

**TEACHING
ENGLISH
LANGUAGE
LEARNERS
ACROSS THE
CURRICULUM**

Teaching English Language Learners through Technology



**Tony Erben
Ruth Ban
Martha Castañeda**

Teaching English Language Learners through Technology

Today's classrooms increasingly include students for whom English is a second language. *Teaching English Language Learners through Technology* explores the use of computers and technology as pedagogical tools to aid in the appropriate instruction of English language learners (ELLs) across all content areas. The authors identify various technologies and software programs regularly used in the classroom for all students that can also specifically aid ELLs. *Teaching English Language Learners through Technology* provides successful strategies for varying levels of access—whether teachers have one computer in their classroom, have multiple computers, or can only occasionally use a computer lab. A fully annotated list of web and print resources completes the volume, making this a valuable reference to help teachers harness the power of computer-assisted technologies in meeting the challenges of including all learners in effective instruction.

Special Features:

- “Implications for the Classroom” provides teachers with useful tools for creating balanced and inclusive lesson plans
- “Teaching Tips” offer teachers additional print and online resources
- Engaging vignettes vividly illustrate real-life interactions of teachers and ELLs in the classroom
- Graphs, tables, and charts provide additional access points to the text in clear, meaningful ways

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Teaching English Language Learners Across the Curriculum

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Teaching English Language Learners through Technology

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To all people who live in a new country
and
to our spouses, Silvina, Hugo, and Daryl

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Abbreviations

BICS	basic interpersonal communication skills
CALL	computer-assisted language learning
CALP	cognitive academic language proficiency
CMC	computer-mediated communication
CP	constructivist principles
DI	differentiated instruction
ELL	English language learner
ESL	English as a second language
ESOL	English to speakers of other languages
IT	instructional technology
KWL	what you Know, what you Want to know, what you have Learned
L1	first language
L2	second language
PBL	project-based learning
SCT	sociocultural theory
SLA	second language acquisition
SWBAT	students will be able to . . .
VoIP	Voice over Internet Protocol
VLE	virtual learning environment
www	World Wide Web

Series Introduction

No educational issue has proven more controversial than how to teach linguistically diverse students. Intertwined issues of ethnic and cultural differences are often compounded. What is more, at the time of writing, December 2007, how immigrants and their heritages *ought* to fit with the dominant culture is the subject of rancorous debate in the United States and a number of other nations.

However thorny these issues may be to some, both legally and ethically, schools need to accommodate the millions of English language learners (ELLs) who need to be educated. Although the number of ELLs in the United States has burgeoned in recent decades, school programs generally remain organized via traditional subjects, which are delivered in English. Many ELLs are insufficiently fluent in academic English, however, to succeed in these programs. Since policymakers have increasingly insisted that ELLs, regardless of their fluency in English, be mainstreamed into standard courses with all other students, both classroom enactment of the curriculum and teacher education need considerable rethinking.

Language scholars have generally taken the lead in this rethinking. As is evident in Part 1 of the volumes in this series, language scholars have developed a substantial body of research to inform the mainstreaming of ELLs. The primary interest of these language scholars, however, is almost by definition the processes and principles of second language acquisition. Until recently, subject matter has typically been a secondary consideration, used to illustrate language concerns. Perhaps not surprisingly, content-area teachers sometimes have seen this as reducing their subjects to little more than isolated bits of information, such as a list of explorers and dates in history or sundry geological formations in science.

In contrast, secondary school teachers see their charge as effectively conveying a principled understanding of, and interest in, a subject. They look for relationships, seek to develop concepts, search for powerful examples and analogies, and try to explicate principles. By the same token,

they strive to make meaningful connections among the subject matter, students' experience, and life outside of school. In our observations, teacher education programs bifurcate courses on content-area methods and (if there are any) courses designed to instill principles of teaching ELLs. One result of this bifurcation seems to be that prospective and in-service teachers are daunted by the challenge of using language principles to inform their teaching of subject matter.

For example, Gloria Ladson-Billings (2001) has experimented with how to prepare new teachers for diverse classrooms through a teacher education program focused on "diversity, equity, and social justice" (p. xiii). Teachers in her program are expected, for instance, to confront rather than become resigned to low academic expectations for children in urban schools. From Ladson-Billings's perspective, "no matter what else the schools find themselves doing, promoting students' academic achievement is among their primary functions" (p. 56).

The authors in this series extend this perspective to teaching ELLs in the content areas. For example, how might ELLs be included in a literature lesson on Hardy's use of landscape imagery in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, or an economics lesson on the principle of comparative advantage, or a biology lesson on the ecosystem of a pond? Such topics, experienced educators quickly recognize, are often difficult for native speakers of English. How can teachers break down these subjects into topics in a way that is educationally significant for ELLs?

The purpose of this series is to assist current and prospective educators to plan and implement lessons that do justice to the goals of the curriculum and make sense to and interest ELLs. If the needs of diverse learners are to be met, Ladson-Billings (2001) underscores that innovation is demanded, not that teachers merely pine for how things once were. The most obvious innovation in this series is to bring language scholars and specialists in the methods of teaching particular school subjects together. Although this approach is scarcely unique, it remains relatively uncommon. Combining the two groups brings more to addressing the problems of instruction than could be obtained by the two groups working separately. Even so, these volumes hardly tell the reader "everything there is to know" about the problems addressed. But we do know that our teacher education students report that even modest training to teach ELLs can make a significant difference in the classroom. We hope this series extends those successes to all the content areas of the curriculum.

Introduction

A potted history of educational technology would reveal that teaching in the 1980s meant being at the cusp of a quiet revolution. In August 1981, IBM released the first personal computer (PC). This particular PC was equipped with anywhere from 16 kilobytes to 256 kilobytes of memory, one or two floppy disk drives and an optional color monitor. In September 1982, the Commodore 64 computer was released for a grand price of \$595, replete with 64K of RAM, a cartridge and serial peripheral ports, two joysticks, three channels of sound and a 16-color matrix. Then in November 1985, Microsoft released Microsoft Windows. Four years later, email became commercialized and at the turn of the decade, Berners-Lee had built all the tools necessary for a working World Wide Web with the first web browser, the first web server and the first web page in 1990.

As a teacher at the time, I recall seeing my first PC. It was 1986. I remember needing to run off a test on a ditto machine—you may remember these being called spirit duplicators—and thinking how simultaneously impressed and anxious I was. At that moment, I had a flood of thoughts, enflamed by a vivid imagination and having seen too many science fiction movies, all about how this supposedly intelligent machine would one day take over my job. Two decades later, and it still hasn't happened; however, it would certainly be feasible to say that, in the intervening years, computers have definitely transformed, and continue to revolutionize, how education is carried out.

Back in 1986, I didn't consider myself technologically minded, but that did not mean I didn't use an array of electronic machines. I had an overhead projector (OHP) in my classroom, as well as a slide projector, a reel-to-reel tape recorder and, as already mentioned, access to a ditto machine, and a film projector if I wanted to show a movie or documentary. All of these have in some way been superseded by computer technologies. Nowadays, I have a document camera instead of my old OHP, an interactive whiteboard that has replaced my blackboard, and an LCD projector that projects any sound, video or word file from my laptop computer and acts as my modern-day substitute for my old audio-visual equipment. I consider myself a technologically

lucky teacher. Not a day goes by when I do not in some way use technology to support my teaching and my students' learning.

With my colleagues, Drs. Ban and Castañeda, I am certainly aware of the thousands of instructionally rich opportunities that using contemporary technologies affords. We are also aware of the thousands of potentially missed opportunities not using technology brings. So with this in mind, we introduce you to this book in order to share our experiences and to help you avoid some of the pitfalls that using instructional technology can entail. However, while centered on instructional technology, this book is meaningless unless it is contextualized in real classrooms and equally anchored within meaningful curriculum. So we have chosen to write a book about how the wonders of technology can best serve one of the most underserved groups in our school system—English language learners (ELLs).

Let us start by drawing connections to the classroom. The following vignette offers an initial segue into how instructional technology can support teachers in their ongoing efforts to teach culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. The story is true—only names and locations have changed.

Vignette

When I was a teacher in a secondary school, the day was broken up into eight periods of 45 minutes, a recess of 10 minutes and a lunchtime lasting 30 minutes. During recess and lunchtime, many of the teachers would meet in the teachers' lounge to sit and talk to their fellow teachers. Sometimes the conversation would be about private matters, sometimes about social matters, and at yet other times about school-related business.

The school was an inner-city high school, comprising 45 percent students from non-English-speaking homes. None of the classes were very homogeneous and every teacher could expect to have students sitting in front of them who came from any variety of first language backgrounds. In addition, the English language learners (ELLs) were at all different levels in their grasp of English. The school had one ESOL (English to speakers of other languages) teacher. She was good, but the job was just too overwhelming for her to make more than just a small difference in the linguistic lives of 45 percent of the 1,550 student population. All of the teachers unconsciously knew that what we did in our own classrooms would "make it or break it" for the school's ELLs. Some of the faculty had enough experience working with diverse populations to know how to embed English lessons within content-area teaching. Many others, though, fluffed their way through the day, hoping that the ELLs in the class would have at least "cottoned on" to something they had taught during the day.

One rainy autumn day sitting in the teachers' lounge, I was eating my lunch with my cup of coffee in hand, half listening to a conversation of two teachers sitting nearby elaborating on the benefits of one classroom management strategy over the other, when one of the social studies teachers burst through the door with a torrent of tears streaming down her face. Ms Barbara was a perfectionist to put it mildly. She knew everything there was to know about the world. All the faculty wanted her on their team during the school's Trivial Pursuit fundraising night! However, after five years of teaching, a master's degree and being president of the state's social studies association, she loudly professed to the other faculty in the teacher's lounge, "I give up. Everything I've tried doesn't work. All my ELLs are failing and my mainstream kids are switching off. I feel like I am planning for 30 individualized lessons, rather than one lesson for 30 kids. I suppose I should just go back to social work. Maybe I am just not cut out for teaching."

It is funny how one isolated incident can act as a catalyst for far-reaching change. You see, it just so happened that, on that particular day, the principal of the school had decided to come to

the teachers' lounge to have lunch. After listening to the sobbing Ms Barbara, he asked the rest of the teachers in the lounge if we all felt the same way. Some said yes, some no, and some were reticent to admit to anything either way. Our principal, well known in the school district as a mover and shaker, promptly said that the next school professional day was going to be spent on in-servicing the whole faculty on infusing English into all curriculum areas to help the ELL population pass the school certificate exams.

When the day of the professional development came, the planning committee had structured the day into vignettes. In other words, since we never made a point of visiting and observing other teachers in their classrooms, every teacher was to share their tale. Teaching ELLs was our focus and the intent was to present and listen to our colleagues share what we did on a daily basis that helped our ELLs improve. Many thought that the day was going to be a waste, until Ms Silvia stood up to speak.

Ms Silvia was an earth science teacher with 11 years of experience teaching in inner-city high schools. She was a big fan of technology and, while the school wasn't exactly technology rich, most teachers had at least two computers in their classrooms with internet connection. She started by describing her grade 9 earth science class: 27 students, nine of whom were ELLs, including three Native Americans, and the rest were native English speakers. She continued by outlining how she managed her classroom space: the two computers were placed in each of the back corners of the classroom and on one side of the classroom she had a bookshelf stacked with all types of books, magazines, and accelerated reading materials. A round carpet with two chairs in front of the shelf delineated a classroom reading circle. On the opposite side of the classroom, a long side cabinet marked the project area. Ms Silvia explained that she collected all manner of useful materials and then stored them in the cabinet for future project use. At the front of the classroom she had on her own desk her homework, extra activities, and games trays. Lastly, an overhead projector, a cassette recorder, and a video/TV monitor, all with earphones, occupied the front corner of the classroom. Apart from the computers, she explained that parents had donated the electronic equipment.

Ms Silvia then outlined a lesson she had taught the previous week. The aim of the lesson was to get students to think about the reasons why attitudes toward fossil fuel use and alternative energy sources may change over the next 50 years and how changing attitudes toward fossil fuel use and alternative energy sources may affect car technology. For homework, Ms Sylvia had got the students to write down three things they knew about fossil fuel use and alternative energy. She used to have the students write on index cards, but now she used www.surveymonkey.com, an online tool to carry out quick and easy surveys. She did this every lesson, since it provided her with up-to-date feedback on how much the students internalized, as well as on the English language needs of her ELLs. Based on students' readiness for learning, interest, and learning profile, she divided the class into groups. Thus in the context of what the students wrote the size and membership of groups always changed.

Ms Sylvia explained that the driving key to all her lessons was that, although the focus of learning was the same, she created different routes of access and varying degrees of difficulty for her students. For this particular lesson she was describing, she explained that she started by showing a short video clip on energy consumption. She found the online TV clip, like so many other current affair clips, at Frontline (www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/educators/index.html). While the students were viewing the clip, she had two of the students who had showed they already possessed an in-depth knowledge on the topic work on the computers. One created a vocabulary word map. Sometimes she used an online graphic organizer tool found at www.region15.org/curriculum/graphicorg.html. This was a good site as it provided graphic organizers in English and in Spanish that could be printed off as well as manipulated online. However, mostly she used Kidspiration at www.inspiration.com/productinfo/kidspiration/index.cfm. The other student went to www.quia.com.

com/ to create a vocabulary extension game using one of the site's online activity builders. Again, sometimes she used Quia, and sometimes she used Hot Potatoes at <http://hotpot.uvic.ca/>. While the two students were busy creating their vocabulary task, Ms Sylvia, on the other hand, used the time to create a word map on the whiteboard, using words from the video clip. While all this was going on, she used the overhead projector to project guiding questions on the screen in preparation for the next segment of the lesson.

She then divided the class into seven groups of approximately four students. Each group, while working toward the same goal, was engaged in slightly different activities. One group used the classroom library to research, one group used the project table to brainstorm their ideas, two other groups each used one of the computers, a fifth group used the TV to preview another broadcast, a sixth group worked with a bookquest (a webquest, but in which students look through books to glean and synthesize information), and the seventh group worked through a worksheet activity put together by the teacher. Ms Sylvia explained that each group, based on their survey-monkey.com results, were organized according to their readiness to learn and engage with this topic. In other words, students who showed more acumen were slotted together, whereas the ELLs who needed help with their English in order to get their heads around the content were also slotted together, and so on. The ELLs were placed in two groups at the computers and had to work through the vocabulary extension activities created previously by the more knowledgeable students. Once the ELLs completed the vocabulary tasks, they were rotated to the other computer so as to further reinforce their subject language knowledge related to the topic at hand. As the ELLs gained confidence in the language of this topic, all groups were rotated (though at different rates—in other words, some groups finished their task earlier than others and these groups were switched, leaving the slower groups to continue working on their group tasks) to enable work on another work-station. In this way all students worked toward the one learning objective but at their own pace. When other groups reached the computer work-stations, Ms Sylvia had the native English speakers work on a previously constructed more cognitively demanding quia.com activity and an actual webquest rather than the vocabulary activities constructed for the ELLs.

Finally, the students were given a variety of options in preparing a report in the next lesson. The nature of the report was framed by the work-stations they had engaged with. In the next lesson, membership in the groups was changed so that ELLs were mixed with the native speakers of English. Ms Sylvia explained how she gave the students a handout containing phrases that would help them put together the report. She finished by explaining to the faculty that she uses variations of this approach with all her classes and she finds that the students are always engaged and that not only do her ELLs learn the content successfully but they always learn English as well in her earth science classes.

After the presentation Ms Sylvia was overwhelmed with questions, thanks, words of encouragement, and requests from other faculty to visit her classroom.

The case of Ms Sylvia exemplifies a number of attributes that are worthy of further comment. These attributes pull at the heart of the intent of this book and that is that good education is no longer about “teaching to the mainstream” or “lecturing to the masses” but, to truly reach the students in our heterogeneous classes of the twenty-first century, teachers need to move beyond the artful application of “good strategies” to a more reflective and purposeful posture in the management of instruction. Ms Sylvia, probably on a pedagogic continuum from *intuitive application* to *calculated stratagem*, applied a range of differentiated teaching techniques, second language acquisition principles, and pedagogical concepts for technology integration. Although these techniques, principles and concepts will be elaborated on throughout this book, it behooves us as authors to flag them here as instructional beacons that will light our journey as we learn about how to use technology in helping ELLs learn curriculum content matter.

Dr. Carol A. Tomlinson, a 20-year veteran of the classroom and now Associate Professor of Education, has written extensively about the benefits of differentiated instruction and its beneficial effects on learning in mixed-ability classrooms. She says that differentiation

is the realization that all learners vary in their readiness, interests, and learning profiles. Jumping off from this point, teachers can set up classrooms where everybody works toward essential understandings and skills, but use different content, processes, and products to get there. Differentiation is all about options, and not about being punitive by just piling on additional work for the more able.¹

Looking at Ms Sylvia's lesson above, one can see that the bulk of her work is in upfront planning. The result was the creation of a tiered lesson—one in which there was a set learning outcome for all but students were given multiple learning pathways to explore.

But how is this important for teaching ELLs? The answer lies in the capacity of technology to facilitate any implementation of differentiated instruction, in ways that help teachers provide lasting equitable education to ELLs. For example, looking more closely at Ms Sylvia's lesson, one sees that she differentiated her curriculum in three areas:

1. **Content:** by giving her ELLs multiple options for taking in information (video orientation to foster visual and listening comprehension, word maps to reinforce and learn new vocabulary, follow-on online semantic mapping exercise using Kidspiration, and online vocabulary extension activity using quia.com), the ELLs have the opportunity to build their knowledge of English, in this case vocabulary building, around the subject matter, so that they can eventually be able to interact with monolingual English speakers in the class about the topic at hand.
2. **Process:** in organizing her lesson in the manner described above, Ms Sylvia generated multiple options for students to make sense of the lesson's ideas. For example, by crafting learning centers, students can explore topics and/or practice skills matched to their readiness to learn, their learning style, and their interest. By establishing flexible groupings, Ms Sylvia creates opportunities for all her students to interact with each other. In the case of her ELLs, they start off the lesson in a group comprising only ELLs (Ms Sylvia formed two groups in the above lesson, one for the lower proficient ELLs and one for the higher proficient ELLs) and then have the opportunity to work through all the work-stations at their own pace. In other lessons, the ELLs are mixed with monolingual English speakers to promote their English speaking skills, and in yet other lessons the class is grouped according to cognitive ability. Also, curriculum compacting (in other words, fashioning curriculum delivery so that, when the quick learners finish earlier than the other students, they have interesting activities to move on to) allows the slower learners, usually ELLs because of their English, to spend more time practicing their English skills in ways that do not hold up the rest of the class from learning.
3. **Product:** by allowing her class to engage with the curriculum matter through learning centers, tiered activities, curriculum compacting, adjustable questioning, flexible grouping, and multiple modalities, Ms Sylvia laid the groundwork for her students to have multiple options for expressing what they know. Consequently, for the ELLs in her class this meant that they could write a report using the English vocabulary and phrases they had learned through the whole language experiences as well as the drill and practice exercises fostered through the learning centers and so be graded in terms of their own individualized performance and not compared with the English output of native speakers of English.

From a linguistic perspective, Ms Sylvia had also initiated practices that facilitate second language acquisition processes. At this point, we want to introduce our *five principles for creating effective second language learning environments*. These research-based hypotheses allude to linguistic practices that are necessary to help a second language learner's development and are adapted from Chapelle's (2001) as well as Ellis's (2005) works. Drawing on Ms Sylvia's example, Table 0.1 outlines the five principles and the corresponding pedagogic activities that were beneficial for the ELLs in her classroom.

We shall revisit these five principles throughout the book and unpack the myriad of ways in which these principles can be realized through technology.

Lastly, what strategies for using technology did Ms Sylvia access? The National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers (ISTE NETS, see <http://cnets.iste.org/teachers/index.html>) define the fundamental concepts, knowledge, skills, and attitudes for applying technology in educational settings. In this book, we shall use these standards as the framework to make sense of the technology-framed activities we propose to use with ELLs. All in all there are six technology standards (see Appendix A) and 21 performance indicators (see Appendix B). In a nutshell, Ms Sylvia met five of the six standards: I, II, III, IV, and V; as well as six of the 21 performance indicators: 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 10. She used her two computers to help create two of her learning centers; she began the class with an orientating video on the topic at hand and reinforced students' comprehension with the accompanying use of an overhead projector. Furthermore, while students were occupied within their work-stations, she had one group look at another video, which was downloaded from a podcast site, another two groups accessed instructional websites to work through pedagogically sound teacher/student-generated materials, and yet a fourth group worked from materials downloaded from the web (see Table 0.2 for overview).

Ms Sylvia did not use the tape recorder or CD player during the lesson she described, but suffice to say that all technology equipment located in her classroom got fair and frequent use. Lastly, technology does not solely revolve around a computer. Older devices such as TV, video recorders, audio cassettes, CD players, and overhead projectors all play a small but very important pedagogical part in a teacher's effort to infuse technology into the classroom. How these older technological tools and the amazing array of new technological tools that a computer offers can help in the teaching of English language learners will be unpacked in Part 3 of this book.

Who Can Benefit from this Book?

A book for educators on teaching ELLs through technology is desperately needed. Although there are many excellent generic ELL books, they are often more appropriate for ESOL teachers than for content-area teachers who have ELLs in their classrooms and want to use technology. This book (part of the *Teaching English Language Learners Across the Curriculum* series) provides content-area teachers with practical, teacher-friendly strategies and techniques for using various technologies and software programs readily available to the public which can enhance the learning potential not only of ELLs, but of all students. *Teaching ELLs Through Technology* is, specifically, useful for:

- *preservice content-area teachers* who want to become better prepared to meet the challenges of their future classrooms;
- *practicing content-area teachers* who would like a “refresher” or perhaps never received ELL training in their teacher preparation program;
- *ESOL aides and support staff* who would like to learn more about issues, strategies, and content related to social studies education;

- *content-area teacher educators* who would like to address how to use technology for ELL instruction in their methods courses;
- *ESOL teacher educators* who would like to infuse their methods courses with technology-specific information and strategies;
- *district curriculum supervisors* who are responsible for curriculum development, modification, and teacher training;
- *administrators* such as school principals and assistant principals who would like to improve the quality of instruction for ELLs in their schools and offer support for teachers.

How to Use this Book

The central purpose of this book is to provide content-area teachers with a guide on how to infuse technology into the classroom, thereby supporting instruction in ways that can be extremely effective with ELLs. The book is aimed at middle and high school.

Following this introduction, Part 1 of this book presents an overview of theory and research on ESOL teaching and learning. Part 1 reviews research with an eye to providing guidance for the informed use of instructional strategies in the teaching of ELLs. It provides a description of who the English language learner is and what one can expect an ELL can do with their English at the four stages of English language development.

Part 2, which contains chapters 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5, forms a transition between the parts before and after. Chapter 2.1 introduces us to the work of Vygotsky and how his learning theories lay the foundation of such educational approaches as differentiated instruction (DI), project-based learning (PBL), and constructivist pedagogy (CP). Chapter 2.2 lays out our sense of what instructional approaches support the seamless integration of technology into a classroom. This includes a discussion about the merits of differentiated instruction, project-based learning, and constructivist learning principles. Chapters 2.3 and 2.4 overview what a desirable instructional program using technology looks like. Once again our intention is not to be comprehensive but to suggest some salient themes and trust the reader to generalize. These themes are built on in chapter 2.5, in which we look at the computer-assisted language learning research base and what teachers can glean from such research to inform their classroom practices with ELLs. We try to identify where this work parallels research treated in Part 1 as well as what appears to be specific about using technology across the curriculum.

Part 3 contains chapters 3.1 to 3.7. Part 3, we feel, comprises the main pedagogical content of this book, although all parts allude to instruction and best practice. Indeed, the many Teaching Tip boxes throughout the book allow us to make constant connections with praxis. In Part 3, we asked ourselves how can technology be best used to facilitate the English language development of ELLs? Our first step was to use our *five principles for creating effective second language learning environments* as signposts to guide our decision-making processes linking pedagogical practice and technology usage. Chapter 3.2 describes the advantages of using e-creation tools and self-made computer-based resources such as web publishing, PowerPoint, e-portfolios, desktop publishing, exercise builders, movie makers, and podcasting. In this part we show how such tools allow ELLs to play with language and through such play meet Principle 5: *Construct activities that maximize opportunities for ELLs to interact with others in English*. In chapter 3.3 we turn to communicative-facilitative e-tools such as email, instant messaging, listservs, discussion boards, Voice over Internet Protocol, and creating sound files. In this part we show how communicative-facilitative e-tools can help ELLs produce language in the content classroom allowing teachers to meet Principle 3: *Give ELLs classroom time to productively use their English*. Chapter 3.4 illustrates the use of writing/reading-facilitative e-tools such as writeboard, wikis, webquests, e-books, and

TABLE 0.1. Five principles for creating effective second language learning environments and corresponding pedagogic activities

<p>#1: Give ELLs many opportunities to read, to write, to listen to, and to discuss oral and written English texts expressed in a variety of ways</p>	<p><i>Second video work-station:</i> It is always important to create a language-rich classroom and afford ELLs the opportunity to listen to a wide variety of Englishes used in a wide variety of ways. Providing ELLs the chance to visualize curriculum content through videos reinforces the visual and audio intelligences of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences. A great site to find a variety of curricula-related videos is English Bites from Nexus, the educational wing of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (http://australianetwork.com/learnenglish/). It gives vibrant daily content about life 'down under' with a whole assortment of activities to complete as you watch streamed media direct from Australia</p>
<p>#2: Draw attention to patterns of English language structure</p>	<p><i>Worksheet work-station:</i> Using language focused worksheets helps an ELL reinforce and internalize English vocabulary and grammar rules. An exceptional website to use can be found at www.getworksheets.com/samples/worksheets/index.html</p>
<p>#3: Give ELLs classroom time to use their English productively</p>	<p>Here a teacher can create a wide variety of worksheets for all curriculum areas as well as download worksheets made by other teachers</p> <p><i>Semantic webbing activity work-station:</i> By allowing her ELLs to work on a semantic webbing activity, Ms Sylvia gave her ELLs pedagogical space to increase their vocabulary. In this way, they had the opportunity to use new words to express themselves with others in the classroom when they interacted on the topic of the day</p>
<p>#4: Give ELLs opportunities to notice their errors and to correct their English</p>	<p><i>Quia.com work-station:</i> Without feedback, ELLs would be doomed to repeat their mistakes. Feedback is an important mechanism in order for ELLs to continually improve their English. Strategically created language-oriented, curricula focused activities created through www.quia.com offers ELLs the chance to learn English while simultaneously getting valuable corrective feedback to improve their English. Quia offers activity generators as well as access to a database of hundreds of activities made by other teachers.</p>
<p>#5: Construct activities that maximize opportunities for ELLs to interact with others in English</p>	<p><i>Bookquest work-station:</i> Like a webquest, a bookquest is an inquiry-based activity that guides students to synthesize information in predefined ways. A "quest" activity always steers students toward a product. For the ELLs in Ms Sylvia's class, the product was writing in their own words what they had learned and getting the monolinguals in the group to go over the language errors they had made in the written product</p> <p><i>Library research work-station:</i> This activity was a jigsaw task. The goal was for each student in the group to take on a "responsibility" role, find information, and share this with their group. In doing this, the ELLs in the group are obliged to use their language skills to interact with the monolinguals but, conversely, the native English speakers are obliged to modify and adapt their spoken English so as to be communicatively effective with the ELLs.</p> <p><i>Project work-station:</i> Ms Sylvia went to http://pbchecklist.4teachers.org/, which creates age-appropriate, customizable project checklists for written reports, multimedia projects, oral presentations, and science projects. The use of these checklists keeps students on track and allows them to take responsibility for their own learning through peer- and self-evaluation. For Ms Sylvia's ELLs this meant that they were provided with guided language cues on how best to use English to interact with their peers</p>

TABLE 0.2. Ms Sylvia's instructional strategies matched with language macroskill and technology

Instructional strategy	Reading	Seeing	Listening	Saying	Doing	Further examples of appropriate technology
Presentation	✓	✓	✓			Video, TV
Demonstration	✓	✓	✓	✓		PowerPoint, overhead projector
Discussion	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Email, chat, IM
Group inquiry	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Internet, LCD projector
Problem solving	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Online tools, blogs, wikis, podcasts
Cooperative learning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Social networks, 4teachers.com
Instructional games		✓	✓	✓		Quia, Hot Potatoes
Simulation		✓	✓			Sims, Second Life

Teaching Tip: Adapted from Integrating Technology into Teaching (Recesso & Orrill, 2008) pp. 82–83, this chart offers a useful guide to make sense of Ms Sylvia's technology use, but also a practical instructional planning scaffold when attempting to integrate technology into the classroom and simultaneously take account of ELLs' language needs.

web searching. This part deals with issues of getting ELLs to improve their literacy skills and chapter 3.5 focuses on getting ELLs to improve their comprehension skills through listening-facilitative e-tools such as vidcasts, audioblogs, online radios, podcasts, and webcasts. Jointly, chapters 3.4 and 3.5 accomplish the spirit of Principle 1: *Give ELLs many opportunities to read, to write, to listen to, and to discuss oral and written English texts expressed in a variety of ways.*

Penultimately, chapter 3.6 helps realize Principle 4: *Give ELLs opportunities to notice their errors and to correct their English.* It is devoted to showing how technology can help assess, evaluate, and grade an ELL's learning progress in ways that direct ELLs' attention to their linguistic errors and help them to correct such errors. Chapter 3.7 provides a definitive account of the ways in which a teacher can manage the technologies that have been highlighted above through virtual learning environments (VLE) such as Nicenet. First, such VLEs can act as repositories of links to e-tool sites and storehouses of online curriculum materials as well as databases of student performance outcomes and products. Second, VLEs can be individualized so that a teacher can provide personalized and level appropriate instructional help to any student. In the case of ELLs, VLEs provide a teacher with a virtual place to build an online resource library of English language, English grammar, English vocabulary and English pronunciation activities (see exercise builders in chapter 3.2) customized for the different proficiency levels of the ELLs in any given classroom. Lastly, such course management devices are efficient tools to augment home-school communication efforts. In the case of ELLs, such efforts are of extreme importance in a context where non-English speaking parents often fall short of coming to grips with school cultures, their rights, and their responsibilities. Thus we show how the e-tools introduced in chapter 3.7 help to realize Principle 2: *Draw attention to patterns of English language structure.*

The three chapters in Part 4 provide directions to resources for teachers and ELL students. Although we identify methods articles, websites, curriculum materials, and the like throughout Part 3, Part 4 summarizes these as well as including additional sources.

Because all classrooms are different in terms of their student make-up and their technology setup, our special focus will be the informed use of various technologies and software programs that can specifically aid (a) ELLs who are at differing levels of English language proficiency as well as (b) teachers who teach in a one computer classroom, have access to multiple computers, and/or have the ability to go into a computer lab at their school.

Finally, this book is written in the spirit of experimentation. Readers looking for a tightly scripted set of methods may be disappointed. Rather we agree with Nel Noddings (2006: 284) when she warns against too much prescription of methods in teaching education and urges instead: "try things out, reflect, hypothesize, test, play with things." Ultimately, curriculum educators must still answer the primary educational question for their own subject: what is worth teaching and how can one best teach it to reach *all* students.

Part 1

**Your
English
Language
Learner**

**Tony Erben
University of Tampa**

1.1

Orientation

English language learners (ELLs) represent the fastest growing group throughout all levels of schooling in the United States. For example, between the 1990–1991 school year and the 2000–2001 school year, the ELL population grew approximately 105 percent nationally, while the general school population grew only 12 percent (Kindler, 2002). In several states (including Texas, California, New Mexico, Florida, Arizona, North Carolina, and New York), the percentage of ELLs within school districts ranges anywhere between 10 and 50 percent of the school population. In sum, there are over 10 million ELLs in U.S. schools today. According to the U.S. Department of Education, one out of seven students in our nation’s classrooms speaks a language other than English at home. Although many of these students are heritage language learners and are proficient in English, many others are recent immigrants with barely a working knowledge of the language let alone a command of academic English. Meeting the needs of such students can be particularly challenging for all teachers given the often text-dependent nature of content areas. The language of the curriculum is often abstract and includes complex concepts calling for higher-order thinking skills. Additionally, many ELLs do not have a working knowledge of American culture that can serve as a schema for new learning.

But let’s now look at these English language learners. Who are they and how do they come to be in our classrooms?

ELL is the term used for any student in an American school setting whose native language is not English. Their English ability lies anywhere on a continuum from knowing only a few words to being able to get by using everyday English, but still in need of acquiring more English so that they can succeed educationally at school. All students enrolled in an American school, including ELLs, have the right to an equitable and quality education. Traditionally, many ELLs are placed in stand-alone English to speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes and learn English until they are deemed capable of following the regular curriculum in English. However, with the

introduction of federal and state legislation such as *No Child Left Behind* (2002), Proposition 227 in California, and other English-only legislation in other states, many school systems now require ELLs to receive their English instruction not through stand-alone ESOL classes, but directly through their curriculum content classes.¹ Today “mainstreaming” is the most frequently used method of language instruction for ELL students in U.S. schools. Mainstreaming involves placing ELLs in content-area classrooms where the curriculum is delivered through English; curricula and instruction are typically not modified in these classrooms for non-native English speakers (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002). According to Meltzer and Hamann (2005), placement of ELLs in mainstream classes occurs for a number of reasons including assumptions by non-educators about what ELLs need, the scarcity of ESOL-trained teachers relative to demand, the growth of ELL populations, the dispersal of ELLs into more districts across the country, and restrictions in a growing number of states regarding the time ELLs can stay in ESOL programs. They predict that, unless these conditions change, ELLs will spend their time in school (1) with teachers not adequately trained to work with ELLs, (2) with teachers who do not see it as a priority to meet the needs of their ELLs, and (3) with curricula and classroom practices that are not designed to target ELL needs (Coady *et al.*, 2003). As we shall later see, of all possible instructional options to help ELLs learn English, placing an ELL in a mainstreamed English-medium classroom where no accommodations are made by the teacher is the least effective approach. It may even be detrimental to the educational progress of ELLs.

This then raises the question of whether or not the thousands of curriculum content teachers across the United States, who now have the collective lion’s share of responsibility in providing English language instruction to ELLs, have had preservice or in-service education to modify, adapt, and make the appropriate pedagogical accommodations within their lessons for this special group of students. This is important: ELLs should remain included in the cycle of everyday learning and make academic progress commensurate with grade-level expectations. It is also important that teachers feel competent and effective in their professional duties.

The aim of Part 1 of this book is to provide you the reader with an overview of the linguistic mechanics of second language development. Specifically, as teachers you will learn what to expect in the language abilities of ELLs as their proficiency in English develops over time. Although the rate of language development among ELLs depends on the particular instructional and social circumstances of each ELL, general patterns and expectations will be discussed. We will also outline for teachers the learning outcomes that ELLs typically accomplish in differing ESOL programs and the importance of the maintenance of first language development. School systems differ across the United States in the ways in which they try to deal with ELL populations. Therefore, we describe the pedagogical pros and cons of an array of ESOL programs as well as clarify terminology used in the field. Part 1 will also profile various ELL populations that enter U.S. schools (e.g. refugees vs. migrants, special needs) and share how teachers can make their pedagogy more culturally responsive. Finally, we will also survey what teachers can expect from the cultural practices that ELLs may engage in in the classroom as well as present a myriad of ways in which both school systems and teachers can better foster home–school communication links.

1.2

The Process of English Language Learning and What to Expect

It is generally accepted that anybody who endeavors to learn a second language will go through specific stages of language development. According to some second language acquisition theorists (e.g. Pienemann, 2007), the way in which language is produced under natural time constraints is very regular and systematic. For example, just as a baby needs to learn how to crawl before it can walk, so too a second language learner will produce language structures only in a predetermined psychological order of complexity. What this means is that an ELL will utter “homework do” before being able to utter “tonight I homework do” before ultimately being able to produce a target-like structure such as “I will do my homework tonight.” Of course, with regard to being communicatively effective, the first example is as successful as the last example. The main difference is that one is less English-like than the other. Pienemann’s work has centered on one subsystem of language, namely morphosyntactic structures. It gives us an interesting glimpse into how an ELL’s language may progress (see Table 1.1).

Researchers such as Pienemann (1989; 2007) and Krashen (1981) assert that there is an immutable language acquisition order and, regardless of what the teacher tries to teach to the ELL in terms of English skills, the learner will acquire new language structures only when (s)he is cognitively and psychologically ready to do so.

What can a teacher do if an ELL will only learn English in a set path? Much research has been conducted over the past 20 years on this very question and the upshot is that, although teachers cannot change the route of development for ELLs, they *can* very much affect the rate of development. The way in which teachers can stimulate the language development of ELLs is by providing what is known as an acquisition-rich classroom. Ellis (2005), among others, provides useful research generalizations that constitute a broad basis for “evidence-based practice.” Rather