Biliteracy Pedagogy: Integrating Language, Literacy, and Content
Focus on Oracy Development

Yankee Ridge Elementary
Urbana School District
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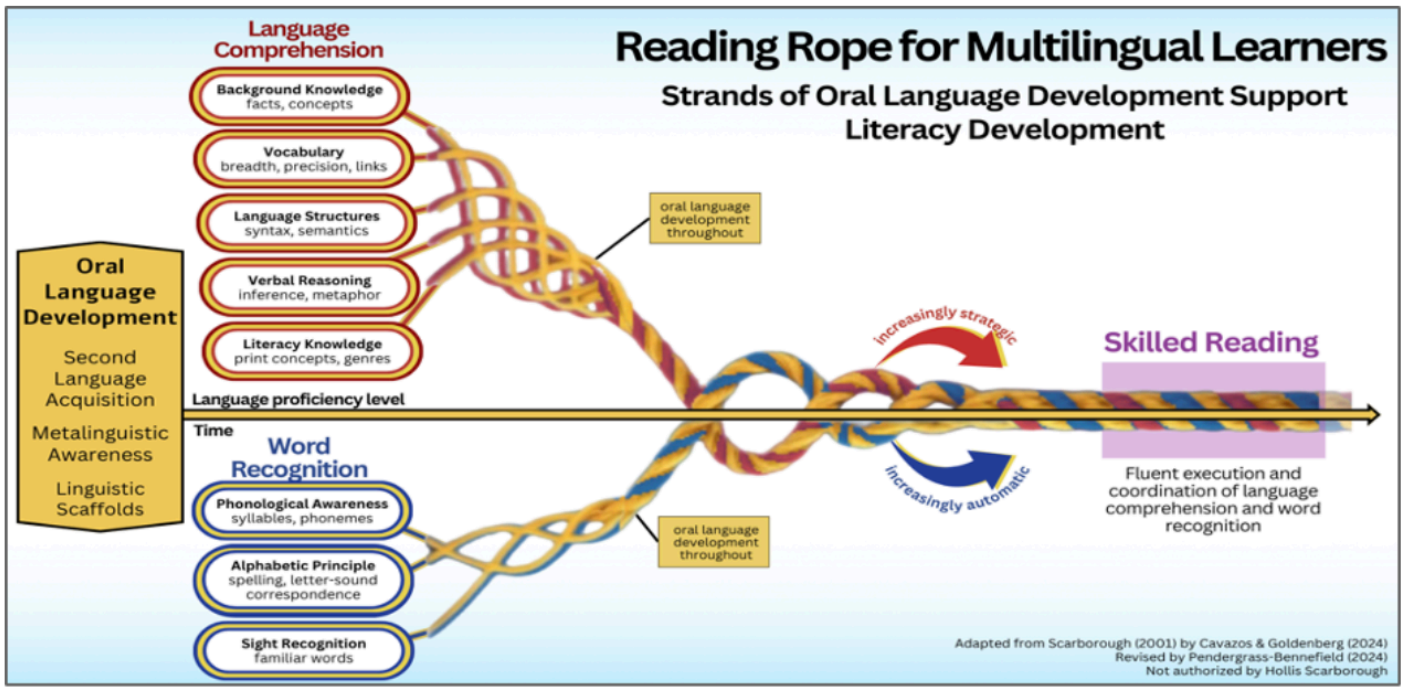
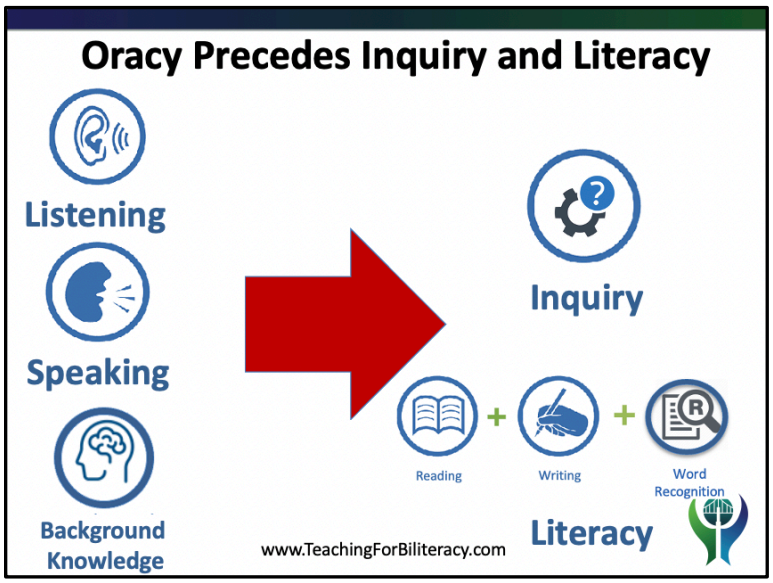
Center for Teaching for Biliteracy

Session Outcomes:

- Describe the role of oracy and background knowledge development in biliteracy pedagogy
- Identify high-leverage oracy strategies and language acquisition supports
- Utilize a planning tool for the intentional integration of language, literacy, and content


Reading Rope for Multilingual Learners
Strands of Oral Language Development Support Literacy Development
Language Comprehension
Background Knowledge
facts, concepts
Vocabulary
breadth, precision, links
Language Structures
syntax, semantics
Verbal Reasoning
inference, metaphor
Literacy Knowledge
print concepts, genres
Oral Language Development
Second Language Acquisition
Metalinguistic Awareness
Linguistic Scaffolds
oral language development throughout
Language proficiency level
Time
Word Recognition
Phonological Awareness
syllables, phonemes
Alphabetic Principle
spelling, letter-sound correspondence
Sight Recognition
familiar words
oral language development throughout
increasingly strategic
increasingly automatic
Skilled Reading
Fluent execution and coordination of language comprehension and word recognition
Adapted from Scarborough (2001) by Cavazos & Goldenberg (2024)
Revised by Pendergrass-Bennefield (2024)
Not authorized by Hollis Scarborough


Oracy Precedes Inquiry and Literacy
Listening
Speaking
Background Knowledge
Inquiry
Reading
Writing
Word Recognition
Literacy
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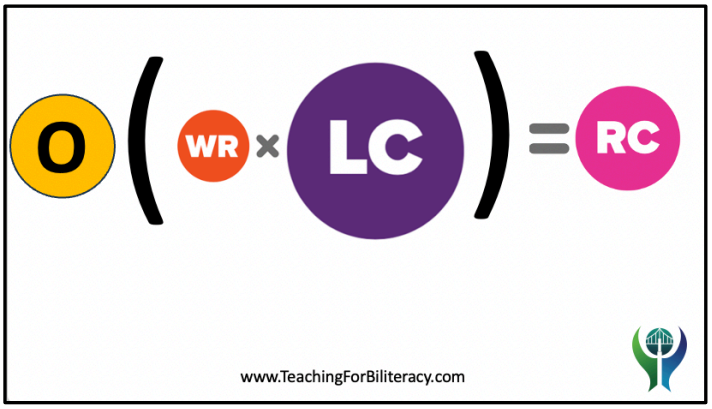
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Figure 5M: CAN DO Descriptors for the Levels of English Language Proficiency, PreK-12

For the given level of English language proficiency, **with support**, English language learners can:

	Level 1 Entering	Level 2 Beginning	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging	Level 6 Reaching
LISTENING	• Point to stated pictures, words, phrases • Follow one-step oral directions • Match oral statements to objects, figures or illustrations	• Sort pictures, objects according to oral instructions • Follow two-step oral directions • Match information from oral descriptions to objects, illustrations	• Locate, select, order information from oral descriptions • Follow multi-step oral directions • Categorize or sequence oral information using pictures, objects	• Compare/contrast functions, relationships from oral information • Analyze and apply oral information • Identify cause and effect from oral discourse	• Draw conclusions from oral information • Construct models based on oral discourse • Make connections from oral discourse	
SPEAKING	• Name objects, people, pictures • Answer WH- (who, what, when, where, which) questions	• Ask WH- questions • Describe pictures, events, objects, people • Restate facts	• Formulate hypotheses, make predictions • Describe processes, procedures • Retell stories or events	• Discuss stories, issues, concepts • Give speeches, oral reports • Offer creative solutions to issues, problems	• Engage in debates • Explain phenomena, give examples and justify responses • Express and defend points of view	
READING	• Match icons and symbols to words, phrases or environmental print • Identify concepts about print and text features	• Locate and classify information • Identify facts and explicit messages • Select language patterns associated with facts	• Sequence pictures, events, processes • Identify main ideas • Use context clues to determine meaning of words	• Interpret information or data • Find details that support main ideas • Identify word families, figures of speech	• Conduct research to glean information from multiple sources • Draw conclusions from explicit and implicit text	
WRITING	• Label objects, pictures, diagrams • Draw in response to a prompt • Produce icons, symbols, words, phrases to convey messages	• Make lists • Produce drawings, phrases, short sentences, notes • Give information requested from oral or written directions	• Produce bare-bones expository or narrative texts • Compare/contrast information • Describe events, people, processes, procedures	• Summarize information from graphics or notes • Edit and revise writing • Create original ideas or detailed responses	• Apply information to new contexts • React to multiple genres and discourses • Author multiple forms/ genres of writing	

Variability of students' cognitive development due to age, grade level spans, their diversity of educational experiences and diagnosed learning disabilities (if applicable), are to be considered in using this information.

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Figure 5N: Descripción de las Habilidades en los Niveles del Lenguaje Académico del Inglés, PreK-12

En cada nivel de capacidad en el lenguaje inglés, **con apoyo**, un estudiante de inglés puede hacer lo siguiente:

	Nivel 1 Entrando	Nivel 2 Empezando	Nivel 3 Desarrollando	Nivel 4 Extendiendo	Nivel 5 Conectando	
ESCUCHAR	• Señalar dibujos, palabras o frases indicados • Seguir instrucciones orales de un paso • Emparejar declaraciones orales con objetos, figuras o ilustraciones	• Clasificar dibujos u objetos siguiendo las instrucciones verbales • Seguir instrucciones verbales de dos pasos • Emparejar declaraciones verbales con objetos, figuras o ilustraciones	• Localizar, seleccionar y ordenar información que proviene de descripciones orales • Seguir instrucciones verbales de paso múltiples • Clasificar o secuenciar información oral usando dibujos u objetos	• Comparar y contrastar funciones y relaciones de acuerdo a información oral • Analizar y aplicar información oral • Identificar causa y efecto en discurso oral	• Sacar una conclusión de información oral • Construir modelos basados en discurso oral • Hacer conexiones en información oral	**Nivel 6 Alcanzando**
HABLAR	• Nombrar objetos, personas y dibujos • Contestar preguntas (quién, qué, cuándo, dónde, cuál)	• Preguntar • Describir dibujos, eventos, objetos y personas • Reformular y decir hechos	• Formular hipótesis y hacer predicciones • Describir procesos • Recontar cuentos o eventos	• Discutir cuentos, cuestiones, y conceptos • Hacer presentaciones orales • Ofrecer soluciones creativas a cuestiones o problemas	• Participar en debates • Explicar fenómenos, dar ejemplos y justificar respuestas • Expresar y defender puntos de vista	
LEER	• Emparejar símbolos y dibujos con palabras, frases o letras en la escritura en el medioambiente • Identificar conceptos de la organización de letras y elementos de textos	• Localizar y clasificar información • Identificar hechos y mensajes directos • Seleccionar patrones de lenguaje asociados con hechos	• Secuenciar dibujos, eventos y procesos • Identificar ideas principales • Usar pistas del contexto para determinar el significado de palabras	• Interpretar información o datos • Encontrar detalles que apoyan las ideas principales • Identificar figuras retóricas y relaciones entre palabras	• Realizar investigaciones para reunir información de fuentes múltiples • Sacar una conclusión de texto explícito e implícito	
ESCRIBIR	• Etiquetar objetos, dibujos, diagramas • Dibujar respuestas a instrucciones • Producir íconos, símbolos, palabras y frases para comunicar un mensaje	• Hacer listas • Producir dibujos, frases, oraciones cortas y apuntes • Dar información pedida por instrucciones orales o escritas	• Producir textos básicos de estilo narrativo o informativo • Comparar y contrastar información • Describir eventos, personas, procesos	• Resumir información de representaciones gráficas o apuntes • Corregir y revisar escritura • Crear ideas originales o respuestas detalladas	• Aplicar información a contextos nuevos • Reaccionar a múltiples géneros y discursos • Redactar varias formas/géneros de composiciones	

Translated by (Traducido por) Elizabeth J. Hartung, Monona Grove, WI; revised by (revisado por) Andrea Cammilleri, Mariana Castro and Stephanie Herrera, WIDA, Wisconsin Center for Education Research

El desarrollo cognoscitivo de los estudiantes puede variar según edad, grado, diversidad de las experiencias educacionales, y discapacidades de aprendizaje (si existen). Esto se debe considerar al usar ésta información.

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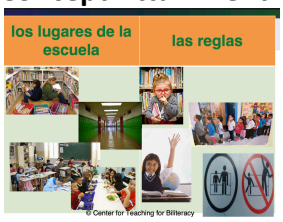
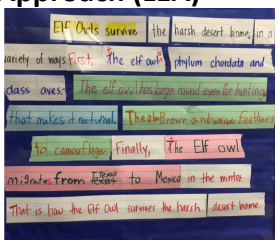
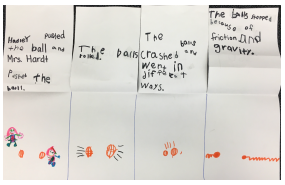
High Leverage Biliteracy Strategies

Strategy	Description	Potential Language Acquisition Supports	Grade Level Variations
Concept Attainment  	Concept attainment is a constructivist strategy wherein students construct an understanding of a new concept through a series of hints or examples of the concept presented through pictures. This is in contrast to the more teacher-centered (and abstract) approach, where the teacher tells the students the concept they will be studying and then describes the concept to the students. *Teaching for Biliteracy* Book: page 81-82	**Sensory:** **Graphic:** **Interactive:**	
Strategy	**Description**	**Potential Language Acquisition Supports**	**Grade Level Variations**
Adapted Reader's Theater (ART) 	An adaptation of readers' theater where the teacher summarizes or paraphrases a text while the students, guided by the teacher, act out the story either silently or joining into the narration using the key academic vocabulary. This previews concepts and vocabulary from the text through narration and movement. While it is similar to TPR, the difference is that there is not as much of an emphasis on associating specific vocabulary with a specific movement. *Teaching for Biliteracy* Book: page 81	**Sensory:** **Graphic:** **Interactive:**	
Strategy	**Description**	**Potential Language Acquisition Supports**	**Grade Level Variations**
Fishbowl 	A small group of students is selected to model a cooperative activity or center task in the "fishbowl," with the rest of the students observing their actions and language. The teacher guides the students in the fishbowl through the activity, narrating and providing sentence prompts as needed. After the	**Sensory:** **Graphic:**	

	students observe their peers participating in the fishbowl, they return to their places and begin the same activity. *Teaching for Biliteracy* Book: page 82 & 136	**Interactive:**	
Strategy	**Description**	**Potential Language Acquisition Supports**	**Grade Level Variations**
Picture Sort/ Word Sort 	In strategic partnerships, students categorize words, pictures, or realia into groups. This can be done as a **closed sort**, using teacher-provided categories, or as an **open sort**, where students create their own categories. In an **open sort**, there is no expectation that students will group items according to content standards. They may organize items in any way, as long as they can explain their reasoning. In a **closed sort**, the teacher provides the categories, which must be clear and understandable to students. **Sentence prompts** are used to structure oral language development and help students focus on vocabulary and concepts. *Teaching for Biliteracy* Book: page 83	**Sensory:** **Graphic:** **Interactive:**	
Strategy	**Description**	**Potential Language Acquisition Supports**	**Grade Level Variations**
Language Experience Approach (LEA)  	Students experience something meaningful together (go on a field trip, conduct an experiment, read a story). Afterwards, using sentence prompts and strategic partners, the teacher asks students to propose a retelling, one sentence at a time, about the shared experience. Their contributions are transcribed into a written piece. This shared text becomes a meaningful literary resource that may be used as a writing mentor text, reading fluency practice, and/or meaningful application	**Sensory:** **Graphic:** **Interactive:**	

	of grade-level language standards and foundational skills. *Teaching for Biliteracy* Book: page 94 & 104-105		
Strategy	**Description**	**Potential Language Acquisition Supports**	**Grade Level Variations**
TPR – Total Physical Response 	1. Students watch a demonstration of key words and gestures. 2. Students listen again and watch as the teacher performs the action. 3. The teacher demonstrates again, this time having students perform the actions simultaneously. 4. The teacher demonstrates without modeling the action. 5. The teacher models variations & combinations for the groups. 6. Students perform variations & combinations. 7. If some students are ready, they demonstrate to classmates. **This may happen over a period of several days/weeks and grow in complexity as students build language.**	**Sensory:** **Graphic:** **Interactive:**	
	For more information about the strategies above and descriptions to even more high leverage biliteracy strategies, scan the QR Code!		

Sensory Supports	Graphic Supports	Interactive Supports
• Real-life objects (realia) • Manipulatives • Pictures & photographs • Illustrations, diagrams & drawings • Magazines & newspapers • Physical activities • Videos & Films • Broadcasts • Models & figures	• Charts • Graphic organizers • Tables • Graphs • Timelines • Number lines	• In pairs or partners • In triads or small groups • In a whole group • Using cooperative group structures • With the Internet (Web sites) or software programs • In the native language (L1) • With mentors

K-5th Grade Biliteracy Unit Framework (BUF), second edition
Interdisciplinary Unit – Language, Literacy, and Content taught in Spanish/French

Unit Theme:
- Content Area Standards
- Spanish Language Arts Standards
- Spanish Language Development Standards
- Content and Literacy Big Ideas
- Summative Assessment

Building Oracy, Background Knowledge: Language Comprehension
- Academic listening and speaking necessary for content instruction and literacy development.
- Developed at the beginning of the unit and whenever new language or concepts are introduced throughout the unit.

Reading Comprehension
- Oracy, background knowledge, and language comprehension
- Comprehensive literacy routines, strategies and reading behaviors.

Writing
- Oracy, background knowledge, and language comprehension
- Comprehensive literacy routines, strategies writing behaviors.

Foundational Skills and Fluency: Word Recognition
- Oracy, background knowledge, and language comprehension
- Phoneme Awareness, Phonics, Decoding, Encoding, Orthography
- Vocabulary background knowledge, syntax, and semantics

Content Area Instruction
- Oracy, background knowledge, and language comprehension
- Inquiry
- Investigations
- Experiments
- Experiences

Summative Assessment

Bridge – Transfer
- Illustration
- Side by Side or
- Así se dice

Bridge – Transfer and Practice.
Practice the new language (includes Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing in the other language)

Bridge: Contrastive Analysis
Phonology
Morphology
Syntax and grammar
Pragmatics.

Formative Assessment

K-5th Grade Biliteracy Unit Framework (BUF), second edition
Interdisciplinary Unit – Language, Literacy, and Content taught in English

Unit Theme:
- Content Area Standards
- English Language Arts Standards
- English Language Development Standards
- Content and Literacy Big Ideas
- Summative Assessment

Building Oracy, Background Knowledge: Language Comprehension
- Academic listening and speaking necessary for content instruction and literacy development.
- Developed at the beginning of the unit and whenever new language or concepts are introduced throughout the unit.

Reading Comprehension
- Oracy, background knowledge, and language comprehension
- Comprehensive literacy routines, strategies and reading behaviors.

Writing
- Oracy, background knowledge, and language comprehension
- Comprehensive literacy routines, strategies writing behaviors.

Foundational Skills and Fluency: Word Recognition
- Oracy, background knowledge, and language comprehension
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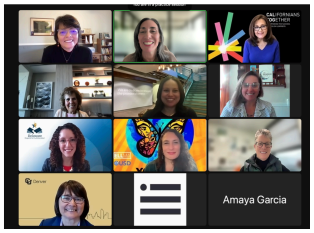
Bridge – Transfer
- Illustration
- Side by Side or
- Así se dice

Bridge – Transfer and Practice
Practice the new language (includes Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing in the other language)

Bridge: Contrastive Analysis
Phonology
Morphology
Syntax and grammar
Pragmatics.

Formative Assessment

Additional Resources:

 Podcast	Everything is Literacy with Susan Lambert, SoR Podcast from August 27, 2025 (46 min)
 Blog	3 Ways to Ensure English Learners Benefit From the Science of Reading, By Leslie Villegas Feb. 22, 2024
National Committee for Effective Literacy Article	Comprehensive Literacy Instruction for English Language Learners By Laurie Olsen