In this inquiry study, teachers will explore the concept of English Language Learning and its implications for classrooms. Individually and in small groups, teachers will have opportunities to read, talk, and reflect about current issues regarding linguistic diversity in classrooms and schools, including bilingual/multilingual, ESL, and language variation contexts. Teachers will carefully examine their beliefs about language difference and revalue language as a resource. At the conclusion of the study, each teacher will have asked questions, gathered new materials, acquired new strategies, and developed action plans to guide his/her teaching practice with linguistically diverse students. Lists 22 professional reading resources selections. (NKA)
English Language Learning:
Revaluing Language as Resource

When teachers understand the light in the eyes of their students as evidence that they are capable and worthy human beings, then schools can become places of hope and affirmation for students of all backgrounds and all situations.

Sonia Nieto (1999)

It is not possible to empower a people and a culture and simultaneously reject their language as less than perfect or acceptable.

Rosina Lippi-Green (2000)

In this Inquiry Study, you will explore the concept of English Language Learning and its implications for classrooms. Individually and in small groups, you will have opportunities to read, talk and reflect about current issues regarding linguistic diversity in classrooms and schools, including bilingual/multilingual, ESL and language variation contexts. You will carefully examine your beliefs about language difference and revalue language as a resource. At the conclusion of the study you will have asked questions, gathered new materials, acquired new strategies and developed action plans to guide your teaching practice with linguistically-diverse students.
LEARNING CONCEPTS
The following is a list of learning concepts that will be explored in the study. You are encouraged to add additional concepts that reflect a transactional, language-as-resource perspective on second language learning as it is not meant to represent an exhaustive list.

- Language learning, including second languages, is socially mediated.
- Learners' knowledge of more than one language is a strength for classrooms.
- Linguistic diversity is a resource, not a problem.
- Issues of language cannot be separated from issues of culture.
- Issues of language cannot be separated from issues of identity.
- Issues of language cannot be separated from issues of power.
- Community and household knowledge and language is intellectual capital that can be a source for curriculum content and language teaching decisions.
- A holistic, meaningful, functional context mediates students’ language learning.
- English Language Learners draw on their knowledge of their first language as they learn a second language; the maintenance of, and continued development of, learners’ first language is critical.
- A high level of intellectual expectation should be maintained while learners gain second language skills.
- Whole, authentic texts, including quality, culturally-relevant literature support English language learners’ development.
- Learners’ approximations (in pronunciation, syntax, graphophonic representations, etc.) are rich opportunities for teachers to see development and value the influence of first language knowledge on second language learning.
- Reading, writing, speaking and listening are parallel systems that develop simultaneously; biliteracy (reading and writing in two languages) occurs simultaneously with bilingualism (speaking and listening in two languages).
- The use of sign systems other than oral and written language (art, music, drama, math, etc.) effectively supports learners’ acquisition of a new language.
- Language is learned most easily in an environment where students feel safe taking risks and are accepted as valued individuals and learners.
- Attention to issues of linguistic diversity is important in all classrooms – even monolingual settings.
FOCUSING QUESTIONS
These are questions that we, as authors of this study, generated to focus the experiences provided in this inquiry study. Everyone in your Reading Initiative group is invited to add questions throughout the study and throughout the year.

- What are the relationships between language and culture, language and identity, language and power, and first and second languages?
- How does second language develop?
- What are the instructional contexts and strategies that best support effective second language development?
- How can teachers simultaneously value and include the language from students' homes and communities and support their development toward conventional/standard English?
- How should second language learners be evaluated?
- What are appropriate materials to use with second language learners?
- How should English monolingual teachers work with English Language Learners?
- What are the political realities affecting second language learning and teaching?
TERMS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS TOPIC
In addition to asking the questions that came to mind when we considered teachers as active inquirers of their own practice, we generated an initial list of words and phrases related to research and inquiry. You might elect to begin your own list—graffiti-style—on a large piece of butcher paper that can be added to over time. You are also invited to add terms to those below. This list helps frame the territory of our work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bilingualism</th>
<th>dialect</th>
<th>English Language Learner/learning</th>
<th>biliteracy</th>
<th>monolingualism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>identity</td>
<td>immigration</td>
<td>context</td>
<td>culture</td>
<td>power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transfer</td>
<td>deficit model</td>
<td>linguistic diversity</td>
<td>approximation</td>
<td>code switching</td>
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<tr>
<td>language myths</td>
<td>language loss</td>
<td>language dominance</td>
<td>language status</td>
<td>code mixing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reading response</td>
<td>transaction</td>
<td>text set</td>
<td>culturally authentic</td>
<td>literature study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard English</td>
<td>ethnography</td>
<td>case study</td>
<td>miscue</td>
<td>invention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sign systems</td>
<td>culturally relevant curriculum</td>
<td>mediation</td>
<td>language choice</td>
<td>funds of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>proficiency</td>
<td>ideology</td>
<td>transitional program</td>
<td>maintenance program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

READING INITIATIVE LEARNING STRANDS
The Reading Initiative professional development experience could be envisioned as a complex tapestry of beliefs, engagements, readings, questions, and reflections. Each engagement is woven onto a foundation provided by the following strands.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Literacy as Part of a Cultural Community</th>
<th>Knowledge Base</th>
<th>Close Observation</th>
<th>Supportive Literacy Contexts</th>
<th>Professional Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focused observations and analysis by each participant of his/her own literacy processes and theories, including the forces that impact those theories.</td>
<td>The concepts and experiences explored and supported by professional reading.</td>
<td>Focused observations and analysis of students as literacy learners.</td>
<td>Exploration and development of contexts that support and encourage readers and writers.</td>
<td>Exploration and development of procedures and contexts that encourage collegiality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Initiating Engagements

Shared experiences that help participants reflect on their personal experiences and knowledge—getting those out into the class conversation—as the group predicts the direction of the study.

The consultant facilitates several or all of these experiences to get the study underway.

### I. Collecting What We Know

As a group, participants contribute to four ongoing collections: 1) questions they have about the learning study; 2) at least five resources for a group-created text set, including books, journals, articles in the popular press, and reading/writing developmental continua; 3) a graffiti board collection of all related words and phrases, i.e., professional development, workshops, authentic learning, and lifelong learning; and 4) a list: what possible ways could we study how teachers learn?

### II. Making Meaning in Other Languages

Using the included examples of print in languages other than English (on overhead transparencies), work as a group to predict/hypothesize about the meaning and purpose of the print. What function does the text serve? How do you know? How is print placed on the page? What do the conventions of the print indicate about its purpose? As you work to construct meaning, list strategies you are using to make sense of the text. List questions you consider as you sort through the text. What does this experience teach you about how second language learners learn to read?

### III. What Does It Mean to Be Bilingual?, I

Working first individually and then as a group, explore what it means to be bilingual following the steps in the discussion activity.

### IV. What Does It Mean to Be Bilingual?, II

Read Nieto (1996). Study the terms listed on the transparency and discuss the implications of each term. From the discussion, negotiate a name for the study group and a term to use to refer to English Language Learners in your educational community.

### V. Text Rendering

Read the poem “Rayford’s Song” (author, date) and reconstruct the text as a group using the text rendering strategy.

### VI. I Hate English!: Sharing Personal Stories

Read I Hate English! (Levine, 1989) and discuss. Share individual stories of experiences with multiple languages and histories of learning second languages.
Potential Resources

Multiple and varied sources of information that provide alternative perspectives and create opportunities for complex connections.

All participants in the study group contribute resources to a collective text set. NCTE provides key articles and video footage. Consultant reads all articles in planning the study.

Creating a Text Set

Participants each contribute at least five resources for a group-created text set, including books, journals, articles in the popular press, pamphlets, etc.

Specific to this study:
- A set of recent literacy journals and texts, or publishers' catalogs
- District and state curriculum documents

Professional Reading

Optional: Schedule part of each meeting to read from the evolving text set, providing an opportunity to seek information to inform the group's questions.

Engagements

Opportunities to test out and explore multiple perspectives on the learning process.

These experiences might be facilitated by the consultant or by a group leader in the consultant's absence. Some experiences are lived outside of the study group time.

E1 Identity and Language

Read as many texts from the text set listed as possible. Discuss the books as they relate to identity, perhaps beginning with the Nieto (2002) quote. Working as individuals, in pairs, or as a whole group, create a magazine collage response to the issues of identity in the picture books.

E2 Culture and Language

Read as many texts from the text set listed as possible. Discuss the books as they relate to culture. Identify ways in which the books, their characters and their experiences are similar and different than yours and your students. Consider how you can connect with these texts through cultural universals in spite of issues of diversity, but how distancing yourself from the text can also reveal ideological stances of authors and readers.

E3 Linguistic Diversity

Read as many texts from the text set listed as possible. Discuss the books as they relate to linguistic diversity. Read and discuss the transcript of children's talk about *Pepita Talks Twice* (Lachtman, 1995).

E4 Listening in on Biliteracy: Watch, Pause, and Say Something

Watch the video segments of second graders reading in English and Spanish. Between segments pause and say something as directed.

E5 Confronting Issues of Standard English

Read the article by Linda Christensen (1994a) and discuss by completing the “anomalies” strategy. Also read the poem, “Language prison” in the center of the article and respond.

E6 When Kids Use Words We Don’t Know: From Chanclas to Canicas

Read and discuss Fránuiz & Reyes (1998) article. Bring examples from your teaching to share. Brainstorm strategies for making use of languages other than English in the classroom.

E7 What’s on Your Mind?

Select a piece of controversial text such as a picture book, a newspaper article, or a vignette from a professional book or journal that discusses language, culture or identity issues relevant to your community. Web “what’s on your mind?”
Demonstrations
Examination of learning concepts and the learning process. Build from learners’ questions and help to generate new insights.

Demonstrations are led by the consultant and help build new knowledge and understandings. They generally follow the preceding group and individual experiences.

D1
Contrasting Language Paradigms
Discuss the attributes of the old and new paradigms presented by Franquiz and Reyes (1998) and included as a transparency. Identify your position on each attribute according to your current teaching and discuss ways to rethink practice.

D2
Lessons in Two Languages
Read and discuss Moll, Diaz, Estrada & Lopes (1992) and complete the “save the last word” strategy. Share themes from small group discussions with the large group.

D3
Funds of Knowledge, I
Read Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez (1992) and discuss. List funds of knowledge from study group members’ households and communities. Watch the video excerpt from Escuela Familia and propose ways to discover funds of knowledge in your classroom.

D4
A Case Study of One African American English Speaker
Read the article by Lippi-Green (2000) and the case study of Marcus from Sulentic (1999). Discuss. Also read Creativity (Steptoe, 1997).

D5
Analyzing ELL Writing
Examine the writing samples on transparencies from the Diana group, Brooke, Marisel and Lolita. Discuss implications for assessment and instruction in the classroom.

D6
What’s in YOUR Backpack?

Invitations to Inquiry
Experimenting by applying questions, tools, and methods of inquiry to a specific issue.

Invitations to inquiry provide opportunities to conduct focused, short inquiries to further explore concepts and questions that have been raised. Participants are invited to choose or create their own inquiries as appropriate. They can be explored by individuals, small groups, or by the entire group.

Q1
Focus on One Writer
Develop a case study of an English Language Learner by considering his or her writing. Collect writing samples, observe the writer engaged in the writing process, and interview the writer. Read Fu (1992) to help you value the student’s self-evaluation in the portfolio development process.

Q2
Focus on One Reader
Develop a case study of an English Language Learner by considering his or her reading. Audio-tape the student reading in English (and in first language if possible) and interview the student. Read Crowell’s (1995) article on miscue analysis with bilingual readers and use the information to assist your analysis.

Q3
Create a Culturally Authentic Text Set
Select children’s and/or young adult literature to develop a text set that either:
- a) represents your local language community, particularly of your students, or
- b) represents linguistic diversity

Q4
Create Invitations
Create invitations to support students’ responses to the literature text set in Q3.
Q5 Reconsider Current Curriculum
Choose an aspect of your curriculum that you believe can be strengthened to benefit English Language Learners.

Q6 English Language Learning
Current Events
Collect news clippings from local media. Post in a central location for study group members to read. Discuss current events and plan political action in response.

Opportunities for Organizing & Sharing
Public displays—charts, webs, lists, notes—of accumulating ideas, knowledge, and plans.
These are used at different places in the study and are saved to revisit over time.

Provocative Questions Board
Throughout the study, participants write questions on index cards to be posted on a group bulletin board.

Graffiti Board
Throughout the study, participants sketch, write or post items on a large butcher paper board to represent their observations and reflections.

Communicating on a List-serve
Throughout the study, record reflections about readings and study group meetings on the list-serve to extend the conversation beyond meeting times.

Web Thinking
At the beginning of the study, place the phrase “English Language Learning” in the center of a web. Throughout the study, pause to display your thinking, connections and anomalies on the web. Use a different color of marker for each session to indicate growth.

Reflection/Action Plan
Focused plans that help learners reflect on their current experience and opinions in constructing their understanding of the unit of study and subsequent new practice.

RA1 ELL’s Status in School
Consider the status of the English Language Learners in your school given what you have learned in the study. Individually or in groups create an action plan for improving support for these learners in your building(s).

RA2 Teacher Research
Return to questions posted on the “Provocative Questions Board” (01). Form research teams to design a study to resolve unanswered questions.

RA3 Looking at the Community as a Resource
Investigate the linguistic and cultural resources available in your community and design ways to bring these resources into your curriculum and classroom community.

RA4 Funds of Knowledge, II
Reconsider the concept of funds of knowledge discussed in D3 and gather data about the funds of knowledge in your students’ households. Develop curriculum based on the funds of knowledge data gathered.

RA5 Revisit List-serve
At the end of the study, print the postings from the list-serve and reflect on collective themes about English Language Learning.
Classroom Strategies
Introduction to the NCTE Reading Initiative

Each of the NCTE Reading Initiative Inquiry Studies includes many strategies for use in classrooms, as well as with your own learning. Sometimes, as in the Reading & Writing Connection study, we have included specific directions for a number of strategies. Other times, they are embedded in the study's engagements and professional reading. This list will help you locate the strategies through this study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Strategies</th>
<th>Location in the study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Analyzing ELL writing</td>
<td>D5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Researching language</td>
<td>D7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Case study strategies</td>
<td>Q1, Q2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Writing portfolios/self evaluation</td>
<td>Fu article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Miscue analysis</td>
<td>Crowell article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Household interviews</td>
<td>Moll, Amanti et al.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Funds of knowledge</td>
<td>Medd &amp; Whitmore, p. 54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Language assessment questions</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning/Instructional Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Student buddies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Writers’ notebooks</td>
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<tr>
<td>• When kids use words we don’t know</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Literature circles</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Funds of knowledge, I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create a culturally authentic text set</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Family stories theme study</td>
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<td>• Storyboard drawings</td>
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<td>• Scrapbooks</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflection Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Provocative questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Graffiti board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Web thinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Response Strategies

- Text rendering
- Personal connections
- Say something
- Collage
- Compare and contrast
- Anomalies
- Cultural relevance rubric

- What’s on your mind?
- Save the last word
- ELL current events

Freeman & Freeman article, p. 4
Professional Reading


Video Clips

#1: E4 Second-grade bilingual classroom. (Teacher researcher: Julia López-Robertson in Tucson, AZ) This video clip offers a glimpse into regular life in a bilingual (Spanish/English) classroom during a time when children make choices about reading activities: what to read, in what language to read, who to read with, where to be in the classroom while reading, etc. The clip moves from the teacher reading aloud to the whole class to children reading individually and in small groups to two children reading aloud in English and Spanish.

#2: D3 Escuela Familia family inquiry program. (Teacher researchers: Karla Brendler and Stacey King Medd in Iowa City, IA) This video clip is a window into bilingual (Spanish/English) families working together in literacy activities. The clip traces a several months worth of time the families worked to compose family story books. It begins with literature read aloud in both languages, continues as families construct “family trees” that serve to reveal their funds of knowledge and potential family stories, and concludes as one family records their family story as part of the publication process.

Children’s Literature that Highlights Issues Critical to English Language Learners


**Young Adult and Adult Literature that Highlight Issues Critical to English Language Learners**


**Additional Recommended Professional Readings:**

**Books and articles:**


Entire journals:
*Language Arts*
*English Education*
*Bilingual Education Research Journal*
*Research in the Teaching of English*
*TESOL Quarterly*
*Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*
*The Reading Teacher*
*Teaching Tolerance*

Websites:
[www.ncbe.gwu.edu](http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/)
[www.ncte.org](http://www.ncte.org)
[www.nabe.org](http://www.nabe.org)
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