cross-linguistic transfer of literacy knowledge and skills needed to comprehend academic, grade-level curricula (Cummins, 1989; Herrera, 2016; Herrera et al., 2014; Thomas & Collier, 2012).

Key aspects of any language that shape literacy development and that have implications for learning (Herrera et al., 2014) include the following:

- **Phonology.** The sounds of the native language, which may or may not exist in the English language.
- **Syntax.** The order in which words are put together in the native language, which again can be very different from English word order.
- **Morphology.** The structure of words and the meaning of word parts.
- **Semantics.** The meaning of words in context.

Knowing about each of these aspects can support us as we approach literacy instruction with CLD students. This knowledge provides us with a backdrop for understanding how students use language to articulate their views, pose questions, and comprehend what is being communicated or taught. The art of observing the student's ways of knowing and how this knowledge is expressed or made public has the potential to teach us about the cognitive paths the learner is taking. With these insights, we can better orchestrate instruction to ensure that each learner has the linguistic support necessary to achieve each lesson's goals.

Cognitive Dimension

The cognitive dimension highlights how students know, think, and apply. As defined by Gipe (2014), cognition refers to “the nature of knowing, or the ways of organizing and understanding our experiences” (p. 5). The lived experiences of CLD students vary greatly and dramatically influence the way they make sense of the world. For example, the lived experiences of a CLD student who has fled his country with a parent due to religious persecution are very different from those of a CLD student who was born and raised in the United States. Understanding how the experiences lived by each of these students provide him or her with a unique lens for interpreting events and information is critical.

As a result of individual differences in how they know and think, students also differ in the way they learn and apply new knowledge. Consider the varied responses stu-

dents might provide if asked to summarize a passage of text. Each student, based on how he or she knows and thinks about the topic, might perceive certain details to be of greater or lesser importance. Each of these processes—knowing, thinking, and applying—is influenced by the funds of knowledge, prior knowledge, and academic knowledge specific to each individual student.

- **Funds of knowledge** relate to “those historically developed and accumulated strategies (e.g., skills, abilities, ideas, practices) or bodies of knowledge that are essential to a household's functioning and well-being” (ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages and Linguistics, 1994, p. 1; see also Greenberg, 1989; Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992; Vélez-Ibáñez & Greenberg, 1992).
- **Prior knowledge** relates to the knowledge that students gain through their interactions with the community or communities in which they live and through their environments, including the natural world, recreational reading, television, and the Internet.
- **Academic knowledge** relates to the school-bound skills and knowledge students gain through their academic experiences in the United States, as well as those in the country of origin (or any other country in which the student received education). Students can also gain academic knowledge in unconventional ways, such as through informal apprenticeships. For example, a student who learns how to build a house from a parent might possess cognitive skills that can support him or her in solving mathematical problems. (*Note:* The same student may or may not have the academic vocabulary needed to verbally express the mathematical reasoning and problem-solving processes.)

Together, these existing knowledge systems make up a student's *background knowledge*, and they create unique pathways for the learner (Herrera, 2016).

Educators often talk about learning styles and learning strategies, yet we seldom connect how each of these may be molded by the language, culture, experiences, and academic background of the learner. Taking students to the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978) in the classroom requires us to ensure that they have a certain level of “struggle” and challenge. This constructive imbalance requires the learner to use all available pathways—new and old—to solve the problem. Learning results when students take information and make it their own. Our reward as teachers comes from seeing the student make meaning of the information and use it for more than simply answering a question on a test! Academic success begins with students knowing that they have learned something and that the effort they have put in was worthwhile.

Academic Dimension

The academic dimension of the CLD student biography encompasses students' access, engagement, and hope. It relates to both present and past school experiences, educational and support programs, and curricula that have played a part in a student's education. The climate of the educational settings in which a student has participated—as well as the attitudes, perspectives, and expectations of teachers—help form a student's perceptions about his or her abilities and place in school. Such factors play a pivotal role in the student's motivation to engage in the learning process. They also affect whatever degree of hope the learner has that his or her effort will lead to English language development and academic achievement.

When it comes to literacy development, the academic dimension plays a particularly pertinent role. Academic literacy, as defined by Gipe (2014), is the instructional literacy children have been exposed to through personal experiences with books and other forms of written or spoken language. Often students come with academic knowledge that is discounted because it was taught using ways that differ from those currently dictated. Frequently, math teachers will comment, "Students can get the correct answer, but they cannot show the steps we are required to check." In a similar way, students' academic knowledge in science is not tapped into or used to bridge to the current curriculum. As a result, students are left feeling as though they are blank slates. As noted in our discussion of the sociocultural dimension of the CLD student biography, many CLD students may not have experienced the more traditional exposure to "text" that is recognized within the U.S. public school setting. Yet literacy development and academic learning that are guided and supported by the teacher's reflective actions, selection of materials, and orchestration of the community of learners have the potential to lead to the type of learning that is always moving students forward.

The Framework: Activating, Connecting, and Affirming Student Learning

In this book we provide a framework that serves as an overlay to lesson planning and a guide for lesson delivery. The framework is intended to help stimulate a discussion among paraprofessionals, ESL teachers, content-area teachers, administrators, and other educators regarding academic vocabulary development, comprehension, and the acceleration of literacy and academic achievement for *all* students. The framework is meant to be descriptive rather than prescriptive, as it is not meant to replace existing

curricular programs but rather to provide tools that more explicitly bring CLD students into the learning equation. The framework further provides the essential elements necessary to be a culturally responsive educator. Toward this end, we describe what we see as essential processes of effective instruction through presentation of specific actions that take place throughout three phases that make up the lesson.

Our framework supports attainment of learning goals throughout the following three phases of linguistic and academic development within the lesson: Activation, Connection, and Affirmation. These phases of development align with the three general stages of the lesson: opening, work time, and closing. Each phase is action oriented toward achieving the goals of activating and documenting students' background knowledge, utilizing what is produced to make connections to new content, and using artifacts to affirm linguistic and academic growth.

Activation: A Canvas of Opportunity

In the *Activation* phase (opening of the lesson), the goal is to create a risk-free environment for our students so they can draw from their funds of knowledge, prior knowledge, and academic knowledge and identify links to the lesson. From the outset, we must create conditions that encourage learners to take risks at their own pace without being judged for their linguistic variations or background knowledge. The first step in creating opportunities to make public what is known in relation to the stated objective is to let go of our assumption as teachers that our students could not possibly be able to produce anything that would be of value. At this time, group configurations reflect our consideration of the biographies of the students who will come together to share before anything new is introduced. We use our knowledge of students' cognitive and academic dimensions to consider differences in academic readiness. We also take into account possible differences in student perspectives resulting from influences of culture and community. Value and respect for one another are critical at this point, when student expression is the goal. Throughout this phase we assume the role of strategic observer, taking in whatever students share and internally brainstorming ways we might be able to connect students' thoughts and ideas with the lesson.

By introducing the topic or vocabulary using visuals and specific strategies that activate students' background knowledge, we provide students with the opportunity to make public both their experiential and academic knowledge. A risk-free environment allows all students to represent what they know in words and/or in pictures and to use whatever language(s) are available as resources to express what they