

California State University, San Bernardino

**CSUSB ScholarWorks**

---

Theses Digitization Project

John M. Pfau Library

---

2010

## Whole language curriculum for English learners in elementary schools

Norma Alicia Alvarado

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project>



Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Alvarado, Norma Alicia, "Whole language curriculum for English learners in elementary schools" (2010). *Theses Digitization Project*. 3711.

<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd-project/3711>

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the John M. Pfau Library at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses Digitization Project by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@csusb.edu](mailto:scholarworks@csusb.edu).

WHOLE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS  
IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

---

A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts  
in  
Education:  
Bilingual/Cross-Cultural

---

by  
Norma Alicia Alvarado  
September 2010

WHOLE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM FOR ENGLISH LEARNERS  
IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS


---

A Project  
Presented to the  
Faculty of  
California State University,  
San Bernardino

---

by  
Norma Alicia Alvarado  
September 2010

Approved by:

  
Dr. María V. Balderrama, First Reader

  
Dr. Bárbara Flores, Second Reader

*August 25, 2010*

Date

## ABSTRACT

English learners in California comprise 61 percent of the student population in grades K-5, with the majority being Spanish speakers. This demographic imperative creates the urgency for schools to address this educational challenge through instructional approaches that are research based and integrate the child's socio-cultural background, their primary language, promote bilingualism and pave the road to language literacy development. Whole language pedagogy is such an approach. This project establishes the need for a comprehensive model of instruction for English learners in elementary schools. The review of the literature and the theoretical base discuss additive models of learning and teaching that are student centered and build on what students bring to school.

Literacy and second language acquisition are the goals of this curriculum and Kenneth Goodman's work in whole language is the framework for teaching English and literacy in meaningful ways to a growing population of English learners.

Reader's Theater is the selected strategy used for designing the second grade lesson plan in this project and is guided by grade level state standards for language arts

and the appropriate English language development standards. "Hedgie's Surprise" is the story used to model effective pedagogy for English learners that is grounded in research, and integrates standards while honoring students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you, Dr. María V. Balderrama for all your dedication and time you spent on my work. Now, I know that all you have been doing with my work and project is priceless and valuable work. Thank you for your dedication. Especial thank to you.

Thank you Dr. Bárbara Flores for all your dedication, time, understanding, and all you helped me during my time in the masters program. You have a special place in my heart. Thank you.

Thank you Elizabeth and Ashleigh, for your patience, and help. I am sorry for not being there when you had questions or needed my time with your homework. This work is for you and for our family.

Thank you to my father, Everardo Ramírez Avalos, and my paternal family who is always in my thoughts and for your faith in my work since I was child.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	v
LIST OF TABLES .....	x
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
The Background of the Project .....	1
English Learners in California .....	1
The Role of Primary Language in Learning English .....	3
The Role of Primary Language in Developing Literacy .....	5
Purpose of the Project .....	6
The Content of the Project .....	7
The Significance of the Project .....	8
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	
Language Development .....	10
Vygotsky's Language as a Cultural Tool .....	11
Mediation and the Zone of Proximal Development .....	13
Halliday's Perspective on Language and Learning .....	18
Second Language Acquisition .....	20
How does the Primary Language Support Second Language Acquisition? .....	20
Primary Language Transfers .....	21

Additive School Models of Bilingual Education .....	22
Learning Theories .....	24
Gardner's Multiple Intelligences .....	25
Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development .....	27
Literacy Development and Whole Language .....	28
What is "Whole Language"?	28
What Constitutes Reading and Writing?	31
The Social Construction of Knowledge .....	34
Teacher and Learners in the Classroom .....	34
 CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	
Key Concepts Framing Whole Language as an Exemplary Model for Language and Literacy Development .....	37
The Five Principles .....	37
Language is Learned Based on Need, Purpose, and Function .....	37
Learning needs to be Meaningful, Enjoyable, and Integrated .....	39
Learning is Built on Children's Language and Strengths .....	40
Language is Learned by Using It .....	42
Language Development .....	43
Whole Language Strategies .....	45
Read Aloud .....	46
Independent, Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading .....	47



Interactive Journals .....	48
Learning Logs .....	49
Active Learning .....	50
Theme Cycles .....	51
Guided and Shared Reading .....	52
Mini Share .....	53
Readers' Theater .....	55
Think, Pair, Share .....	56
The Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD) .....	56
Writing Conferences .....	57
Summary .....	59

#### CHAPTER FOUR: DESIGNING WHOLE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

Using Readers' Theater to Put Principles in Practice .....	61
Planning a Whole language Lesson .....	64
Developmental English Language Arts and English Language Development State Standard .....	64
Components of the Readers' Theater Lesson Plan .....	67
Goals and Objectives .....	70
Concepts .....	70
Anticipatory Set .....	71
Modeled Instruction .....	72
Guided Practice .....	73
Closure/Independent Practice .....	76

Assessment and Follow-up .....	78
Materials and Equipment .....	79
Summary .....	85
CHAPTER FIVE: WHOLE LANGUAGE LESSONS LEARNED	
Summary .....	88
The Value of Teacher's Pedagogical Knowledge .....	88
Conclusion .....	90
APPENDIX: READERS' THEATRE SCRIPT FOR HEDGIE'S SURPRISE .....	92
REFERENCES .....	98

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Multiple Intelligences, Ability and Examples .....	26
Table 2. Principles Framing the Strengths and Benefits of Readers' Theater .....	64
Table 3. Summary of Second Grade English Language Development Intermediate Proficiency Level Standards and English Language Arts Standards .....	68

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Mediation Model and Core Elements .....	46
Figure 2. Mediated Structure for Charting Predictions Before Reading Story .....	81
Figure 3. Mediated Structure for Checking Predictions After Reading Story .....	82
Figure 4. Mediated Structure of the Elements in Story .....	83
Figure 5. Mediated Structure of Readers' Theater Plot Sequence .....	84
Figure 6. Summary of the Lesson Plan: Readers' Theater .....	87

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### The Background of the Project

##### English Learners in California

For decades bilingual education has been one of the most controversial educational issues in the United States. Bilingual education advocates suggest that teaching English learners (El's) in their primary language creates a necessary and supportive link between the home and classroom environment leading to second language acquisition and academic achievement. The primary or home language is rich in linguistic resources, transfers, and provides a bridge that helps students learn English. Many English learners are literate (read and write) in their primary language giving them an advantage in developing literacy in English.

Using the home language to teach and learn is a critical pedagogical issue given that the English learner population in the United States is increasing. According to the 2000 U.S. Census about 1 in 5 children ages 5-17, (approximately 10.8 million children) are from immigrant families, where a language other than English is their primary language. In schools, children whose home language

is not English tend to be identified as English learners. Garcia (2009) estimates the number of English learners in the United States in K-12 grades at more than 14 million with these students concentrated in California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey. The majority or 77 percent of El's are Latino or Spanish speakers. California's public school demographics reflect the national trends with more than one third of students identified as English learners and 83 percent identifying their primary language as Spanish (Gándara, 2009). According to the California Legislative Analysts Office, (2007-2008) of all English learners approximately 61 percent are in grades K-5, 20 percent are in grades 6-8, and 19 percent are in high school or grades 9-12.

The "English learner" designation is linked with academic problems making this student population vulnerable to falling behind in academics, and dropping out of school. As stated earlier, Latinos comprise a large portion of the English learners in California, and data (Latino Issues Forum, 2010) suggest that 53 percent of Latino youth do not graduate from high school and only 22 percent are prepared for four-year university studies. In 2006, fifty percent of English learners passed the high school exit exam (De Cos, 2005). Graduation from high

school requires English language proficiency as well as reading and writing competencies. Without these skills students are prevented from obtaining a higher education degree and professional jobs. Furthermore, English is increasingly the language of business in the global markets and individuals lacking these skills are denied full participation in local and world economies.

This demographic imperative forces educators to implement those practices that are best for English learners in acquiring second language and literacy skills. The research in this field tends to support the importance of utilizing teaching strategies that build on the child's culture which includes their linguistic heritage, or home language. These models of teaching and learning are additive and asset based because they recognize that children come to school with rich sources of knowledge that teachers can utilize to organize learning environments and create opportunities for success.

#### The Role of Primary Language in Learning English

Additive models of teaching view a child's primary language as a major asset that a teacher can use to teach. Research supports that a learners' primary language is vital to acquiring a second language. Stephen Krashen's work (1973) is frequently cited regarding how the primary

language can be instrumental in facilitating the acquisition of a target language. He mentions that the first language can make second-language input more comprehensible and facilitates language acquisition. James Cummins' (1981) research provides also ample evidence in support of using the primary language for instruction. His writings have demonstrated how linguistic knowledge from the primary knowledge transfers to the second language, identifying this process as the "common underlying proficiency" (CUP). Individuals do not have to lose their home language and in the process disconnect themselves from their ancestors, forego their identity and sacrifice their self-esteem to succeed academically.

Balderrama and Díaz-Rico (2006) emphasize the importance of using a child's culture and their language practices as essential to teaching English learners effectively. Knowing their students' background, family traditions, and community can only increase a teacher's understanding about a child's assets, which in turn can help a teacher plan and organize successful teaching and learning. Once again, the important role of maintaining the primary language and its relationship to school success is linked.



## The Role of Primary Language in Developing Literacy

The role of a child's first language is important in learning to speak English as well as in reading and writing English. Honoring children's linguistic resources and seeing them as rich in knowledge applies to literacy. For example, many educators view students as if they are empty vessels into which knowledge is to be poured. The reading pedagogies frequently associated with this "students as empty vessels" perspective include phonics, and decoding, (sounding out letters), and skills based methods (recognizing, and knowing words). These approaches to teaching reading pose particular problems for English learners in developing literacy because the knowledge that English learners possess is not recognized, validated or used to teach. When students are viewed in this manner they are not credited for prior knowledge, including linguistic or cultural tools emerging from the home language that can be used to teach reading and writing. These approaches to teaching reading to English learners are subtractive in nature because they take away and fail to build on what students know. Instead, what often results is that EL's will manifest challenges and experience difficulties when they are taught to read and

write English using subtractive approaches. These predictable behaviors are misdiagnosed as "learning disabilities" particularly when teachers fail to fully understand the process of learning to speak and read English as a second language. There is ample research to suggest that many EL's have been wrongly identified as special education candidates when all they needed was responsive pedagogy that added and built on their primary language, culture and prior knowledge, and when teachers understood these predictable academic challenges as normal to their language and literacy development. The importance of the primary language is imperative contributing, building and furthering both second language acquisition and developing literacy, and must be used as a tool to teach English learners.

#### Purpose of the Project

The primary goal of this project is to propose a pedagogy that adds, builds, and uses the student's language and culture to speak, read and write English. This pedagogy is whole language and this approach to literacy is described, including its theoretical base which is grounded in sociopsycholinguistics. Whole language utilizes Vygotsky's theories of language and

learning, Halliday's work in language development, Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, and Piaget's theory of cognitive development.

This project presents a lesson of instruction that uses whole language as a vital curriculum for English learners (Spanish speaking students learning English as a second language) in primary grades (first to fifth grade). This lesson includes reading and writing strategies that balance instruction between the first and second language, teaches reading as constructing and building meaning (Flores, 2009), utilizes strategies that build on the home language, or language they already use (Goodman, 2006), and integrates cultural knowledge a child brings from home and previous life experiences into literacy instruction.

### The Content of the Project

Chapter One is the introduction and need of the project and covers the growing population of English learners in the United States and California. The significance of the primary language in the acquisition of the second language and in the development of literacy is emphasized. Also addressed is the importance of knowing students' prior knowledge as manifested through their students' community life and family traditions.

Chapter Two includes the review of the literature that is divided into five sections: 1) language development; 2) second language acquisition; 3) learning theories; 4) literacy development and whole language; and 5) the social construction of knowledge.

Chapter Three is the theoretical framework grounding this project. The key theories related to language and literacy development for English learners are discussed, with an emphasis on whole language pedagogy.

Chapter Four includes an example of curriculum that integrates whole language principles. This lesson plan can be used with second grade bilingual students.

### The Significance of the Project

Teachers play a central role in planning and organizing learning environments that promote success for English learners. Effective pedagogy and instructional strategies that are additive and build on a student's primary language can positively affect the academic achievement of English learners. Culturally relevant pedagogy that is research based and facilitates literacy is critical in interrupting cycles of academic failure and drop out rates. Whole language is an example of a pedagogy that can lead to success, assures access to learning,

facilitates English language acquisition and literacy and does not eradicate the culture, heritage and humanity of the learner.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The dramatic increases in the English learner student population makes it imperative for teachers to support second language acquisition as well as literacy. This review examines language development, learning English as a second language, and focuses on effective pedagogical practices for English learners. Additive literacy models that build on the learner's knowledge, including whole language are examined in this review.

#### Language Development

Language development is a central element of schooling and a critical aspect of learning and teaching. Students, as learners, must develop their oracy (listening and speaking) and literacy skills (reading and writing) in order to succeed academically. Teachers must be able to teach and facilitate language development, including second (English) language acquisition, reading, and writing. Without responsive, effective language and literacy instruction, EL's will continue to receive substandard education leading to academic failure.

Lev Vygotsky's work on language is central to this project as well M. A. K. Halliday's research on language

and learning. Their insights and findings are relevant to language and literacy development and essential to understanding and informing successful pedagogy for this growing student population.

### Vygotsky's Language as a Cultural Tool

Lev Vygotsky (1978) viewed language as one of the most important tools that humans use to facilitate thoughts and cognitive development. Language is the mind's tool that permits humans to express ideas and thoughts, and to communicate with others. He also studied the relationship between thinking, and speech; he did not view these as distinct or separate functions and believed that the efforts to communicate with others results in the development of words that structure and develop consciousness.

Vygotsky points out that language first develops internally in the human mind. Later individuals learn to externalize their thoughts through speech or verbal language that is acquired through social interaction. Language informs thought, and thoughts are influenced by an individual's socio-cultural experience, such as the primary or home language, socioeconomic status, and other external factors. Language development is a dynamic process, constantly changing and evolving. Classrooms are

social and cultural arenas characterized by social interaction and communication, or language usage. In these contexts, students and teachers interact and together shape each others' worlds through their active speech.

Additionally, Vygotsky takes a strong stance that the mind evolves to reflect social reality. This process affects an individual's thinking and repeats itself. Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev, and Miller, (2003) suggest that Vygotsky's work emphasizes the importance of promoting education that provides students with new psychological tools that can help students construct knowledge, and furthers their cognitive development.

Psychological tools imply that each culture has its own tools that help people approach and solve new problems and even define how people interact and relate to one another. Language is an example of a psychological, cultural tool that provides order and coherency in an individual's social world and defines their reality. The first or home language acquired by a person is their first psychological tool. This is one rationale in using a child's primary language to teach him/her English and literacy. Vygotsky's (1978) perspective of children is that they are intelligent social beings who possess inner speech from their early age and who are not empty vessels



that need to be filled with language or new knowledge. In others words, children, despite their age or linguistic background, possess vast psychological tools.

### Mediation and the Zone of Proximal Development

One of Vygotsky's (1978) main ideas around social constructivism theory lies in the concept of mediation. Mediation refers to the use of tools that help a person solve problems or achieve goals. Also, central to his theory of learning is the zone of proximal development, or ZPD. A discussion of the relationship between thought, language and cognitive development clarifies how learning occurs through mediation in social interactions.

As stated earlier, students become active, involved participants in their learning when they use language to communicate. Many bilingual educators that understand the implications of the active language practices organize purposeful activities where teacher and learner create a project that has value and meaning for both (teacher and learner). This social learning process is grounded in a purposeful event with both teacher and student bringing their histories and lived experiences from their own sociocultural contexts to create meaning to attain learning. Language is at core of this interaction.

In Mind in Society Vygotsky (1978) defines the zone of proximal development as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 86). In other words, the ZPD is the difference between what a learner can do with assistance and what he or she can later do alone. Learning can be mediated through social interaction and then internalized by the learner.

Vygotsky's theory proves useful in that language can be used in social interactions to help learners move into and through a learner's zone of proximal of development, thus extending learning.

Vygotsky (1978) views the learner as a social and cultural being, who learns through interaction with others. Language is the mediation tool in these social contexts, as learners construct knowledge when they talk, work, or collaborate with one another on a task. Learners in the ZPD engage in successful and effective learning by the nature of the social interaction between two or more people with different levels of skills and knowledge. The mediator or the more knowledgeable learner may be the teacher or a peer. The mediator guides and extends

learning by finding ways to scaffold and move the learner into the zone of proximal development. This event takes learners into the next level of knowledge or understanding. Thus the ZPD represents the skill level or layer of knowledge that is slightly, or just beyond what the student is currently capable of doing. With support or help from a learner who has different and higher skills, the learner can move into that next skill level and increase their knowledge and understanding. Mediation is the process that moves the learner into and through the zone of proximal development.

Díaz and Flores (2001) suggest that the teacher can provide deliberate mediation that will support the learner through their individual zone of proximal development. English learners, for example can be supported in their understanding of English and development of literacy through demonstrations, suggestions, or reminders, guided by the teacher. These deliberate actions (by teacher) move or mediate cognitive and intellectual growth.

The role of a competent peer in supporting intellectual development can encourage positive social interaction with the less capable student until he or she can perform on his or her own. Interpersonal communication plays a significant role in the construction of knowledge

and meaning making which later become an individualized process of knowledge. For example, when students are provided with the opportunities to discuss intellectual concepts meaningfully, interact with peers, and make sense of these ideas with others, the whole process shifts from interpersonal (between self and others) to intrapersonal (within self) communication. Once students are able to solve problems by themselves, ideas, concepts, and words become their own, or have been internalized. This new information now "belongs to the learner" and the learner can also share and extend this new knowledge with others or to new experiences. Mediation is critical in allowing the learner to construct knowledge in collaboration with their peers, while using language as they move the zone of proximal development.

Dixon-Krauss' (1996) work elaborates on Vygotsky's work and mediation. She remarks that the mediation model of instruction is derived from two principles. The first principle suggests that the primary function of communication is social. Language thus has a social motive, and this principle can be extended to literacy. In literacy, communication is in the form of print (words) and is used to communicate meaning between the author and the reader. The second principle describes how school

instruction (teaching) marks the base of a socially mediated activity. It is here that the teachers' role is critical, as the teacher must mediate learning by deliberately organizing social interaction that will provide support for the student's learning in the zone of proximal development. In the ZPD, the teacher is a mediator and analyzer because at the same time s/he is interacting with the student s/he is also analyzing what type of strategies and how much support his/her student needs. Furthermore, Dixon-Krauss describes a teacher's mediation as strategic and a "dynamic, general framework that guides the teacher's decisions on planning instruction and his action during instruction" (p. 20-21).

The mediated instructional model that teachers (mediators) can use to extend learning has three phases including: 1) purpose; 2) strategies; and 3) reflection. The first phase, or purpose, helps the teacher decide, sort out, or establish the structure for activity. In the strategies phase, the teacher observes and examines the interaction or both student and teachers as they are actively engaged in the learning activity. In the third or reflective phase, the teacher can look back and decide on the strengths or changes that may be required to continue to mediate learning. This model can be applied to any

school subject and lends itself to whole language pedagogy because it engages the learner. The teacher deliberately mediates active, student-centered social learning activities to promote development of listening, speaking, reading and writing. (In Chapter Three, this model is discussed in more detail.)

### Halliday's Perspective on Language and Learning

M. A. K. Halliday's perspective on language and learning complements Vygotsky's ideas because both consider language as an important tool in the learning process of human beings. Halliday (2003) states "learning is a process of construction" (p. 30) in which humans build knowledge through experiences and by participating in interpersonal relationships. He suggests that there are three kinds of language learning and describes these as: 1) learning language; 2) learning through language, and 3) learning about language.

The first stage or learning language is the stage where human beings learn language from their surroundings and by interacting with others. This stage starts after the child is born. Language is considered to be social and personal because language is used by human beings to communicate thoughts and ideas to others. The new born child starts building up his or her language resources

since the moment of birth. Birth requires interacting with his/her immediate contexts using expressions such as gestures, sounds, and facial expression to communicate with others.

Learning through language is the second stage that starts when the child uses his home, primary, or first language in social context. Here the child is more conscious of his responsibilities as learner. The child is an active learner and knows that his language is the medium to communicate with his surroundings and learn new knowledge. The child's main tool for learning cognitive knowledge is his primary language. Language development takes place involuntarily outside of the school, in social groups such as family, friends, society, and other social events.

Finally, Halliday's learning about language suggests that the child learns the mechanics of the language or the proper use of grammar, syntax, semantic, and phonology as essential aspects of communication. Frequently, this last stage occurs consciously and in formal contexts such as schools. In these settings children consciously work on literacy skills such as reading and writing. Learners begin to see the relationships between writing skills as a communication tool that expresses their thoughts and

ideas. That is, the child builds his her vocabulary through formal learning.

Halliday (1975) believes language has many functions for human beings in any culture. Every culture has its own communication system and its main purpose is to communicate personal thoughts and ideas. In others words, the main purpose of language is self-expression and social interaction. Both Halliday and Vygotsky, recognize the centrality of the home language and social interaction in learning and literacy.

### Second Language Acquisition

#### How does the Primary Language Support Second Language Acquisition?

In answering this question, one must first acknowledge that human beings are cultural and social beings and live in a social, learning, and global environment, where everything is inter-connected. Socio-cultural contexts include family, school, teachers, social class and religion are critical influences in an individual's experiences connecting and defining shared realities. These cultural contexts are also defined by the learner's first language or acquired in the setting of a child's home. For this reason, the teacher must understand



and validate the sociolinguistic experiences children bring to school.

### Primary Language Transfers

The research on language acquisition supports an important connection between primary and second language that is central to this paper. Cummins' (1981) extensive research in the transferring of linguistic knowledge proposes the common underlying (CUP) and the separate underlying proficiency (SUP) hypotheses.

The CUP hypothesis suggests that the primary and second language have a shared linguistic foundation and the primary language knowledge facilitates second language acquisition (Balderrama & Díaz-Rico, 2006). In bilingual education, this perspective is seen as additive, implying that the primary language adds, contributes, and is an essential tool in acquiring second language skills and literacy. Cummins suggests that English learners are frequently seen as having learning, reading, or writing problems because teachers of EL's do not understand the concept of the transference of proficiency, or CUP. Teachers of English learners must understand that these students need to have their primary language foundation as a means to acquire a second language, thus minimizing or eliminating learning academic problems. Balderrama and

Díaz-Rico (2006) state "once a student has a strong linguistic and literacy foundation in the primary language, learning a second language and learning in general-building on this foundations, and elements once learned do not need to be relearned" (p. 117).

The SUP assumption denies the importance of the home language in acquiring a second language, opposing Vygotsky's and Halliday's perspectives on language and learning. In contrast to the CUP, the SUP implies that the primary language is a handicap that interferes with and delays second language acquisition. The subtractive or deficit model in teaching bilingual students is frequently associated with the SUP as this perspective ignores and denies usage of a child's primary language.

#### Additive School Models of Bilingual Education

Organizational or school level models that support the primary language or heritage language in instruction include maintenance and two way or dual immersion bilingual education programs. These models are described briefly below to shed light on how additive models of teaching and learning that affirm the importance of the child's first language can be organized at both classroom and school levels.

The maintenance bilingual model is also referred to as late-exit or developmental bilingual education. It is organized to preserve a student's heritage language as they become proficient in English, including literacy. Its goals are to organize schools and instruction that fully develop the primary language of the students, full proficiency in English, and achievement in all domains of academic study. Bilingualism is the goal and this model implies that using the primary language leads to English language proficiency while also affirming bicultural development and growth.

Schools using this model organize instruction that uses the home language, and students are taught to read and write in their primary language. Students receive the benefit of their own cultural heritage in literacy development by listening and reading familiar songs, poems, folktales, and stories in the primary language. The advantages of the maintenance model are numerous. Students participating in this model are bilingual and bicultural and have been taught using their primary language without compromising their home cultural, social and emotional connections with their family members and home environment.

Another school level model that builds on the home language of learners is the two-way bilingual education program or two-way immersion (TWI). These programs are characterized by mixing the equal number of students that are native English speakers and students speaking the target language or, those students whose language is other than English (for example, Spanish or Chinese) in the same classroom. All students develop proficiency in both their native (Spanish, Chinese) and second language (English), and achieve academically in two languages (Lindholm-Leary, 2004). This program improves the status of the English learners' primary language, raises their self-esteem, and increases cultural pride of students. The benefits of TWI are multiple as it supports the idea of the importance of dual-language proficiency and increases the prestige of home language of all students, particularly English learners of the local community and creates biliterate learners and citizens.

### Learning Theories

How children learn is an important question that merits attention, if teachers are to organize their classroom for academic achievement in general, and for English language development, and literacy specifically.

Howard Gardner's (1983) work in the multiple intelligences and Jean Piaget's (1970) cognitive development theory, provide useful constructs that address how children learn. Gardner and Piaget's view of learning are described briefly and connected to whole language pedagogy.

### Gardner's Multiple Intelligences

Gardner's (1993), theory of multiples intelligences was a result of his investigations in neurobiology, human development, and psychology. He states that children possess different intelligences with multiple dimensions. His theory recognizes different cognitive strengths in children and defines intelligence as, "biolo-psychological potential to process information that can be activated in a cultural setting to solve problems or create products that are of value in a culture" (Gardner, 1999, p. 34). He argues that the traditional definitions of intelligence are too narrow, and that a broader definition more accurately reflects the differing ways in which humans think and learn. Human beings have a variety of intelligences that they develop in their lives and these may be influenced by their environment, their language, and culture. The implications for learning are that teachers must acknowledge that their students manifest different or multiple ways of learning and displaying

knowledge. By teachers knowing their students and the ways in which they learn, instruction can be organized to mediate learning and support the zone of proximal development. According to the multiple intelligence theory, there are eight basic types of intelligences. These include the verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical-rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and the naturalistic. Table 1, describes the ability associated with each intelligence as well as real life examples of these abilities.

Table 1. Multiple Intelligences, Ability and Examples

Intelligence	Ability	Examples
1. Linguistic	word smart	poets, writers speakers,
2. Logical Mathematical	number and reasoning smart	scientists
3. Spatial-ability	visual smart	artists
4. Bodily- Kinesthetic	body smart	craftspeople, dancer
5. Musical	rhythm smart	musicians
6. Interpersonal	people smart	teachers
7. Intrapersonal	self smart	theologians
8. Naturalist	nature smart	biologists

## Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development

Piaget's work is relevant to this project because he examines language, and how the student is active and engaged in his/her learning. Piaget (1970) views language as an outside agent in the child's development and thoughts who translates his personal symbols or symbolic structures into collective or social meanings. He adapts language through assimilation and accommodation and the child adapts it for their use and to function more effectively. His theory of cognitive development influences whole language because it helps teachers to understand how people come to know concepts, ideas, and moralities. Piaget (1970) showed how children are actively involved in understanding their world and in trying answer their questions, and solve the problems that the world poses for them. Once again, a major theorist suggests that children possess vast cognitive knowledge that present them as curious, intelligent learners in classrooms, and are far from being empty or void of knowledge.

## Literacy Development and Whole Language

### What is "Whole Language"?

Whole language is a theory based on the assumption that the student is actively involved in the learning process. Using and playing language leads to language development. Language is a natural human endeavor that occurs in social contexts and has universal aspects that all humans share. Whole language theory considers language as a social semiotic system, composed of interdependent, inseparable subsystems, and predictable processes that have aesthetic qualities like primarily in linguistics, sociolinguistics, and cognitive psychology theories (Edelsky, Altwerger, & Flores, 1991). The classroom is the site for activity and a learning community, where teachers are learners who teach.

Whole language pedagogy, or using whole language theory to teach, suggests that the reading and writing processes are learned through actual reading and writing engagements that are meaningful to the student. Students engage in these literacy practices because they find joy, understanding and meaning not because the teacher requires them to complete their work. Reading and writing activities are organized in ways that connect the students' education with their home environment to make



the learning process purposeful and engaging. Furthermore, the reading process is viewed as a constructive process that builds and develops the learner's knowledge and skills comprehension is only one objective. This theory considers based in three considerations related to learning: 1) the context for learning should take advantage of people's propensity to do/think/know more when they are part of the learning communities; 2) what is planned as learning has teaching embedded in learning; and 3) what is learned should have some sensibility and imminent connection to what it is learned for (Edelsky, Altwerger, & Flores, 1991).

In Whole Language, What's the Difference? Edelsky, Altwerger, and Flores (1991) mention that whole language classrooms provide content-rich curricula where language and thinking can be about interesting and significant content, and the learner is involved as a problem solver and in critical analysis. Reading writing processes are learned through involvement with reading and writing exercises and not through doing reading and writing exercise (Edelsky & Draper 1989).

Whole language pedagogy has a sound theoretical foundation that can help bilingual students achieve the highest level of native literacy. This teaching approach

can make acquiring English as a second language a less painful process of acquisition. English learners are involved in authentic literacy events in which the students write because they have something to say and the teacher honors and affirms the voice of the writer. This gives the student writer ownership of the process and the expectation is that the student will write and use language. Students recognize and view errors as part of the early stages of writing, and misspelling or grammatical errors are the paths to learning to write in the context of a comprehensive or whole process (Goodman, Brooks, Meredith, & Goodman, 1987).

The most powerful, durable, effective kind of language learning can take place in schools based on the theory of "natural learning" (Cambourne, 1988). Whole language utilizes a set of principles that guide classroom practice (Goodman, 1986) with the student at center and the teacher as mediator. Whole language curriculum is flexible in that it takes and builds on what students bring to the classroom, adapting instruction to meet the needs of the learner. This additive model of instruction views the primary language of the bilingual pupil as an asset, that it be accepted, used and expanded upon to

develop literacy and flexibility in language use  
(Goodman, Brooks, Meredith, & Goodman, 1987).

#### What Constitutes Reading and Writing?

Literacy development is critically fundamental for any learner to acquire, as his/her entire success in school is highly dependent on reading and writing. Most educators and teachers have different points of view of the processes of acquisition of reading and writing, and more specifically what constitutes reading and writing. The work of Dr. Kenneth Goodman, Professor Emeritus, at the University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona is used to address these questions. Dr. Goodman's work integrates the theories (Vygotsky and Piaget) described earlier and he applies these theoretical foundations to teaching English learners to read and write.

Goodman et al. (1987) mention that there is only one process to reading. This process is an interchangeable process of creating meaning between the reader and the text writing that allows communication and interpretation through signs that represent meaning, between members of any society. He defines reading as based in interpretation, it must be necessary that readers understand some characteristics of the texts" (p. 20). Goodman (1996) states "reading is not first of all about

letters or words, but about meaning" (p. 31). During the reading process, the child contributes his knowledge of the world to the text. In other words, the child utilizes the sign systems such as graphophonic (knowledge about letter/sound correspondences), phonology (knowledge about sounds), syntax (sentence construction, basic grammatical constructions), and semantic (meaning) to construct meaning between the text and the child. He also mentions that while a child is reading, she or he makes predictions, inferences, about his own reading process to confirm or deny his own predictions, inferences and self corrects his/her own mistakes/miscues, if he/she needs to. Goodman adds that reading is constructing meaning between the text and the reader and miscues made during the reading process help the reader to understand the messages from the text. The most important and significant function for the reader during the reading process is to make meaning from the text with minor struggles from the reader.

In *Sobre la Lectura*, Goodman (2006) suggests that "in order to construct our own vocabulary, we need successful experiences with words, and phrases that are developing from authentic text" (p. 88). He calls for authentic reading. He describes authentic books are those that have

meaning for the child during his reading and that organize opportunities for success and achievement for the reader. Feeling and being successful encourages one to continue reading and as the reader continues to read she or he becomes more confident, more proficient, and more successful. Whole language pedagogy has many reading strategies that are designed and used with the purpose of being meaningful and bringing rich reading experiences to the reader. Some of these strategies include readers' theater, guided reading, mini share, and are discussed in Chapter Three. Readers' Theater is the strategy selected for this project and used to design a whole language lesson (see Chapter Four).

Sociopsycholinguistics theory emerged from the ideas proposed by Ken Goodman. In Language and Thinking in School, Goodman et al. (1987) define sociopsycholinguistics as the study of language acquisition and the psychological factors that are used to recognize words. Goodman also offers an explanation of the psycholinguistic theory of reading and writing, whereby reading and writing are two language forms that are parallel to each other. Language processes are both social and personal. They are personal because they are used to satisfy personal needs, and it is social because people

need to communicate over time, space and to preserve ideas through heritage. Goodman believes that goal of schooling is to use these parallel processes to engage children in learning and create the possibilities for children to invent and discover reading while they are learning about their social environment and individual worlds. That is, students must be actively involved in using language and literacy in meaningful ways. Whole language teachers organize writing side by side with students and hold high expectations for all of their students as successful writers.

### The Social Construction of Knowledge

#### Teacher and Learners in the Classroom

In whole language classrooms the teacher and students play important roles in the acquisition of the language that is part of the social construction of knowledge. Teaching and learning takes place as a collaborative social process within the context of the classroom where the teacher is both a teacher and learner. The student is also both a learner and a teacher. Educators using whole language pedagogy understand these roles and relationships and acknowledge the prior knowledge that the child brings to the learning process.

Additionally, the role of the teacher is one of mediator, guide, monitor, facilitator, whose role is to engage with students in constructing opportunities that will results in interacting with meaningful ideas, concepts, and materials. As suggested earlier, students negotiate meaning and co-construct knowledge with themselves, their peers and their teachers. . Teachers are present to encourage learners to learn about their own interests, alone and with others and to move them through the zone of proximal development. The teacher collaborates with the learners to elaborate the curriculum (Edelsky, Altwerger, & Flores, 1991) More important, the teacher uses genuine texts-that engage students. These include children's literature, recipes, song lyrics, dictionaries, and other materials used to plan meaningful, culturally responsive listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities. In the whole language classroom, the teacher is a skilled professional, affirms the additive model of teaching and knows that students bring many experiences that can be used to teach. In these interactions, the role of the student is one of active learner occupied with construction of knowledge with others and in the self-negotiation of meaning. Students are social participants, active thinkers, problem solvers inquiring

about their learning and the world around them as well the task with which they are involved. Peers assume the role of knowledge constructor, as they help contribute to expanding their classmates' knowledge and are integral parts in the social construction of knowledge in the classroom.

In short, the social construction of knowledge integrates and use theories that place language at the core of how knowledge is constructed socially as individual learners interact with one another. With the mediation of a more knowledgeable learner (teacher or peer, for example), students engage in these interactions within the zone of proximal development where they can reach their potential, and extend their learning.



## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### Key Concepts Framing Whole Language as an Exemplary Model for Language and Literacy Development

The review of the literature in Chapter Two presented topics that form an interrelated framework that grounds whole language pedagogy as a model for language and literacy development for English Learners. This section describes the five principles of whole language that inform the pedagogical framework introduced in this chapter and describes specific strategies, one of which will be used as an exemplary curricular lesson.

#### The Five Principles

##### Language is Learned Based on Need, Purpose, and Function

Vygotsky's explanation of learning as socially based as well as Halliday's work on the development of language as having personal-social functions serve as major influences on Ken Goodman's work, the leading advocate in whole language pedagogy. Goodman's view of the role of language in human learning is vital and is achieved in "functional situations in which learners are trying to use language to achieve personal-social purpose" (p. 313). As

stated earlier, social context encourages the learner to develop and use effective language to communicate effectively. As with language, students will read and write when they have a purpose or need in performing these tasks. What results from these engagements is learning. Goodman (1987) adds, "Relevant reading, listening, talking, and writing need to be a vital part of every child's day" (p. 186) and classroom instruction should be designed to engage and encourage children's language and literacy development.

Edelsky (1986) says that many traditional language and literacy activities require meaningless "filling the blanks, reading flashcards, writing word lists, completing sentences in a wordbook, participating in round robin reading of paragraphs in controlled-vocabulary readers (p. 166). These activities tend to have little meaning and relevancy for the learners (lack connections to their lives, for example) and lack a purpose for picking up a book, engaging with a text or a giving reasons to write. That is, these events are empty of any social significance, discouraging language and literacy development. Class activities can be organized for English learners that center on meaning making and this is precisely what is at the heart of whole language pedagogy.

In another study, Edelsky (1986) also identified six activities she observed in a sixth grade whole language classroom as mediating language and literacy development. These activities included: (a) children writing for their peers; (b) children reading the entire book; (c) children guessing and justifying their guessing; (d) children writing in journals on books they read; (e) children planning, rehearsing, carrying out a play with elaborate presentations, while organizing this event with adults (teacher) and peers; and (f) children revising and editing their writing in order to make their communication more comprehensible. All of these are examples of activities that engage the learner in literacy acts that motivate students and involve them as active learners in their own language and literacy development, and challenge them to use language in multiple ways.

Learning needs to be Meaningful, Enjoyable, and Integrated

Vygotsky and Halliday posit that learning takes place when it is meaningful. Piaget's work on children's play further corroborates that human development and growth takes place in contexts that are fun, enjoyable, and safe for the learner. Meaning and fun are coupled with activity, and for this reason students must be active,

central players in academic activities that are socially organized around students. Goodman (2006) adds that whole language teachers know, and deliberately organize academic activities that engage students and teachers in active roles. He states that whole language teachers "know that children have language and the ability to learn language, and that learning in school should be as easy and as much fun as outside of school" (p. 25).

While Goodman (2006) insists that learning requires meaning and joy, his strongest stance is that learning must be integrated. This fundamental principle in whole language pedagogy requires that language and literacy be taught in as a whole, not in isolated, discrete bits and pieces. That is, this approach includes all domains or elements of language (listening, speaking, reading, writing) are part of a meaning making system, with each part related and its functions interdependent. He further emphasizes that learning theory does not provide evidence that learning takes place in chunks or in discrete events.

#### Learning is Built on Children's Language and Strengths

Earlier the discussion of Vygotsky's research addressed how children are not empty vessels, but instead human beings with rich linguistic resources, and an

extensive repertoire of psychological tools. This research supports using the primary or home language of the children in learning and teaching. Whole language pedagogy affirms this stance. Children in school are viewed as having reached a high degree of language proficiency in at least one language or dialect, because "this language is at the same time their form of expression, and communication, their instrument of thought and the central instrument of their learning" (Goodman et al. 1987, p. 8).

According to whole language pedagogical philosophy, the role of the school and teacher is to build upon this existing competence and to build upon children's strengths, or assets. Teachers who view children as competent learners also recognize that all aspects of language and literacy are a work in progress, or a dynamic process that is constantly growing and evolving.

By viewing children and learning in this manner, whole language teachers recognize the importance of authentic, communication with language learners as writers and readers. That is, validation, use and integration is central to mediating a context or setting that engages the students while also creating purpose, meaning and joy in learning. This approach is real, authentic and parallels the way in which language usage and learning take place in

real life. Goodman states (1987) that "life experiences do not just involve things; more commonly they involve learners in dynamic processes of transaction with the world" (p. 14). This pedagogical framework has important implications for English learners because their primary language, their dialects and their personal experiences with literacy and life are purposefully integrated in the learning and instructional process.

#### Language is Learned by Using It

Halliday's and Vygotsky's work on language informs whole language instruction in that language and linguistic events are important aspects of culture and individuals. Language is an essential psychological tool interrelated with culture suggesting that children acquire and use language prior to formal schooling experiences. Most children, despite their English language proficiency levels or literacy levels, have a keen awareness of print and books in their environments.

Whole language teachers design opportunities for children to use, play, and interact with language. Examples of these interactive activities include learning centers to facilitate their use of language, thinking, background knowledge, and experience. Another example of teachers mediating knowledge and creating opportunities

for students to connect school and home is for teachers to bring objects from the community that can be used in a classroom project. These objects should have some features that students recognize so that the teacher can provide clues to extend their thinking and predicting. Such activities integrate and utilize all aspects of language (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), extend the students' thinking, build their schema, and honor and acknowledge what students know. According to Goodman et al. (1987), important academic skills such as categorization, classification, prediction, labeling, concept development, and use of evidence are used, and developed side by side with language and literacy. Teachers of English learners are concerned about vocabulary development and academic language and the whole language classroom addresses these important skills in an integrated, meaningful, and purposeful context.

#### Language Development

As the name implies, whole language pedagogy has language development as its focus in instruction. Goodman (2003) states, "whatever is true of language in general is also true of written language" (p. 303). This suggests that practices used to encourage language development are applicable to literacy. The teacher's understandings of

the social nature of learning (Vygotsky), the importance of language interaction in language development, and the use of strategies that place the learner as an active learner that can construct meaning are central to language development. The teacher's role is critical in organizing activities that build on the learner's linguistic knowledge and culture.

In whole language classrooms there are specific ways to mediate language development that promote active listening, use of informal language, academic language and literacy skills. Goodman (1987) suggests that through active listening activities teachers create opportunities that involve students in real speech events that help the students become aware of their roles as listeners/participants in communication events. Use of informal language encourages students to use their language (primary) in conversations and discussions that promote understanding of social and academic events. Academic language development can be organized to include the use of expository texts such as list making, letter, writing, and reporting, researching, and writing essays. Reading can be integrated in all of these language development activities and can be the focus or the extension of a lesson. All of these language development



strategies integrate all aspects of language, English language acquisition, and literacy.

### Whole Language Strategies

Whole language pedagogy is a vision of teaching and learning that places the learner at center while viewing language and literacy as a complete meaning making system. This perspective extends language development by integrating, including thinking activities that help students in the totality of their learning. Social interaction, collaboration, and the teacher's role as one of mediator are fundamentals to whole language classrooms.

In the implementation of whole language strategies a model of mediation is used. This process is guided by the teacher and includes purpose, strategies, and reflection. In the purpose phase the teacher examines the structure of the text that will be used for the specific lesson or activity. Second, the teacher selects the specific teaching strategy that will be used to engage students in meaningful activities and push them into and through the ZPD. The strategies are selected according to the teacher's intent and purpose of the selected texts. In the final, reflection phase, teachers observe, examine, and decide if the strategies are supporting the reader. If

necessary, teacher makes changes or adaptations. Figure 1 maps the mediation model and its core elements.

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Reflection</b>
Analyze the text's Structure	Select strategies	Observe, look back

Figure 1. Mediation Model and Core Elements

The following section discusses numerous pedagogical strategies informed by whole language principles that frame the exemplary curricular lessons in Chapter Four.

#### Read Aloud

This strategy can benefit all elementary level students and engages the students in using speech, or reading out loud while also exposing and introducing the reader to new authors, new books, and a variety of genres. Listening to oneself also broadens vocabulary while encouraging students to visualize and create images of what they are reading. Student's read aloud can be audio taped and students can hear themselves. Later students use the tapes to read independently. The whole language teacher can also listen actively during the child's read-aloud giving him/her opportunities to analyze the reader's knowledge about the text, word recognition, and

understanding of the story. The reader's abilities are also an important part of this strategy because the teacher must be aware of the personal academic background a student brings to the learning activity. This information is used to analyze how the reader can be supported and what may be needed to increase comprehension and meaning. The strategies are selected according to the teacher's intent and purpose of the selected texts. According to Dixon-Krauss (1996) reading strategies selected by teachers tend to fall in three areas: (a) comprehension strategies (prediction, sorting, information, making inferences); (b) word identification strategies (context, phonetics, instruction analysis); and (c) text structure strategies (stories elements, main points of key concepts, dialogue).

#### Independent, Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading

This strategy is called Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading (USRR) or Drop Everything and Read (DEAR). Pappas, Kiefer, and Levstik (1990) state that USRR "is simple periods of quiet time set aside during the day when children read books of their own choosing" (p. 281). This strategy usually begins with ten minutes and later it is extended to more time depending on the interest of the

students. Elementary school children or emerging readers may spend their silent reading time looking at pages and softly speaking to themselves or quietly reading aloud and reading to themselves.

Children in the upper elementary grades (4-6) may have forty-five minutes a day or longer time depending on the student's interest in reading books. The most important aspects of DEAR in school should center on reading as enjoyment and fun. Multicultural literature and books that reflect the language and culture of the readers should be a consideration in providing reading choices. Teachers can interact and talk with students about the books that are available and discuss the choices students make in their reading selections.

#### Interactive Journals

The benefits of using journals in elementary grades are that students are allowed and expected to express and reflect on their actions, feelings and thoughts through writing, while improving their written skills. Interactive journals are also referred to as reflective or dialectical journals because they engage the learner in roles as readers and writers, and meaning makers. In the whole language classroom, students use their journals to write personal entries about what happened during their life, on

that day, or the night before, or they can predict what will be happening in school that day.

Writing and reading become dynamic and constructive processes and the text is authentically constructed with meaningful concepts and rich in vocabulary. Teachers can also observe a student's ability to write, their expression, and assess a student's knowledge in a comprehensive way. Another way in which teachers can use journaling is to respond and interact with each student's writing, thus extending the learner's zone of proximal development.

### Learning Logs

Pappas et al. (1990) define learning logs as "a kind of journal that enable children to write across the curriculum as they plan, map, record, recall, consider, organize, assign, remember, pose, question, predict, decide, and so on in a range of projects and activities in various thematic units" (p. 291). Learning logs extend the process of generating information as each student activates his or her prior knowledge, and allows for practicing and discovering ideas before sharing or interacting with others. Pappas et al. (1990) suggest that entries in learning logs consist of three stages including: (a) asking questions; (b) making guesses (or

stating hypothesis); and (c) organizing information. Learning logs promote sequential, logical thinking, document both content and process, and make visible children's understanding and metacognition, their problem solving and finally provide opportunities for self-reflection about their learning.

### Active Learning

This strategy is known also as What do I know? What do want I to know? What did I learn? (K-W-L) Students take an active role in the learning process by addressing these questions before, during, and after their lesson or projects. This engaging strategy is an example of a learning log. In the pre-reading activity the teacher asks the students to brainstorm what they know about the topic. Information is written and made visible (stored) on a class chart (What I/We know). At the next level, students are engaged in the post-reading activities by asking them what they want to know about the topic (What do I/We want to know?). Students are the center of learning and their interests and questions related to the topic are validated and integrated in the design of lessons. This is an important phase because learning is grounded in meaningful, purposeful acts consistent with theoretical prepositions by Vygotsky, Halliday, and Piaget. Also, this

activity emphasizes class participation, social skills, verbal skills, taking risks, and the development of students' high order thinking.

In the post reading activity, the students document what they learned. The student and or class completes the last column on the class chart "What I/We learned". This last activity gives students the opportunity to assess and reflect on their learning. Reflecting, or looking back on one's learning is an important thinking skills that develops the learners metacognitive skill through practice in monitoring their work and evaluating their progress.

#### Theme Cycles

Anders, and Guzzeti (2005) mention that theme cycles, learning cycles, inquiry cycles, and authoring cycles are similar. The difference in theme cycles is that they are applied to the whole class. Goodman (2006) states "Whole language teachers organize the whole of or a large part of the curriculum around topics or themes" (p. 32). Theme cycles usually begin with a discussion about what the students want to learn about a specific topic during the semester or school year. The teacher lists the ideas that the school curriculum or standards mandate. One topic is selected to focus learning. After the topic selection, the teacher and students brainstorm everything they know about

the topic, and then these ideas are categorized and mapped. Similar to the "K, W, L," activity, students generate questions that they would like to answer, and these questions are prominently displayed in the classroom for everyone to see and used for the duration of the theme study. After, the class creates a list of possible ways to answer these questions, the students work as a whole group, in small groups, or individually to explore the theme as a way to obtain answers to their questions. As the theme cycle progresses, the initial web, or map of what we know and what we want to know is redrawn to represent the developing and changing knowledge of the class. Again, students are actively involved in all aspects of their learning. From beginning to end engagement by the learner is central. Frequently, teachers using theme cycles will integrate a reflective component such as what we learned. This is similar to what was described above in the section on active learning.

#### Guided and Shared Reading

This is one of the whole language strategies used to guide students in the reading process. During shared reading, (teacher reads with whole class) teachers use enlarged books or big books to model how reading takes place, including book orientation, directionality and how



speech matches print. During the guided and shared reading, the text is read aloud, and the teacher remarks about the printed words while s/he is reading aloud. The roles of the characters in the story are emphasized. The children are asked to predict or anticipate the story or context using the title of the book (also pictures). This strategy is a clear example of how reading is taught in its entirety, and not in discreet parts, emphasizing the active use of the students' listening, predicting, speaking, imagining, and sharing of knowledge and ideas. Teachers mediate this whole language activity by pushing students into zones of proximal development that extend their thinking, imagination and language in safe, learning environments. Equally important is that those students who may be inexperienced readers can participate and are encouraged to take risks with literacy activities, and using their first language. These opportunities not frequently provided for English learners in classroom that do not use whole language pedagogy as a basis for teaching reading and writing.

#### Mini Share

This strategy can be used in lower grades, (K-3) where learning opportunities are organized around sharing and exploring, students are guided, gain confidence,

practice, predict, and develop word recognition with the help of their teacher. In mini share reading (Flores, 1995; 2008) the teacher introduces predictable books to small groups of children. Multiple copies of the same book are needed to allow the children to interact, and work with their own copies as they read and explore the text as a whole class. These texts may include books with one line of the text and adequate space between words. Patterned, predictable, fiction and non-fiction, books with supportive illustrations, teacher-made books, or commercially published books are effective. This strategy is used with children transitioning into guided reading. The goals of the mini share reading include

- (a) familiarizing children with predictable books that engage them in successful acts of reading;
- (b) allowing children to experience the text up close in order to develop early reading behaviors;
- and (c) having the teacher help children become aware of the three cueing systems (semantic, syntactic, graphophonic) and early reading strategies.

Mini share reading activities are complex allowing for modeling and learning many essential reading habits while also developing specific language and literacy skills such as word recognition, building knowledge of high frequency words, locating unknown words,

locating unknown words with known letters, and in developing awareness of punctuation. As mentioned, understanding of the cueing systems is an important aspect of this strategy and students learn the semantic cues (meaning cues and picture cues), syntactic cues (structure), and graphophonic cues (visual cues/letter sounds).

### Readers' Theater

This is an interpretative reading activity that allows the listeners to relive the radio broadcasts of the past or present (Pappas et al., 1990) while bringing life to characters in stories. This strategy is mostly auditory and when used is enhanced with a lot of facial expressions and gestures. This strategy is powerful in demonstrating to children that reading is an active, and open process that allows for multiple interpretations of what is heard and thus allows the listener to construct meaning.

Readers' theater brings life to the text and breathes life into reading by allowing the reader to enact a character in the story. Pappas suggests that stories or parts of the book that have an exciting plot, compelling characters and language that calls for visual maps are ideal selections for Readers' Theater. This project uses Readers' Theater as an example of a language and literacy strategy that

integrates essential whole language principles. In Chapter Four, a lesson is presented using Readers' theater.

#### Think, Pair, Share

This whole language strategy encourages students' classroom participation in multiple ways. First, it helps students develop conceptual understanding of a topic, and encourages their ability to select information and this information is used to draw conclusions. Think, pair, share also allows students to consider other points of view as important to increasing their own knowledge. Whole language teachers use the "think, pair, share" strategy to augment the quality of students' responses, and to extend and build their thinking skills by having students use language to discuss their views or to pose higher order (challenging) questions (pushing students into and through the zone of proximal development). Another benefit of this strategy is that it leads to retention and recalling of academic knowledge and information, because it supports comprehension and not mere recall of information.

#### The Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD)

The GLAD is a project and model of professional development in the area of language acquisition and literacy across the curriculum in a balanced literacy approach. Central to GLAD is the integration of listening,

speaking, reading, and writing across all content areas. This approach also emphasizes that language and literacy are acquired more effectively when the emphasis is on meaning and message and its guiding principles involve high level, academic language and literacy. The following lists selected elements of the GLAD model for teaching English learners:

- Teaches to the highest potential.
- Uses brain-based research to organize second language acquisition.
- Engages students in reading and writing.
- Uses themes for teaching while also addressing standards-based teaching.
- Encourages learning, respect, trust, identity, and personal voice.
- Utilizes on-going assessment and evaluation using multiple tools for student learning.

### Writing Conferences

Pappas et al. (1990) mention that the two major types of writing conferences are related to content and editing aspects of the writing process. Content conferences assess and guide students in the writing process and teachers read and react to the student's text. It is expected that

the student author will already have checked his work and has worked with another peer or classmate in reviewing the writing before meeting with the teacher. During the conference or meeting, the teacher focuses on the content of the text (meaning-making) and the way in which the student organized the meaning of the text. First, the teacher makes any positive comment about the student's text or can mention writing strategies pertinent to improving or enhancing the writing. The teacher can ask questions, or strategically place the student in the role of author. In this way the student is given ownership of his ideas and written work, as well as in solving their own writing challenges. At the end of this conference the teacher makes notes about what should be re-written and these comments are included in the messages of the student's writing log.

In editing conferences the focus is to revise what has been written. In editing the text, the teachers guide the students in ways to improve writing, meaning, and communication of ideas. To accomplish this task, teachers have designated a special place in the classroom such as an edit table or editing corner stocked with a dictionary, a thesaurus, pencils, or others material that support editing. This process includes correcting spelling,

punctuation, deleting words or phrases, or selecting words to improve clarity of the text. Another editing option is to involve a peer in editing. Teachers and students can negotiate and decide which editing procedures can be used allowing students to be actively involved in their literacy development.

### Summary

Whole language strategies integrate the language arts in the quest of developing students' critical thinking, meaning making, and language development. The strategies described above share common elements that integrate language, involve students as active learners, engage them in discussions and interactions with the text and hold high expectations for all students as they are encouraged to work to their highest potential. These strategies also value the knowledge of the learner, including prior academic knowledge and oracy and literacy in primary language.

The next chapter applies the principles discussed above through an exemplary whole language lesson using Readers' Theater. This lesson is designed to demonstrate how second graders can engage in developing English as a

second language through integrated listening, speaking, reading and writing engagements.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### DESIGNING WHOLE LANGUAGE CURRICULUM

#### Using Readers' Theater to Put Principles in Practice

The following chapter focuses on developing curriculum and presents selected strategy that integrates many whole language principles. This lesson places the learner at the center of learning, and involves children in using language in authentic, real ways that are meaningful. Readers' Theater is selected to demonstrate how children can be engaged in reading while also using scripts to bring life to text. Children are active and involved in their learning as they imagine and get involved in creating images of the characters, the setting, or the script. For this reason Readers' Theater is often referred to as the "theatre of the imagination". The emphasis is on oral expression and engages children in the use of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993) such as verbal, kinesthetic, visual, musical, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.

Vygotsky, Halliday, and Piagetian principles of learning and language ground this strategy because all children are assumed to have the capacity to act upon, or create drama around a concept, idea or script. Additive

models of education and culture are integrated in organizing academic activities whereby children "act out" their view and understanding of their world, creating their own scripts, reading aloud, performing with a purpose, and bringing enjoyment to both themselves and their audiences. Almost any story or book can be scripted for Reader's Theater, but some are easier and work better than others. Generally stories that are simple and lively, with lots of dialogues or action, and with few scenes or characters are sound choices.

Whole language teachers of English learners can also strategically decide on multicultural literature and readings in the children's primary language to build on the psychological and linguistic tools students bring to the activity. All cultures have beautiful stories that can be used as the texts or scripts to engage children.

Readers' Theater facilitates social learning, by providing whole language teachers with multiple opportunities to organize zones of proximal development for their students. For instance, the context created by this strategy provides a clear purpose for writing, for reading, and for sharing their learning by bringing others into a space that the students, in collaboration with each other and their teacher create. Readers' Theater involves

every learner, and creates the zones for different levels of English proficiency, reading, writing, listening, and speaking to exist. This strategy, while comprehensive in that it integrates many sound whole language practices, is an effective and low anxiety approach that engages children in reading in a joyful, playful way.

Language and literacy are taught in integrative and meaningful ways allowing children to write, read, perform and interpret their roles as they acquire a better understanding of the literature, the text and the concepts. The research and theories discussed in this project state that teachers must organize purposeful lessons that engage children in using language, literacy skills and in playing and experimenting with words. Language and literacy must be used, heard, practiced, and Readers' Theater provides ample opportunities for such events to take place. Table 2 Summarizes essential principles of this strategy.

Table 2. Principles Framing the Strengths and Benefits of Readers' Theater

- 
1. Students are active participants in the learning process.
  2. Learning is organized around relevant, real experiences that build on children's knowledge.
  3. Motivation to learn is embedded in engaging, and meaningful activity.
  4. Cooperation and social learning is encouraged.
  5. Student contributions as to what and how students learn are more visible and are clear to students and teacher.
  6. The teacher guides the learning process, and mediates the zone of proximal development (makes adaptations as necessary).
  7. The students' writing and work can be used as scripts, or materials for reading and teaching.
  8. The written samples can be used to monitor growth and learning, as well as for formal assessments.
  9. The activity promotes individual problem solving and critical thinking.
- 

#### Planning a Whole language Lesson

##### Developmental English Language Arts and English Language Development State Standard

The Reader's Theater lesson designed for this project targets second grade, intermediate level English learners and addresses fundamental planning elements including state standards (English language arts aligned with

English language development). The components of the lesson plan are discussed in the next section and include: goals and objectives, concepts, anticipatory set, modeled instruction, guided practice, and closure through independent practice. Assessment and follow up activities are also discussed including a list of materials necessary for implementation of this lesson.

Developmentally, second graders are generally seven and eight years old with cognitive skills that are developed allowing them to understand there are realities other than their own and consequently there are different points of view or perspectives. This allows them to understand roles or characters in stories and these characters talk, think, and do different things in life which are critical elements and understandings required in Reader's Theater.

In terms of language usage (general, not second language or English usage) children can use contextual clues to obtain an understanding of the meaning of words and in understanding conversation. At this age students have opinions which they know they can share with others and they can use reason and their experiences to describe and represent their thoughts.

English learners identified as intermediate learners in English as second language have a broad range of language skills in oracy and literacy. In California schools, the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) is used to assess proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing and broadly identifies what students at this stage of English language development. The CELDT identifies that second grade intermediate EL's can use oral language to describe people, places meaning of words. Part of learning any second language involves errors and the CELDT recognizes that intermediate level students may have errors in their speech. Regarding literacy, EL's can read a variety of texts and can retell what was read with scaffolding or mediating (Vygotsky) from a teacher or competent peer. Students can be expected to identify main ideas and details from texts, particularly stories that engage them.

As suggested earlier in this project, knowing one's students is central to effective teaching. Knowing one's students include understanding cognitive abilities and developmental levels as well as knowing what primary and second language tools students have developed.

## Components of the Readers' Theater Lesson Plan

In California two sets of standards are required to teach English learners in language arts. These standards include the California English Language Arts (ELA) Standards (California Department of Education, 1997) and the English Language Development (ELD) standards (California Department of Education, July, 1999). The ELD standards are benchmarks or the "onramp" for ELA standards, and ultimately English learners must reach the ELA standards. This lesson integrates both sets of standards and addresses the four domains of language (listening, speaking, reading and writing). Table 3 summarizes the ELA and ELD Standards used in the Readers' Theater lesson plan. This table lists the California Standards for English learners for second grades, at intermediate level of English Proficiency.

Table 3. Summary of Second Grade English Language Development Intermediate Proficiency Level Standards and English Language Arts Standards

Lesson ELD Standards (Intermediate Level)	ELA Standard (Second grade)
<p>Listening:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Listen attentively to stories and information and identify important details and concepts by using both verbal and nonverbal response.</li> <li>2. Participate in social conversations with peers and adults on familiar topics by asking answering questions and soliciting information.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.1 Determine the purpose or purposes for listening (e.g. to obtain information, to solve problems, for enjoyment).</li> <li>1.3 Paraphrase information that has been shared orally by others.</li> <li>1.4 Give and follow three and four step directions.</li> </ol>
<p>Speaking:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make oneself understood when speaking by using consistent standard English grammatical forms and sounds; however, some rules may not be followed (e.g. third-persons singular, male and female pronoun).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.6 Speak clearly and at an appropriate pace for the type of communication (e.g. informal discussion report to class).</li> </ol>



Lesson	
ELD Standards (Intermediate Level)	ELA Standard (Second grade)
<p>Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Read stories and respond orally in simple sentences to factual comprehension questions about the stories.</li> <li>2. Use more complex vocabulary and sentences communicate needs and express ideas in a wider variety of social and academic setting (e. g. classroom discussions, mediation of conflicts).</li> <li>3. Write captions or phrases for drawing related to a story.</li> <li>4. Draw logical inferences about stories aloud and use simple phrases or sentences to communicate the inferences made (CELDT).</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.2 State the purpose in reading (i. e., tell what information is sought).</li> <li>2.4 Ask clarifying questions about essential textual elements of exposition (e.g. why, what, if, how).</li> </ol>
<p>Writing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write short narratives stories that include the elements of setting and character.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2.1 Write brief narratives based on their experiences move through a logical sequence of events; describe the setting, characters, objects, and events in details.</li> </ol>

Additionally, the English Language Arts (ELA) have listening and speaking subcomponents that emphasize that students listen critically and respond appropriately to oral communication, speak in a manner that guides the listeners to understand important ideas by using proper phrasing, pitch, and modulation and retell stories, including characters, setting.

## Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives use for this lesson are derived from the standard listed above. In the lesson students will:

1. Increase reading vocabulary and improve reading comprehension
2. Develop listening and speaking in English as a second language via Readers' Theater.
3. Use and interact with books.
4. Learn how to organize and deliver oral presentations, including retelling of the story (characters, setting, and plot).
5. Create their own version of Readers' Theater that is performed for an audience.

## Concepts

This lesson helps students understand the importance of listening, speaking, reading, and writing as essential processes of communication and mediates the cognitive connection between language and literacy. Enacting a performance using Readers' Theater (Brett, 2010) allows the learner first hand experiences that lead to understanding. The concepts developed in this exemplary lesson plan are literary elements of story, oral language expression via Readers' Theater, and critical literary

analysis. These concepts organize interactive participation amongst students, teacher, using the selected story, "Hedgie's Surprise." See Appendix for a copy of this story.

### Anticipatory Set

The anticipatory set motivates and introduces the lesson and is the attention getter for the topic. First, the teacher mediates knowledge construction by engaging students in making predictions about the story. The Mediated Structure for Charting Predictions Before Reading the Story, (Figure 2) is an organizer that engages students. The term-mediated structure is used as a tool that teachers can use to facilitate the zone of proximal Development used by Vygotsky. Figure 2 shows that template that teachers can use to involve students with the text, while providing a visual structure for organizing thinking and learning. This chart can be used by teachers with the whole class to make predictions about the story, and students may draw illustrations to make predictions.

The teacher may ask the students to draw and write their comments, observations of the story in their literature response journal. Thus, students participate at both individual and group levels. After reading and discussing the story or script teachers can revisit the

chart with students and discuss the accuracy of the predictions made before reading the story. Figure 3 shows a template of mediated structure teachers can use to check these predictions. In this post-reading stage, students are encouraged to make observations and orally share their personal opinions about the characters, setting, and the plot of the story according to their listening of the story.

### Modeled Instruction

Social learning is an important aspect of this pedagogy accomplished through modeling or having students see and practice what is expected of them in Readers' Theater. Modeling is fundamental to students' success because language behaviors and usage are made explicit and visible to students. After the students have heard the story, the teacher will introduce the Readers' Theater script version of the story (See Appendix). All students will practice reading the script of "Hedgie's Surprise." This modeled instruction includes choral reading of the story, implying that students will read along, as a whole class with the teacher. Some students may take turns reading selected parts of the narration and enacting the characters with appropriate intonations. Depending on the prior experiences and knowledge of the students, the

teacher may need to model the voice inflections and involve students in making suggestions about how certain characters or emotions may sound.

Reading aloud chorally provides a risk free environment for students to chime in and out and also listen to others as they read. English learners need to engage in listening and speaking in order to internalize the nuances of English. The Readers' Theater script provides children with the opportunities to engage in multiple ways of learning and practicing the varied and beautiful aspects of language.

#### Guided Practice

Guided practice is the stage in the lesson that provides the opportunity for each student to demonstrate understanding and grasp a new concept. Students work through an activity or exercise under the teacher's direction and observation.

This process is twofold and involves the children by engaging them in practicing their parts and then co-constructing the story elements mediated structure. Figure 4 shows the template for the mediated structure of the elements in story developed to help students understand that most stories are composed of different elements such as the characters, the setting, the plot,

and the end. The teacher should assign students to groups and guide the children in naming and identifying the characters, setting, and plot of the story.

The Mediated Structure of the Elements in the Story is used as also co-constructed with the whole class in the form of poster or big chart where all students can see and can participate in completing. Children share their thoughts about the story as the teacher writes and negotiates the language that is selected to document and write what students say. Each child is given an individual, version of the mediated structure (Figure 4 Mediated Structure of the Elements of the Story) and asked to write his/her comments and observations about the story.

This guided practice activity is designed to engage students in practicing the literary elements of the story they are learning and also makes visible the connection between oral and written language.

Successful readers know that the sequence of the story is important to understanding the plot and the resolution or ending. The Mediated Structure of Readers' Theater Plot Sequence (see Figure 5) is another organizer developed to help and guide student to work collaboratively in identifying the sequence of events in

the story. Readers' Theater Plot Sequence, organizer groups the stages of development of the story line through three acts, Act I, Act II, and Act III. Each Act is broken down further into three scenes listed as Beginning (Scene 1), the Middle (Scene 2), and the End, (Scene 3). Chunking information and breaking down stories helps students see and understand how stories are comprehensive and made of core elements.

The plot is the story line and involves the core elements of all stories. Lack of understanding of a story frequently means missing the plot. Setting includes time and place. Details that describe setting might include weather, time of day, location, landscape, and even furniture. All of these things can contribute to the understanding of a scene. The characters of the story can be an animal or person who is responsible for the thoughts and actions within a story. Characters are extremely important because they are the medium through which a reader interacts with a piece of literature. Mediating and exposing students to the concept of plot and the parts of a plot is essential to Readers' Theater. It is essential.

Teachers should make visible the role of plot discussing its elements and purpose including:

1) exposition; 2) rising action; [the beginning]

3) climax; [the middle] 4) falling action; and  
5) resolution [the end]. Engaging the children in analyzing the plot allows students to develop their analytic and critical thinking skills. Also, students begin to use and practice academic language in a context that is meaningful. These understandings help student get into the characters roles and they can begin to decide how these characters can be portrayed. Practicing together, students can make sure that their inflections; pronunciations, voice, pitch, and gestures match the storyline.

Teachers can also provide opportunities for students to design their props, costumes, and sound effects. Children are extremely cognizant of detail and have vast knowledge about movie scenarios given the impact of the mass media in their lives. Involving students in the decision making regarding these aspects of the presentation of the play will excite the children, motivate them to perform with gusto and create opportunities for them to share and demonstrate their prior knowledge.

#### Closure/Independent Practice

Independent practice involves the learner in demonstrating or applying that s/he has learned what was



taught. In Readers' Theater, the children will demonstrate what they have learned by performing the play for another audience (other peers, other teachers, family, or a group that has not seen their performance).

This performance is evaluated by the children themselves (self-assessment) and by their classroom peers. They can write what they opined in the form of reflections in their literature response journal. This writing can be guided by an open-ended question (Tell me what you thought about the performance) or can be structured with several questions about the performance (Describe what you liked best about the performance, What did you feel during the performance, and Describe which character you liked best in the performance).

Teachers can extend the zone of proximal development by having students write and elaborate on their own story with new characters. Strategic planning by the whole language teacher can determine if the class or groups of students can create their own story and use it for their next Readers' Theater performance. If this decision is made, the teacher can facilitate and guide students in the writing process of a narrative story and then mediate their writing so that it can be adapted as a script for the Readers' Theater. Figure 2. Mediated Structure for

Charting Predictions can be used to help students charting the story by predicting before the teacher can read them the story. Figure 3. Mediated Structure for Checking Predictions After Reading Story can be used to confirm or deny their predictions about the story.

#### Assessment and Follow-up

Assessments are ongoing using observation, anecdotal records, interacting with students, and listening to engagement and content of discussion. The mediated structures presented as such as the Prediction Chart, Elements of the Story and the, Readers' Theater Plot Sequence can be utilized in a more formal manner, including teacher feedback journal entries. How to use these charts can be decided by the teacher. The performance of the Readers' Theater is a major evaluation tool for teacher and students (self assessment and reflection) that can focus on specific elements of the lesson as well as on the whole experience and event. Each aspect of the whole language lesson provides ample and varied modes of assessment that teachers can use to evaluate individual students progress in all aspects of language usage, development and progress.

## Materials and Equipment

Preparing and teaching a lesson, like theater, requires materials and preparation. Below is a list of essential materials for this lesson. Teachers may add additional supplies (old clothing, shoes, cardboard boxes, hats, for example) that create an environment of performance and theater for the students. Also, teachers can begin to collect props by encouraging students contribute supplies when possible and without imposing on their families. This essential list of materials includes the following:

1. Book, Hedgie's Surprise by Jan Brett, (2000)
2. Student copies of the Reader Theater's Script by Kary A. Johnson (<http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources-plans/readers-theatre-with-brett>)
3. Chart paper
4. Markers, crayon, pencils, scissors
5. Mediated Structure for Charting Prediction Before reading Story (Figure 2) and Mediated Structure for Checking Predictions After the story (Figure 3).
6. Story Elements Chart Mediated Structure. Figure 4.

7. Reader's Theater Plot Sequence Mediated.  
Structure, Figure 5.
8. Masks
9. Additional props relevant to characters,  
setting, and plot, such as feathers, old shirts,  
pants, sheets, and dresses.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Before Reading \_\_\_\_\_

Prediction Chart: What do I think story is about?

Predictions:

Figure 2. Mediated Structure for Charting Predictions

Before Reading Story

Name: _____ Date: _____	
After Reading _____	
Prediction Chart: What was the story about?	
Predictions Predictions	Checking my

Figure 3. Mediated Structure for Checking Predictions

After Reading Story

Name of the Story: \_\_\_\_\_

### Elements in the Story

<p><b>Characters:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.</li><li>2.</li><li>3.</li><li>4.</li><li>5.</li><li>6.</li><li>7.</li></ol>
<p><b>Setting:</b></p>
<p><b>Plot:</b></p> <p>Beginning: Exposition</p> <p>Rising Action</p> <p>Middle: Climax</p>
<p>End: Resolution</p>

Figure 4. Mediated Structure of the Elements in Story

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Readers' Theater Plot Sequence

Act I	Scene 1 (Beginning)	Scene 2 (Middle)	Scene 3 (End)
Act II	Scene 1 (Beginning)	Scene 2 (Middle)	Scene 3 (End)
Act III	Scene 1 (Beginning)	Scene 2 (Middle)	Scene 3 (End)

Figure 5. Mediated Structure of Readers' Theater Plot Sequence



## Summary

Whole language educators are cognizant that reading and writing engagements are done with purpose and meaning for the students. The teacher's roles are to act as a guide, monitor, facilitator, and kid-watcher. Teachers should be there to encourage learners to learn about their own interests, alone and with others while also learning and developing their knowledge of the world, academic concepts, and language.

Children become active members of their own learning development in the whole language classroom when they become conscious of print and its function through involvement in a print-rich environment that includes meaning seeking opportunities instead of isolated, precise skills instruction. A strategy such as Readers' Theater organizes teaching and learning so that children engage in meaningful uses of language both oral and written in their primary language as they acquire and practice English. Figure 5, summarizes the core elements of the Readers' Theater lesson plan described earlier. This outline is included in Figure 6.

Subject: English Language Arts  
Topic: Hedgie's Surprise

Grade Level: Second Grade

English Proficiency: Intermediate (I)

Goals and Objectives:

In the lesson students will:

1. Increase reading vocabulary and improve reading comprehension.
2. Develop listening and speaking in English as a second language via Readers' Theater.
3. Use and interact with books.
4. Learn how to organize and deliver oral presentations, including retelling of the story (characters, setting, and plot).
5. Create their own version of Readers' Theater that is performed for an audience.

Summary of the lesson plan:

ELD and ELA (intermediate level) Standards

Listening:

Listen attentively to stories and information (ELD).  
Use listening to obtain information (ELA).

Speaking:

Make oneself understood and use standard English (ELD) and paraphrase, give multiple step directions (ELA).

Reading:

Read stories and respond orally (ELD), state purpose in reading (ELA).

Writing:

Write short narratives based on experiences in logical sequence describing setting, characters (ELD and ELA).

Concepts:

- Literary Elements of Story.
- Critical Literary Analysis.

Anticipatory Set:

- Teacher engages students in story by mediating interaction with book.
- Students make predictions about the story using mediated structure (Figure 5).

Modeled Instruction:

- Teacher mediates used of language and reading for a purpose; s/he reads story aloud to students.
- Teacher identifies and makes visible literacy elements of story (Figure 4).
- Teacher models analysis of literacy elements of the story.

Guided Practice:

- Groups of students (no more than six) engage in practicing concepts.
- Students enact roles from Hedgie's Surprise to practice language and prepare for enacting play (props, costumes).

Closure (60-90 minutes):

- Students perform the play in groups.
- Students performance their predictions about the story (Figure 2).

Independent Practice:

- Students perform the play for another audience.
- Students write about their reflections and experiences about the play.
- Students write and elaborate their own story, including characters.

Required Materials and Equipment:

- Story book of Hedgie's Surprise.
- Readers Theater script for Hedgie's Surprise.
- Paper plates, paper sacks, yarn, colored file folder stickers, markers, crayons, glitter, colored feathers, straws, paint, colored chalk, glue, construction paper, felt, tissue paper, crepe paper and other supplies available for the elaboration of puppets or costumes.

Assessment and Follow-Up:

- Teacher observation.
- Students' self-evaluation.
- Portfolios with Mediated Structure for Charting Predictions Before Reading Story (Figure 2), Mediated Structure for Checking Predictions After Reading Story (Figure 3), Mediated Structure of the Elements of the Story (Figure 4), and Mediated Structure of Readers' Theater Plot Sequence (Figure 5).
- Literature Response Journal.
- Presentation of the story (group performance).

Figure 6. Summary of the Lesson Plan: Readers' Theater

## CHAPTER FIVE

### WHOLE LANGUAGE LESSONS LEARNED

#### Summary

The introduction in this project provides the context for the need for whole language curriculum instruction for English learners. The literature reviews relevant educational theories that have made important contributions to the understanding of the child's language and learning development in the primary grades. Literacy development from the perspective of whole language is discussed touching on key principles related to language acquisition including reading and writing. Key principles of whole language pedagogy and examples of multiple teaching strategies that are consistent with these principles are described. Finally, Readers' Theater is selected as an effective whole language strategy and a second grade lesson is presented.

#### The Value of Teacher's Pedagogical Knowledge

In researching, writing and preparing the curriculum for this project I acquired important knowledge about whole language pedagogy that I will use in the classroom with my students. First, my research through the literature review has informed my understanding of the

scientific theories that inform whole Language pedagogy. I have learned to see how whole language curriculum requires that each activity, or literacy experience offers an opportunity for both linguistic and cognitive development of the learner. The basis of this curriculum is building on what the learner brings to the classroom with the teacher strategically mediating aspects of the lesson.

Knowing and respecting the learner is integral to whole language pedagogy and diversity in learner background is seen as a strength and asset. Whole language pedagogy recognizes differences among learners in culture, value systems, experience, needs, interests and language, and expands on these differences to create zones for learning while teaching to the student's potential. The goal of whole language pedagogy is expansion of the learner's strengths.

Teachers are mediators and can engage in using innovative and rigorous curriculum that utilizes strategies like whole language that will prepare our bilingual children for active engagement in 21<sup>st</sup> century personal, social, and academic involvements. In the whole language classroom, the learners are empowered. The teachers are guides, facilitators, and kid-watchers who monitor language development while learners solve problems.

or pursue the answers through investigation or by taking risks in the learning process.

### Conclusion

One of my favorite phrases from Kenneth Goodman's extensive work captures my motivation for this project and resonates with my beliefs about being a bilingual learner. He states (2006) that "Bilingual children are not disadvantaged in an academic way. They are at a disadvantage only if their linguistic strengths are under appreciated and schools are failing to build on their strengths" (p. 4). The bilingual, English learner population is growing every year in our public schools forcing teachers to find effective ways to teach English and literacy while also recognizing how students will suffer discrimination, and isolation unless educational opportunities are guaranteed in their schools. Whole language pedagogy offers ways in which teachers can be agents of change, promote the language development of the bilingual students and choose to use a vital curriculum that is additive and does not require additional money or funds, but instead requires respect for the learners.

What teaching EL's requires is dedication to honoring the child and his/her wholeness as a person and learner

with tremendous in school. As teachers, we must commit to implement pedagogy that creates success not failure. We must acknowledge and affirm pride in cultural linguistic identity and welcome the challenges our bilingual learners bring to our classroom.

APPENDIX

READERS' THEATRE SCRIPT FOR HEDGIE'S SURPRISE



# READERS THEATRE SCRIPT FOR HEDGIE'S SURPRISE

By K. A. Johnson (2010)

**Narrator:** Once there was a speckled hen that lay an egg every day, only to have it taken by a little Tomten every morning just after the rooster crowed.

[Enter Rooster, Tomten, and Henny.]

**Rooster:** Cock a Doodle Doo!!

**Tomten:** I am so tired of eating porridge. Henny, have you got a little yummy for my hungry, hungry tummy?

**Henny:** [sitting on egg in nest] Please don't take my egg. Cluck Cluck Cluck. [sounding sad]

**Tomten:** I'm hungry. I will take the egg anyway!

[Tomten grabs the egg from underneath Henny and runs to the barn.]

**Narrator:** As usual the Tomten climbed into the henhouse and took Henny's warm, smooth egg. He ran off to cook it in his little kettle, sprinkle it with salt, and gobble it down.

[Tomten eats egg and pats his tummy.]

**Tomten:** Yum, yum. That was a good egg. [Yawn] I am so sleepy. I think I will take a nap.

[Tomten falls asleep on the hay.]

**Narrator:** The next morning, Henny left the henhouse and went for a walk. She saw Goosey-Goosey sailing forth in the pond, smiling and bowing with a stream of piping goslings.

[Henny leaves henhouse. Enter Goosey-Goosey and goslings.]

**Henny:** [asking Goosey-Goosey] Where did all those goslings come from?

Page 2

**Goosey-Goosey:** [to Henny] My eggs are hatching!

**Goslings:** [pretending to swim] Cheep, Cheep! Swish, Swish, Swish

**Henny:** I want my eggs to hatch too. I have to stop that Tomten from taking my baby eggs!

**Narrator:** The next morning the Tomten poked his head in.

[Enter Rooster, Henny, Tomten, and Hedgie.]

**Rooster:** Cock a Doodle Doo!!

**Henny:** Cluck, Cluck [pecking at the Tomten]. Please don't take my baby eggs! NO! NO! NO!

**Tomten:** I am so tired of eating porridge. Henny, have you got a little yummy for my hungry, hungry tummy?

[Tomten grabs the egg and runs out of the henhouse.]

**Narrator:** Nothing stopped that hungry Tomten from taking her eggs again!

**Henny:** [wailing] No eggs, no chicks, no peeping babies.

**Hedgie:** Puffa-puffa, Stick-stick. Henny, you are wailing so loudly that you woke me up! Poor Henny, I've been watching the Tomten take your eggs. I'll help you trick him into stopping!

[Everyone goes to sleep.]

[Hedgie sneaks in the henhouse and trades the egg for an acorn. She carries the egg back to her nest and Henny never knows.]

[Next morning comes; enter Rooster, Henny, and Tomten.]

**Rooster:** Cock a Doodle Doo!!

Page 3

**Tomten:** [enters henhouse shouting] Henny, have you got a little yummy for my hungry, hungry tummy?

**Narrator:** The Tomten reaches into the nest and pulls out an acorn.

**Tomten:** Hmm. What's this? I think I will try it.

**Narrator:** The Tomten eats the acorn and lays down for a nap but by mid-afternoon he wakes from his nap.

**Tomten:** I am hungry and grumpy!

[Everyone goes to sleep for the night.]

[Hedgie sneaks in the henhouse and trades the egg for a strawberry. She carries the egg back to her nest and Henny never knows.]

[Next morning comes; enter Rooster, Henny, and Tomten.]

**Rooster:** Cock a Doodle Doo!!

**Tomten:** [enters henhouse shouting] Henny, have you got a little yummy for my hungry, hungry tummy?

**Narrator:** The Tomten reaches into the nest and pulls out a strawberry.

**Tomten:** Hmm. What's this? I think I will try it.

**Narrator:** The Tomten eats the strawberry and lays down for a nap but by mid-afternoon he wakes from his nap.

**Tomten:** I am hungry and grumpy!

[Everyone goes to sleep for the night.]

[Hedgie sneaks in the henhouse and trades the egg for a mushroom. She carries the egg back to her nest and Henny never knows.]

[Next morning comes; enter Rooster, Henny, and Tomten.]

Page 4

**Rooster:** Cock a Doodle Doo!!

**Tomten:** [enters henhouse shouting] Henny, have you got a little yummy for my hungry, hungry tummy?

**Narrator:** The Tomten reaches into the nest and pulls out a mushroom.

**Tomten:** Hmm. What's this? I think I will try it.

**Narrator:** The Tomten eats the mushroom and lays down for a nap but by mid-afternoon he wakes from his nap.

**Tomten:** I am hungry and grumpy!

[Everyone goes to sleep for the night.]

[Hedgie sneaks in the henhouse and trades the egg for a potato. She carries the egg back to her nest and Henny never knows.]

[Next morning comes; enter Rooster, Henny, Hedgie, and Tomten.]

**Rooster:** Cock a Doodle Doo!!

**Tomten:** [enters henhouse shouting] Henny, have you got a little yummy for my hungry, hungry tummy?

**Narrator:** The Tomten reaches into the nest and pulls out a potato.

**Tomten:** Hmm. What's this? I think I will try it.

**Narrator:** The Tomten eats the potato and lays down for a nap but by mid-afternoon he wakes from his nap.

**Tomten:** I am hungry and grumpy! Henny, if you do not give me an egg tomorrow I will eat you up instead!

**Henny:** Hedgie, I am so scared. How will we fool the Tomten again?

**Hedgie:** Don't worry, Henny. Now it is time for my surprise. [Hedgie whispers in Henny's ear.]

[Everyone goes to sleep for the night.]

[The next morning comes; enter Rooster, Henny with Hedgie underneath, Tomten.]

**Rooster:** Cock a Doodle Doo!!

**Tomten:** [enters henhouse shouting] Henny, have you got a little yummy for my hungry, hungry tummy?

**Narrator:** The Tomten reached into the nest and pulls out...

[Tomten forcefully grabs under Henny.]

**Tomten:** Ow, Ow, Ow!

**Hedgie:** Puffa-puffa, Stick-stick!

**Tomten's mom:** Tomten—come home to the hayloft. I have some nice porridge for your breakfast.

[Tomten goes to the hayloft, eats and falls sound asleep.]

**Henny:** Thank you so much, Hedgie! What I can't figure out is where all my eggs are going.

**Chicks:** [coming from Hedgie's nest] Peep, Peep, Peep. Here we are, Mom! Hedgie was keeping us safe and warm in his nest.

**Narrator:** From that day on, Henny and Hedgie remained good friends. The Tomten never took any more of Henny's eggs and seemed content to eat porridge and stay in the hayloft with his mom.

Johnson, K. A. (2010). *Readers theatre script*. Retrieved February 14, 2010, from <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/readers-theatre-with-brett-420.html?tab=2#tabs>

## REFERENCES

- Allen, J. (1988). *Literacy development in whole language kindergartens* (Tech. Rep. No. 436). Urbana: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Center for the Study of Reading. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 300 780).
- Anders P. L., & Guzzeti, B. J. (2005). *Instruction in the content areas* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: NY, Routledge.
- Anderson, R. C., Hiebert, E. H., Scott, J. A., & Wilkinson, I. A. G. (1984). *Becoming a nation of readers: The report of the commission on reading*. Washington, DC: National Institute of Education.
- Balderrama, M. V., & Díaz-Rico L. T. (2006) *Teaching performance expectations for educating English learners*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.
- Breet, J. (2000). *Hedgie's surprise*. New York, NY: Putnam.
- Brett, J. (2010). *Readwritethink*. Retrieved February 14, 2010, from <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources-plans/readers-theatre-with-brett>
- California Legislative Analyst's Office, 2007-08, *Education Analyses, February 21, 2007* (California Legislative Analysts Office (LAO) 2007-08 Budget Book-Education Analyses, February 21, 2007).
- California State Board of Education (June, 1999). *English Language Development for California Public Schools. Kindergarten through Grade Twelve*. Sacramento: California State Department of Education.
- California State Department of Education. (1997) *English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools. Kindergarten through Grade Twelve*. Sacramento: California State Department of Education.
- Cambourne, B. L. (1988). *The whole story: Natural learning and the acquisition of literacy*. Auckland: Ashton-Scholastic.

- Cambourne, B. L., & Turbill, J. (1990). Assessment in whole-language classrooms: Theory into practice. *The Elementary School Journal*, 90(3), 337-349.
- Cloud, N., Genesse, F., & Hamayan, E. (2000). *Dual language instruction*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Cummins, J. (1981). The role of the primary language development in promoting educational success for language minority students. In *Schooling and language minority students: A theoretical framework* (pp. 3-49) Sacramento: California State Department of Education.
- Dahl, K., & Freppon, P. (1991). Literacy learning in whole-language classrooms: An analysis of low socioeconomic urban children learning to read and write in kindergarten. In J. Zutell & S. McCormick (Eds). *Learner factors/teacher factors: Issues in literacy research and instruction* (pp. 149-158). Chicago, IL: National Reading Conference.
- De Cos, P. L. (2005, November). High school dropouts, enrollment and graduation rates in California. Sacramento: California State Library.
- Díaz, E., & Flores B. (2001). Teacher as Sociocultural, Sociohistorical Mediator: Teaching to the potential. In M. L. Reyes & J. J. Halcon (Eds.), *The Best for our children. Critical perspective on literacy for latino students* (p. 29-47). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Dixon-Krauss, L. (1996). *Vygotsky in the classroom*. New York: Longman.
- Edelsky, C. (1986). *Writing in a bilingual program: Había una vez*. Norwood, N. J.: Ablex Pub. Corp.
- Edelsky, C., & Draper., K. (1989). Reading/"reading"; writing/"writing"; text/"text". Reading-Canada-Lecture. 7. p. 201-216.
- Edelsky, C., Altwerger, B., Flores, B. (1991). *Whole language: What's the difference?* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

- Edelsky, C., Draper, K., & Smith, K. (1989). Hookin' 'em in at the start of school in a "Whole language classroom." *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 14(4), 257-281.
- Farris, P., Cooper, S. (1994). *Elementary social studies: A whole language approach*. Iowa: WBC Brown & Benchmark.
- Flores, B. (2008, November). *Mediated instruction*. [PowerPoint slides]. Class EELB 626, Bilingual/Cross-Cultural Education, San Bernardino, CA: MA. College of Education.
- Flores, B. (2009, May). *Reading and writing strategies*. Class Notes EELB 611 Bilingual/Cross-Cultural Education, San Bernardino, CA.: MA. College of Education.
- Gambrell, L. B., & Palmer, B. M. (1992). Children's metacognitive knowledge about reading and writing in literature-based and conventional classrooms. In C. K. Kinzer & D. J. Leu (Eds.), *Literacy research, theory, and practice: Views from many perspectives* (pp. 215-223). Chicago, IL: National Reading Conference.
- Gándara, P. (2003). English Learners in California Schools. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 11, 1-52.
- Garcia, E. (2009). The Demographic imperative. *Education Leadership*, 66, 8-13.
- Gardner, H. (1993). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books.
- Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence reframed. Multiple intelligences for the 21th century*. New York: Basic Books.
- GLAD Project (2009) Retrieved October 09, 2009 from <http://www.projectglad.com/glad.html>
- Goodman, K. (1986). *What's whole in whole language?* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.



- Goodman, K. (1992). Why whole language is today's agenda in education. *Language Arts*, 69, 354-363.
- Goodman, K. (1996). *On reading*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Goodman, K. (2003). *On the revolution of reading: The selected writings of Kenneth, S. Goodman*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Goodman, K. (2005). *What's whole in whole language?* (20<sup>th</sup> ed.). Canada: RDR Books.
- Goodman, K. (2006). *Sobre la lectura* [On reading]. Mexico, D. F.: Paidós.
- Goodman, K., & Goodman, Y. (1983). Reading and writing relationships: Pragmatic functions. *Language Arts*, 60(5), 590-599.
- Goodman, K., Brooks, E., Meredith, R., Goodman, Y. (1987). *Language and thinking in school: A whole-language curriculum*. New York. Richard C. Owen Publishers, Inc.
- Goodman, Smith, E., B., K., Meredith, R. (1970). *Language and thinking in the elementary school*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
- Graham, S., Harris, Karen (1994). The Effects of whole language on children's writing: A review of literature. *Educational Psychologist*, 29(4), 187-192.
- Gunderson, L., & Shapiro, J. (1988). Whole language instruction: Writing in first grade. *The Reading Teacher*, 42, 430-437.
- Hagerty, P. J., Hiebert, E. H., & Owens, M. K. (1988). Students' comprehension, writing and perceptions in two approaches to literacy instruction. In S. McCormick & J. Zutell (Eds.), *Cognitive and social perspectives for literacy research and instruction* (pp. 453-459). Chicago, IL: National Reading Conference.

- Halliday, M. A. K. (1975). *Learning how to mean*. New York: Elsevier North Holland.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (2003). Three aspects of children's language development: learning language, learning through language, learning about language. In J. J. Webster (Ed.), *The language of early childhood* (pp. 308-326). New York, NY: Continuum
- Kozulin, A., Gindis, B., Ageyev, V., Miller, S. (2003). *Vygotsky's Educational Theory in Cultural Context*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Krashen, S. (1973). Lateralization, language learning, and the critical period. *Language Learning*, 23, 63-74.
- Latino Issues Forum. Retrieved February 09, 2010. <http://www.lif.org>
- Lessow-Hurley, J. (2005). *The Foundations of dual language instruction* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Lindholm, K. (1992). Two-way bilingual/immersion education: Theory, conceptual issues and pedagogical implications. In R. Padilla & A. Benavides (Eds.), *Critical perspectives in bilingual education research* (pp. 195-220). Tucson, AZ: Bilingual Review/Press.
- Lindholm-Leary, K. J. (2004/2005). The rich promise of two-way immersion. *Educational Leadership*, 62(4), 56-59.
- Pappas, C., Kiefer, B., Levstik, L. (1990). *An integrated language perspective in the elementary school*. New York: Longman.
- Piaget, J. (1970) *Structuralism*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Reading Rockets: Tape assisted Reading (2009). Retrieved October 19, 2009, from <http://www.readingrockets.org/>

- Reading Rockets: Tape Assisted Reading. (2009).  
*Offers effective teaching strategies, activities, and lessons.* Retrieved October 19, 2009 from [http://readingrockets.org/strategies/tape\\_assisted\\_reading?theme=print](http://readingrockets.org/strategies/tape_assisted_reading?theme=print)
- Reading/Writing workshop. (2009). *Reading and writing are instructional strategies as well as organizational framework* Retrieve October 19, 2009 from <http://www.pwcs.edu/curriculum/sol/reading.htm>
- Robb, L. (1994). *Whole language, whole learners: Creating a literature-centered classroom.* New York: William Morrow and company, Inc.
- U.S. Census Bureau. United States Census (2000). [www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html](http://www.census.gov/main/www/cen2000.html)
- Valsiner, J. (1988). *Developmentally appropriate assessment of reading and writing in the early childhood classroom.* *Elementary School Journal* 89:173-183.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The Development of higher psychological processes* (M. Cole, V. John-Steiner, S. Scriber, E. Souberman, Eds.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1986). *Thought and language* (A. Kozulin Ed. & Trans). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Westby, C., & Costlow, L. (1991). Implementing a whole language program in a special education class. *Topics in Language Disorder*, 11, 69-84.
- WestEd Publications Department (2006). *The Map of Standards for English Learners (Grades K-5). Fifth Edition.* San Francisco, CA.