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Beyond Words: Making Academic Language Real for Secondary English Learners

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the degree
of Master of Arts

in

Teaching and Learning (Curriculum Design)

by

Suzanne Michele Van Steenbergen

Committee in charge:

Marcia Sewall, Chair
Cheryl Forbes
Claire Ramsey

2008

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Chair

University of California, San Diego

2008

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my parents (Mom, Tom, Dad and Gracie), for loving and supporting me—*no matter what*.

I also would like to thank all of my students, past, present and future, for reminding me daily why I became a teacher. Thank you for your courage, humor and love of learning.

Table of Contents

Signature Page.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Figures.....	ix
List of Tables.....	xi
Abstract.....	xii
I. Introduction.....	1
II. Assessing the Need: Academic English as a Gateway Toward Success.....	4
Jasmine’s Story: Making the Transition Isn’t So Easy.....	4
Making the Connection: Authentic Vocabulary Instruction and Critical Thinking.....	8
American Schools: Complex Realities for English Learners.....	9
Secondary English Learners.....	10
English Learners in California Schools.....	10
English Language Acquisition.....	11
Performance on Content Area Exams.....	11
Academic English: Gateway Toward Success.....	16
Critical Thinking for the 21 st Century.....	17
English Learners: Local Realities.....	19
Advantages of Having a Small EL Population.....	19
Challenges Posed by a Small EL Population.....	21
Conclusion.....	22
III. A Review of Relevant Literature.....	23

Academic English: Scarcella’s Framework.....	23
Linguistic Fluency	24
Cognitive Fluency.....	25
Sociocultural/Psychological Fluency.....	26
Putting it Together.....	27
Explicit Vocabulary Instruction.....	28
Sociocultural Learning Theory: An Overview.....	29
The Zone of Proximal Development.....	30
Accessing and Building Prior Knowledge	31
Semiotic Mediation	32
Internalization.....	34
Conclusion.....	35
IV. Review of Existing Curricular Approaches for English Learners.....	37
Sheltered Instruction Overview.....	40
The SIOP Approach.....	41
Scholastic’s Read 180	43
Hampton-Brown’s Edge.....	46
Conclusion.....	49
V. <i>Beyond Words</i> : Building Academic English Literacy Across all Dimensions	51
<i>Beyond Words</i> : Curricular Features	54
Explicit Academic Vocabulary Instruction	54
Inquiry-Based Activities.....	55
Instructional Conversations.....	56
Challenging Tasks	58

Conclusion.....	59
VI. Implementation.....	60
Implementation Setting.....	60
The School.....	60
The Classroom.....	61
The Focus Text: Hampton Brown’s Edge.....	63
<i>Beyond Words</i> : Activity Sequence	65
Part One: Accessing & Building Students’ Prior Knowledge.....	65
Part Two: Reading and Analyzing Articles in Cluster 1	83
Part Three: Reading and Analyzing Articles in Cluster 2.....	88
Part Four: Culminating Class Discussion	96
Conclusion	97
VII. Evaluation.....	99
Overview of Evaluation Strategies.....	99
Objective Exams	100
Audio Recording of Small Group Discussions	102
Student Work.....	103
Transcription of Whole-Class Discussion.....	105
Field Notes.....	105
Findings.....	106
Linguistic Fluency	106
Cognitive Fluency.....	110
Sociocultural/Psychological Fluency.....	119
Conclusion	123

VIII. Conclusion	124
Appendix	126
References	168

List of Figures

Figure 1.	Sample “Released Questions” (2008) from the CELDT exam.....	14
Figure 2.	Sample "Released Questions" (2008) from the 10th Grade ELA exam	14
Figure 3.	Sample questions from the 2008 "Released Questions" from the World History CST exam	15
Figure 4.	CST World History questions from Figure 3 with the academic vocabulary words removed.....	16
Figure 5.	The three dimensions of academic English, as described by Scarcella (2003)	24
Figure 6.	Competencies that contribute to linguistic fluency in academic English (Scarcella, 2003)	38
Figure 7.	Competencies that contribute to cognitive fluency in academic English (Scarcella, 2003)	38
Figure 8.	Competencies that contribute to sociocultural/psychological fluency in academic English (Scarcella, 2003)	39
Figure 9.	Targeted components of linguistic academic English fluency in the <i>Beyond Words</i> approach, highlighted in yellow.....	53
Figure 10.	Targeted components of cognitive academic English fluency in the <i>Beyond Words</i> approach, highlighted in yellow.....	53
Figure 11.	Targeted components of sociocultural/psychological academic English fluency in the <i>Beyond Words</i> approach, highlighted in yellow.	54
Figure 12.	Features of Instructional Conversation, as described by Dalton & Tharp (2002)	58
Figure 13.	Instructional routine used during the <i>Beyond Words</i> implementation.....	62
Figure 14.	Sentence starters for the Thinking About Culture activity on Day Three	71
Figure 15.	Instructions for the Media Gallery Walk activity on Day Three.....	72
Figure 16.	Students' responses to the Media Gallery Walk activity on Day Three.....	73

Figure 17. Statistics students evaluated for the Making Connections activity on Day Four	74
Figure 18. Target vocabulary words for Cluster 1	76
Figure 19. Portion of the graphic organizer provided to students on Day Six.....	77
Figure 20. Magazine advertisement for analysis exercise on Day Seven	79
Figure 21. Sample student analysis of an advertisement using academic vocabulary	81
Figure 22. Sample student analyses of advertisements using academic vocabulary	82
Figure 23. Graphic organizer for Day Ten lesson	84
Figure 24. Target vocabulary words for Cluster 2	88
Figure 25. Notes written on the board during explanation of <i>alternative</i> for the Avoiding Stereotypes activity	94
Figure 26. Notes written on the board during explanation of expectations for the Avoiding Stereotypes activity	94
Figure 27. Student poster exploring stereotypes of Asian Americans	95
Figure 28. Student poster exploring stereotypes of African Americans.....	95
Figure 29. Students' performance on vocabulary questions for the Cluster 1 exam.....	107
Figure 30. Students' performance on vocabulary questions for the Cluster 2 exam.....	108
Figure 31. Students' performance on multiple-choice questions assessing knowledge of how to distinguish between facts and opinions, Cluster 2 exam.....	112
Figure 32. Students' performance on questions assessing knowledge of how to evaluate evidence, Cluster 2 exam	114

List of Tables

Table 1.	Features of the <i>Beyond Words</i> approach and the targeted dimensions of academic English literacy.....	52
Table 2.	Evaluation strategies for the <i>Beyond Words</i> approach.....	99
Table 3.	Clusters 1 and 2 exam components and targeted dimensions of academic English fluency.....	102
Table 4.	Sample evidence of linguistic, cognitive and sociocultural/psychological fluency in students' work, including small group and whole class discussions	104
Table 5.	Sample responses showing evidence of higher-order thinking (by distinguishing between facts and opinions) within the cognitive dimension.....	113
Table 6.	Sample responses showing evidence of higher-order thinking (by evaluating evidence) within the cognitive dimension	115
Table 7.	Sample responses showing evidence of accessing prior knowledge within the cognitive dimension.....	117
Table 8.	Sample responses showing evidence of understanding within the sociocultural/psychological dimension.....	122

ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Beyond Words: Making Academic Language Real for Secondary English Learners

by

Suzanne Michele Van Steenberg

Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning (Curriculum Design)

University of California, San Diego, 2008

Marcia Sewall, Chair

Meeting the needs of adolescent English Learners (ELs) requires giving focused attention to students' academic language needs. This is especially true if students are to achieve academically and have access to higher education. Using the student text *Edge* as a foundation, the *Beyond Words* project takes a balanced approach toward developing students' academic English skills, targeting each of three dimensions of academic English, including linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural/psychological literacy (Scarcella, 2003). Beginning with explicit vocabulary instruction, *Beyond Words* extends students' understanding of key academic concepts by engaging them in inquiry-based activities, small group instructional conversations, and challenging tasks. Through these features, students explore the essential question, "How do the Media Shape the Way We Think?" Students become active agents in their own learning, guided by the teacher toward a shared understanding of social issues, including the causes and impacts of stereotypes in

our culture, and the way media representation of minorities can influence the way we view ourselves and each other.

Beyond Words was implemented in an English Language Development (ELD) classroom of 16 secondary ELs, most of whom had been learning English for approximately 3-5 years. By the end of the unit, students demonstrated progress toward mastery of select skills within each of the three dimensions of academic English as outlined by Scarcella (2003).

I. Introduction

The intricate connection between academic vocabulary and critical thinking first became apparent to me during my second year of teaching. The entire English Language Development (ELD) program at my school, consisting of approximately 150 students and 15 teachers, including myself, had the opportunity to visit the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles, California. The museum provides anti-bias lessons geared toward a wide range of audiences, and seeks to educate the public about issues related to prejudice and oppression.

Given that many of my students had only been in the United States for five or fewer years, I knew that in order to get the most out of the museum experience they would first need to build background knowledge. Since a number of the exhibits at the museum explore the Holocaust, I created a series of lessons in the weeks prior to our visit that explored the contributing factors to the Holocaust, as well as the perils of prejudice and the importance of respecting diversity in our society. Students were reasonably engaged in the lessons and enjoyed the articles we discussed, but something surprised me.

I had taken for granted that my students, who were immigrants and who had faced enormous challenges in coming to the United States, would quickly understand and internalize the complexity of the word *prejudice*. As a diligent ELD teacher, I had identified *prejudice* as a key academic vocabulary concept central to our unit. I had pre-taught the word, provided students with examples and non-examples, and had walked students through reading a series of articles that explored issues of prejudice. But in our class discussions, students asked questions that led me to conclude that they were missing something, even though I knew they had all encountered prejudice at some point in their

lives. I realized that I had skipped a crucial step. We could not approach discussing the nature, manifestations, or causes of prejudice until the students had some meaningful experiences exploring the issues. For all my pre-teaching and anticipatory lessons, students had to go to the museum to really “get” what I was trying to teach them. The museum trip provided the perfect opportunity for students to access prior knowledge about issues of prejudice that I had suspected they possessed. Since I had done a poor job of enabling students to explore their prior experiences, they were having difficulty making connections to this new word and the concept behind it.

When we returned from the museum after a stimulating and moving visit, our classroom conversations exploded with layered and complex questions and observations regarding this important word. *Prejudice* became real to the students because they were able to see it in action, connect their observations to their own lives, and to express their thinking using their newly-acquired academic language skills. For example, during part of the museum tour, students learned about other children who had either survived or been killed during the Holocaust. Our museum docent handed students a brochure that included photos and biographies of several such children. At the end of the tour, our gracious host revealed to the students that he was in fact one of the children students had studied. This serendipitous revelation stunned and moved the students, and it also enabled them to ask questions of a living survivor. Their questions were varied and thoughtful. Clearly, the students were not lacking prior knowledge regarding prejudice and its history. Rather, students needed the opportunity to connect that prior knowledge and experience to new ones, layering their newly acquired language skills on top of their fresh understanding.

When approaching my research for this thesis, I thought back to my experience of teaching the concept of *prejudice* to my former ELD students. I asked myself, how might I create more accessible yet authentic means for students to explore complex academic vocabulary? Beyond pre-teaching select words, how can I help students internalize the academic language they learn so they can put their new language skills to work? We cannot always travel to a museum, of course, but are there ways I can engage students in the same types of experiences they might encounter at a museum or other real-world location? How exactly were my students making meaning while on our trip, and how could I recreate that in the classroom? I realized that the answer partly lay in engaging students in the same types of paired, small group and whole-class discussions and enrichment activities that marked our visit to Los Angeles. How might such activities encourage students to improve their critical thinking and critical literacy skills? In short, how can I think about academic language instruction differently so that I can simultaneously access and build students' prior knowledge about complex ideas?

This thesis documents my attempts to enrich my ELD curriculum with authentic academic language instruction. I will begin my discussion of this enlightening endeavor by first outlining my rationale for the *Beyond Words* approach based on the current state of ELD education in California and schools and across the United States. Second, I will review select literature regarding academic English and sociocultural learning theory. Finally, I will describe the *Beyond Words* curriculum, its implementation, and students' learning outcomes. I hope that what I have learned helps teachers of English Learners across content areas consider new and innovative ways to make academic language instruction central to their teaching.

II. Assessing the Need: Academic English as a Gateway Toward Success

The difficulties I faced when attempting to introduce students to complex ideas, as described in the previous chapter, and the false assumptions I made about students' prior knowledge, are not unique challenges in California schools. Teachers across California and the United States are coming under increasing pressure to meet the academic needs of English Learners (ELs). Clearly, learning English goes beyond basic rules of decoding, pronunciation, grammar and syntax. Students must also learn how and when to use academic language in addition to mastering discipline-specific written and oral conventions. Unfortunately, when students exit language programs designed for ELs, they find themselves lost within a mainstream educational system that sometimes does not take their needs into account or that lacks the expertise and resources to meet those needs. An experience I had with such a student is instructive in this respect.

Jasmine's Story: Making the Transition Isn't So Easy

Arriving to class flushed and exhausted from the school day, Jasmine approached me with an apprehensive look. She held her most recent history exam. Sheepishly she asked, "Is a 52 bad?" I responded carefully. "Well, it depends on how many questions were on the test." She responded, "Oh. It was out of 100." I smiled and took the honest approach. "Well, yes, I suppose it is bad. But it also means you have plenty of room to grow! Let's figure out what went wrong."

I am an English teacher at Coastal Community High School (CCHS)¹, a large suburban high school in San Diego County. Jasmine was a tenth grade student enrolled in my after-school academic support class. I designed the course, entitled Academic

¹ All names of students and locations have been changed, unless otherwise indicated.

Literacy, in order to help students like Jasmine learn to be successful in high school. An English Learner, Jasmine had been in the United States for five years and was transitioning out of the English Language Development (ELD) program at CCHS. This was the first year that Jasmine is enrolled in all “non-sheltered” classes. That is, her entire schedule consisted of classes for mainstream, or English proficient, students. I designed Academic Literacy to provide a bridge for students from the highly structured and supportive ELD environment to mainstream content classes in which EL students are in the extreme minority. Jasmine’s history exam results, and her lack of awareness about how she earned them, reflect a growing problem in American schools. How can teachers support ELs throughout their schooling so that they have full access to the curriculum, including both the content *and* the “hidden curriculum” of academic success?

I decided to do some detective work. I asked Jasmine to gather all notes she had used to prepare for the exam. At first, I was quite confused. Jasmine’s notes, taken from in-class lectures in her World History class, were impressive. They were formatted in proper Cornell Notes style, with questions and ideas listed on the left side of the page, and notes about those questions and ideas listed on the right. Jasmine had underlined and highlighted numerous key terms, indicating that she had spent some time attempting to determine what was important. But when I looked deeper, I became troubled. I asked Jasmine, “What is the Enlightenment?” This had been a major focus of the unit. She could not answer the question. “How did the philosophers impact the culture?” Nothing. Even though Jasmine had highlighted the passages that addressed these “big ideas,” she clearly did not have an adequate, or even cursory, understanding of their meaning. Jasmine had internalized many habits of “good” students, but she was not

developing a deeper understanding of key concepts. Further, the language of the notes was quite academic in nature. For example, in one passage she had written, “The philosophers had formed and popularized new theories, but were not active revolutionaries.” She couldn’t articulate to me the meanings of *popularized* or *formed*, both of which were essential if Jasmine was to understand the underlying role philosophers played in the Enlightenment. I asked Jasmine if I could keep her notes and chat with her history teacher. She agreed.

At our meeting, Jasmine’s history teacher and I quickly discovered that Jasmine was making several “rookie” academic mistakes. First, the teacher was shocked when he saw Jasmine’s notes. “Oh no! She is writing everything down! She isn’t supposed to do that!” Sure enough, when we examined the pertinent PowerPoint slides, there were several bullet points of text per slide, but only a fraction of the text was underlined. The rest of the bullet points included information designed to elaborate on the underlined, “important” passages. Not understanding these annotations, Jasmine had felt compelled to write down every word, leaving her little time to listen to the oral part of the lecture. In addition, the academic vocabulary on the slides, which Jasmine had copied dutifully, was not comprehensible to her, nor was it likely accessible to many of the fluent English-speaking students. The teacher explained that his habit during lectures was to explain many of the more complex ideas in student-friendly terms. He did not, however, pre-teach or emphasize any of the academic words that were not specific to the subject matter itself. Finally, the teacher explained that prior to the test, he had conducted a review session, using the exam itself, without the students’ knowledge, to quiz students

about key concepts and terms. Jasmine had not taken notes during this review session, though many of her peers had.

It became clear to me that there were both linguistic and non-linguistic factors at work in Jasmine's misunderstanding, factors that would put her at a disadvantage when entering her history class and other content area classes such as math, science and English. Linguistically, Jasmine had not yet mastered a number of the academic vocabulary terms and concepts required to comprehend grade-level texts. Secondary students who are fluent in English have access to a much broader vocabulary than ELs, enabling them to spend more of their mental energy learning new, course-specific concepts, like those of the Enlightenment, for example. Academically, Jasmine did not understand many of the hidden "rules" of the classroom, including the need to focus one's study on big ideas, write down only what is important, and use the teacher review session as a guide for test preparation.

In addition to her academic challenges, Jasmine also faced social and cultural obstacles in her history class. First, Jasmine felt uncomfortable raising her hand to ask questions or staying after class to seek additional help. As is common with ELs, Jasmine did not want to stand out in any way, preferring to avoid calling attention to her own confusion. For example, during exams Jasmine reported that she often finished last, and felt rushed because she feared that her peers were growing frustrated waiting for her. While troubling, this made sense. Jasmine had told me previously that students rarely worked in pairs and almost never in small groups to complete difficult assignments or to study the material. Jasmine was likely intimidated by her peers simply because she had not interacted with them much throughout the year.

Finally, and perhaps most important, Jasmine had trouble distinguishing between important, key ideas from lesser, subordinate concepts. To her, the ideas all seemed important, and she became lost in the sheer volume of text. Limited opportunities to engage with more skilled peers probably contributed to Jasmine's confusion. In short, Jasmine lacked the prerequisite academic language and self-advocacy skills needed for success in challenging content classes.

Making the Connection: Authentic Vocabulary Instruction and Critical Thinking

As I prepared to conduct my research, I began to see a connection between Jasmine's frustrations and lack of success in her history class and my own struggles with teaching the complex idea of *prejudice* to my ELD students a few years earlier. In both cases, the teacher was not providing students with sufficient or appropriate language instruction that would enable students to become proficient enough in the language of school for them to achieve success. Jasmine's history teacher was glossing over major concepts, no doubt under pressure to cover massive amounts of material, and was only providing PowerPoint notes and brief oral clarifications. In my own classroom, I was also stopping short of providing students with comprehensive academic English instruction, despite my greatest efforts to include "research-based" vocabulary teaching strategies in my lessons. My focus on vocabulary alone was too narrow, and I was thus missing opportunities to help my students improve their overall academic English fluency.

Jasmine had been a student in my ELD class the previous year, and now I was witnessing up close what happens with my students once they move on. It was eye-opening. Memorizing facts is not enough. Even learning English, the stated objective of

an ELD course, is not sufficient to prepare students for overall academic success. I had learned this lesson previously with students like Jasmine. I asked myself, what could I have done differently to prepare Jasmine for success in her content classes?

American Schools: Complex Realities for English Learners

In the past two decades, schools in the United States have seen an increase in the number of immigrant students such as Jasmine. According to Capps et al. (2005), by the year 2000, one in nine American residents was an immigrant, but the children of immigrants represented one in five of all children under age eighteen. Mexico is the largest country of origin for immigrant students, with 38% of all foreign-born children, Pre-K through fifth grades, followed by Asian countries (25%), other Latin American countries (17%) and Europe and Canada (17%).

Implications for schooling go beyond immigrant status or country of origin for immigrant students. For example, according to Capps et al. (2005), a higher share of immigrant children come from lower income families than children born in the United States, due in part to the fact that immigrants on average generate lower incomes working in the United States than do American citizens. This poses economic challenges for students, above and beyond their language challenges. Because children from low-income immigrant families, especially Latinos, are less likely to enroll in early education programs, immigrant students often have limited access to educational opportunities from the very beginning. In addition, students entering school with little or no English proficiency sometimes have little or no formal education prior to entering the United States, or must adjust to a school system that is radically different from the one they are used to. Limited formal education explains some of the challenges that students like

Jasmine encounter. When they enter the United States, ELs are charged with learning a new language and adapting to the complex cultural demands of a new environment. If students do not have access to explicit instruction regarding how to be a student in America, their English skills may not be enough to ensure their academic success.

Secondary English Learners

The increase during the 1990s in the number of children of immigrants in secondary schools was nearly double that in the elementary grades (Capps, et al., 2005). Therefore, English learners who enter American schools in the secondary grades face challenges that younger students do not encounter. Because elementary schools offer resources for “newcomer” students, that is, those entering American schools for the first time, English Learners who enter secondary schools often do not receive valuable resources designed to meet their adolescent literacy needs (Capps, et al., 2005).

Additionally, mastering English is not enough to ensure success in school. Secondary ELs must also master “at least two bodies of knowledge: English, more specifically English for the classroom and tests, and disciplinary content material such as history [and] science” (Maxwell-Jolly, Gándara, & Mendez Benavídez, 2005, p. 4). Acquiring the “basic academic skills students need in order to access school subjects and communicate understanding of content” is also critical for their success (Maxwell-Jolly, et al., 2005, p. 4).

English Learners in California Schools

Given the challenges that students like Jasmine face daily, the question arises, how are ELs performing academically? This section examines some recent data from a common language proficiency exam given to ELs in California, and compares those

results with some trends arising from the content standards-based exams. The results of such a comparison are illuminating

English Language Acquisition

In 2004, the Public Policy Institute of California commissioned a study of the current educational status of ELs in California (Jepsen & de Alth, 2005). Using the newly implemented statewide California English Language Development Test (CELDT) as the primary data source, the Institute examined the data for trends and patterns regarding EL students' progress in learning English. The CELDT is given to all ELs in California schools and is the primary mechanism that schools use to track students' progress in English language development. The report highlights predictors of positive growth in English language acquisition among ELs, as determined by increases in CELDT scores over time. For example, ELs in schools with overall higher content area standardized test scores were more likely than students in lower performing schools to see greater growth in their CELDT scores. Primary grade students progressed more quickly than secondary students, and students with teachers who are authorized to teach ELs saw slightly more improvement in their CELDT scores. Additional factors that appear to contribute to improved English proficiency, according to the report, include length of time in the United States, academic grades, and the amount of time students spend moving in and out of schools.

Performance on Content Area Exams

Understanding the factors that contribute to English language proficiency only provides part of the picture of English Learners' overall academic success. In fact, according to Maxwell-Jolly (2005), it is naïve to assume that focusing primarily on English

language development will ensure students' overall academic success. For example, English Learners who perform well on the CELDT exam also show marked improvement on their content area standardized test scores (Jepsen & de Alth, 2005). While this might speak to the benefits of improved English proficiency, according to Callahan (2005) this correlation between improved English proficiency and higher content scores could likely be explained by the fact that ELs who have access to more rigorous instruction in the content areas are more likely to experience success in school, including graduating from high school.

Unfortunately, not all students have access to such rigorous content, and as a result, California English Learners are not presently improving academically across content areas at a pace necessary to keep up with their fluent English-speaking peers, despite their gains in English fluency. For example, while 64% of tenth grade English Learners in California scored “proficient” on the CELDT exam, which tests only English language proficiency, only 4% were able to pass the English Language Arts portion of the California Standards Test (CST) for the tenth grade (Maxwell-Jolly, 2005). The CST is a standards-based, English-only test given to all students in grades two through eleven. While the CELDT focuses on basic language acquisition, the CST focuses on whether students have met grade-level English Language Arts (ELA) standards set by the state of California.

To explore the disparity between students' CELDT success and their CST struggles, a comparison between the two exams is instructive. The sample questions from the CELDT, as shown in Figure 1, require students to identify synonyms for common, everyday words in English such as “real” and “genuine,” or to understand how

to express the plural form of a common noun, as in “party” becoming “parties” when pluralized (California Department of Education, 2008a, p. 60). One sample question from the ELA portion of the CST, as shown in Figure 2, on the other hand, requires students to distinguish between academic words like “identify,” “justify,” “illustrate,” and “emphasize,” after having read a thirteen-paragraph piece by Mark Twain (California Department of Education, 2008b, p. 11). The second question in Figure 2 requires that students know terms of literary analysis such as “symbolism” or “irony.” As these figures illustrate, the language skills required for success on the CST far exceed those required on the CELDT, despite the CELDT’s function as an English proficiency exam.

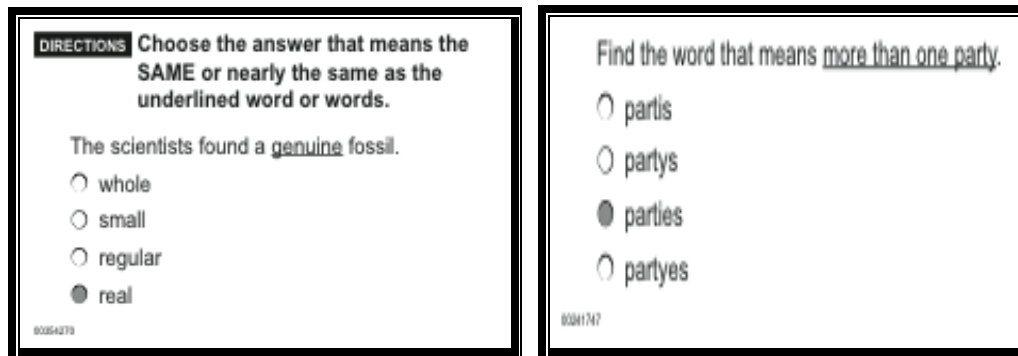


Figure 1. Sample “Released Questions” (2008) from the CELDT exam.

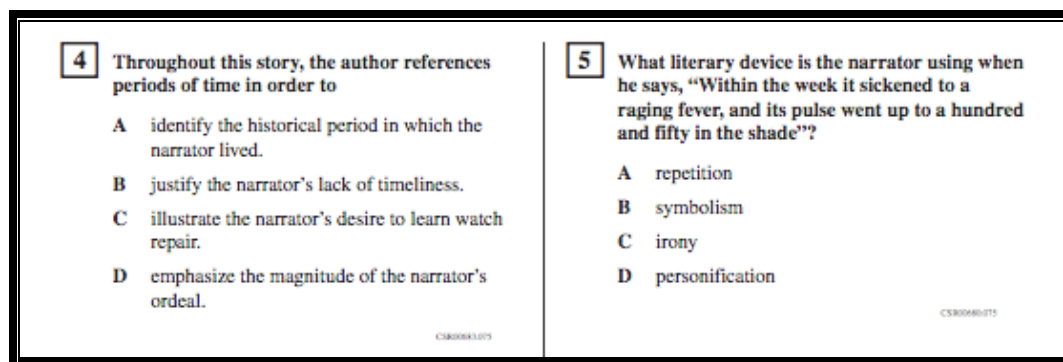


Figure 2. Sample "Released Questions" (2008) from the 10th Grade ELA exam.

The language demands on English Learners become more apparent when examining questions from exams in the content areas. For example, sample questions from the World History CST exam, given in the tenth grade at most schools, are illuminating. Not only must students remember such complex and unfamiliar vocabulary terms as “nonviolent noncooperation,” but a look at three randomly-chosen questions from the test, as shown in Figure 3, demonstrates that seven other academic vocabulary words are also included with these questions (California Department of Education, 2008c, p. 13).

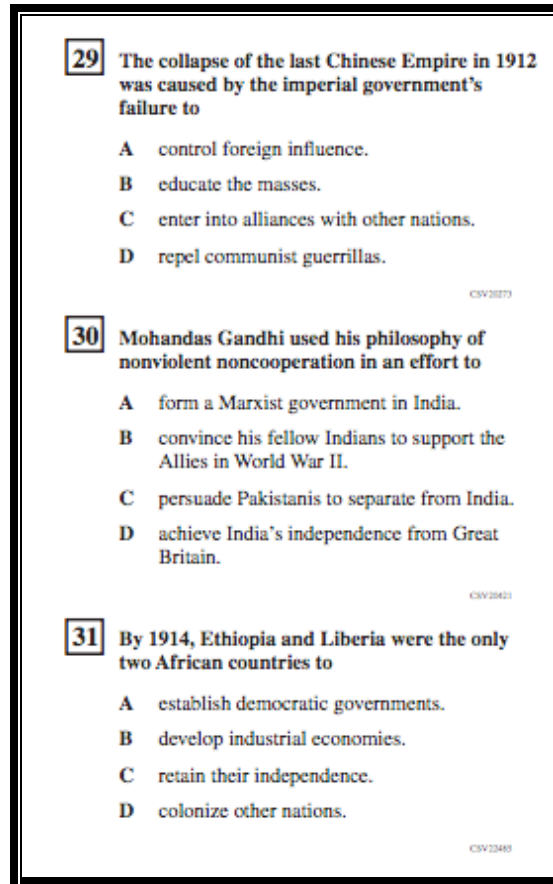


Figure 3. Sample questions from the 2008 "Released Questions" from the World History CST exam.

For ELs, making sense of this material is nearly impossible without a broad academic vocabulary, as the following exercise demonstrates. A “gapmaker” tool created by Haywood (2008a), designed to remove academic vocabulary words from texts, was used with the three sample questions in Figure 3. As shown in Figure 4, words like “convince,” “collapse” and “establish” seemingly have little to do with the exact topics at hand, such as the Chinese Empire, Gandhi’s movement and African history, but without understanding these key words, students cannot grasp the underlying concepts, nor can they make meaning from them. Reading the questions without these academic words is a frustrating exercise. It is no wonder that students might be appearing to master English,

as evidenced by their CELDT growth, yet are not meeting standards in the content areas; they are not mastering the “right” English in order to achieve academic success.

<p>The _____ of the last Chinese empire in 1912 was caused by the imperial government's failure to: control foreign influence, educate the masses, enter into alliances with other nations, or repel communist guerrillas.</p> <p>Mohandas Gandhi used his _____ of nonviolent noncooperation in an effort to: form a Marxist government in India, _____ his fellow Indians to support the allies in World War II, persuade Pakistanis to separate from India, or _____ India's independence from Great Britain.</p> <p>By 1914, Ethiopia and Liberia were the only two African countries to: _____ democratic governments, develop industrial _____, _____ their independence, or colonize other nations.</p> <p>The following words will fill the gaps:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>achieve</td> <td>collapse</td> <td>convince</td> <td>economies</td> <td>establish</td> <td>philosophy</td> <td>retain</td> </tr> </table>	achieve	collapse	convince	economies	establish	philosophy	retain
achieve	collapse	convince	economies	establish	philosophy	retain	

Figure 4. CST World History questions from Figure 3 with the academic vocabulary words removed.

Academic English: Gateway Toward Success

What, then, is the “right” English that ELs are missing? As the previous examples of questions from standardized content area exams suggest (see Figures 2 and 3), students are not adequately mastering the language they need to access the core curriculum across content areas. Scarcella (2003) defines this language, which she refers to as “academic English,” as a variety of English that is used in professional publications and academic disciplines. Scarcella’s definition of academic English includes the language of higher-order thinking, including inventing, inferring and conceptualizing, and includes both oral and written communication skills.

Unfortunately, students are “unlikely to learn [academic English] on their own through exposure to English oral discourse” (August, Carlo, Dressler & Snow, 2005, p. 55). Unlike the “technical” or content-specific vocabulary that is “recognizably specific to a particular topic, field or discipline,” (Coxhead & Nation, 2001, p. 261), academic

English vocabulary reaches across disciplines and must be explicitly taught. Echevarria, Short and Powers (2006) argue that “without systematic [academic] language development, students never develop the requisite academic literacy skills needed for achieving success in mainstream classes, for meeting content standards, or for passing standardized assessments” (p. 199).

Academic English literacy is complex. According to Echevarria, Short and Powers (2006), knowledge of academic English includes “semantic and syntactic knowledge, along with functional language use” (p. 199). Students must learn how a word is used, how its multiple meanings impact its use, and what the concepts are behind complex academic words. This knowledge leads to fluency, which is crucial for students’ academic success. As Coxhead and Nation (2001) state, fluency is “encouraged by repeated opportunity to work with texts that are within the learner’s proficiency” (p. 259).

Critical Thinking for the 21st Century

Giving all students access to the academic language they need to achieve success on standardized tests is only one small part of our obligation to English Learners specifically, and all students generally. In fact, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2002), a collaboration between educators and business leaders, issued a report that argues “standardized tests alone can measure only a few of the important skills and knowledge we hope our students will learn” (p. 5). Looking beyond rote memorization of facts and details, the authors of the report advocate that teachers emphasize learning skills, including thinking and problem-solving, by incorporating them “deliberately, strategically and broadly” (p. 4). The report also recognizes what many teachers can

verify from classroom experience, which is that “students understand and retain more when their learning is relevant, engaging and meaningful to their lives” (p. 4).

But are students being given ample opportunities to develop these important skills while in high school? According to a survey conducted with over 400 employers in the United States (Casner-Lotto & Barrington, 2006), the answer may be no. Researchers from a consortium of business leaders and educators invited employers to articulate which skills new entrants into the workforce will need in order to achieve success. When researchers compiled and invited employers to rank workplace skills in terms of importance, a trend emerged. Employers consistently emphasized “applied” skills like teamwork, collaboration and critical thinking as “very important,” over “basic” skills like reading comprehension, English language and math skills (p. 9). When asked whether high school graduates meet expectations for critical thinking/problem solving, which writers define as the ability to “exercise sound reasoning and analytical thinking” and to use “knowledge, facts and data to solve workplace problems,” 69.9% of employers rate high school graduates as “deficient” (p. 13). Employers further articulated their expectation that new employees participate in the workplace, solving problems and proposing solutions when needed.

Clearly graduates must leave high school equipped with myriad skills beyond those “basic” skills valued on standardized tests if they are to become productive members of the global workforce. The question is, for adolescent English Learners who enter high school behind their peers linguistically and sometimes academically, how can teachers help students meet both the language and the cognitive demands of school? How can teachers engage EL students in critical thinking as they simultaneously develop

their language skills? This study seeks to make one small contribution toward answering these questions.

English Learners: Local Realities

This study takes place in a high school of approximately 2500 students in San Diego County. The demographics for CCHS do not closely resemble those of the state of California. For example, according to the School Accountability Report Card for CCHS (California Department of Education, 2008d), English Learners (ELs) comprise only 6% of students in this high school, totaling about 170 students, 91% of whom speak Spanish as their first language. Statewide, on average, 15% of students in high schools are ELs. In addition, 16% of California students classify themselves as “Hispanic” or “Latino.” About 10% of CCHS students meet low-income guidelines, compared with a statewide average of 40%. The most recent Academic Performance Index (API) score, a number generated by the State of California from a combination of standardized test scores, indicates that CCHS has for two straight years met performance targets under the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act. In short, CCHS is a high performing school that has a culture of academic success, a highly educated and involved parent community, and a number of financial and other resources to which many California schools do not have access. Therefore, for our English Learners, attending CCHS poses multiple opportunities and unique challenges.

Advantages of Having a Small EL Population

The relatively small EL population at CCHS provides some advantages for the ELD program, as well as some challenges. On the positive side, CCHS is able to closely monitor each student’s progress. The school employs a full-time bilingual liaison who

works with students, parents and teachers daily to meet students' needs. CCHS also employs two counselors who work specifically with EL students, four ELD teachers, and an EL Lead Teacher who has release time to support students in their classes. The program also has access to specially designated funds from the state to support the ELD program, allowing the school to provide professional development for teachers and academic support classes for long-term ELs, that is, students who have been in the United States for five or more years.

Perhaps because of the support students receive, the English Learners at CCHS experience great success compared to EL students attending other schools in the county that support much larger EL populations. For example, 26% of redesignated students, or those who have met criteria for movement out of the ELD program, tested "proficient" or above on the California Standards Test (CST) for the English Language Arts during the 2005-2006 academic year, which is an increase from 9% the previous year.

But English Learners who are still part of the ELD program test far below their English-speaking peers. Only 5% of English Learners tested "proficient or advanced" on the CST for English, compared with 71% of students who are English proficient (California Department of Education, 2008d). Clearly CCHS has still has a lot of work to do to ensure English Learners meet academic success. That said, one final but important benefit of having a small EL population is that CCHS is not under the same pressure of other local "improvement" schools that have struggled to improve test scores for targeted populations under the timetables required by federal law. Such schools, despite committed faculty and staff members, face increasing interference and even sanctions from the State of California due to poor academic performance. Because CCHS has

fewer students in these categories, namely EL and Hispanic/Latino students, the school can devote more time and attention to meeting their needs.

Challenges Posed by a Small EL Population

On the other hand, our small but comprehensive sheltered program, which is comprised of courses specifically designed for English Learners, is often under threat of budget cuts to classes, teachers and other important resources. The sheltered courses, which include science, math, social science, keyboarding and Spanish for Spanish speakers, are particularly vulnerable to cuts. For example, in the year prior to this study the ELD teachers at CCHS lobbied for the retention of a sheltered Government and Economics course, in which only 15 EL students were enrolled. The CCHS administration had planned to remove the course from the master schedule, which would have forced recent immigrants to enter “regular,” non-sheltered government classes that would have offered little instructional support for students. The ELD teachers were successful in their efforts, but it is likely that this and similar issues will arise again.

In addition to institutional challenges, English Learners at CCHS comprise a minority on the campus. Students transitioning out of ELD classes, like Jasmine, often find themselves being the “only one” in their content classes. Not only do they often feel linguistically isolated, being the only bilingual student in the class, but also students have reported to me that they also feel culturally isolated, as these students are often the only non-White student in the class. One of the greatest challenges for teachers of English Learners is to help students overcome this isolation while also ensuring that they develop the academic and language skills necessary to be successful across their classes.

Conclusion

As the number of English learners increases in the United States, educational institutions must adapt to meet their needs. But teaching English to these students is not enough. Students must have access to rigorous academic content in all subject areas. As Maxwell-Jolly points out (2005), confusing language proficiency with content knowledge “yields invalid and unreliable test scores” that not only cloud the assessment picture for EL students, but can “dampen students’ enthusiasm for learning when they are unable to express what they know in English” (p. 5). Giving students the opportunity to master the academic language of school allows students to engage in critical thinking about key content area concepts, ensuring that their enthusiasm for learning is not diminished. Engaging students in their own learning is one step toward preparing students to enter the workforce independent critical thinkers armed with the linguistic and cognitive skills necessary for success.

III. A Review of Relevant Literature

Research into best practices for meeting the needs of English Learners (ELs) has begun to focus on developing students' academic English fluency. For students like Jasmine, who are highly motivated and bright but who lag behind their English-fluent peers in their academic English literacy, nothing could be more important than ensuring access to the frequently neglected language skills of school. In essence, if Jasmine is ever going to succeed academically, she must improve her academic language skills, for those skills constitute an invisible gatekeeper preventing ELs and other struggling students from achieving success.

So, what exactly is “academic English?” Scarcella (2003) provides a useful definition of academic English that recognizes its inherent complexity. This literature review first examines Scarcella's framework for considering academic English, which serves as the basis for this study. Situating her framework within sociocultural learning theory as pioneered by Vygotsky (1978, 1986), Scarcella (2003) argues for a multi-dimensional, dynamic conception of academic English. Using Scarcella's framework as a guide, I will explore relevant research regarding approaches to academic language acquisition along with effective teaching practices that find support within those theories.

Academic English: Scarcella's Framework

Before teachers can consider how best to improve students' academic English skills, the complexity of academic English literacy must be considered. Scarcella's framework captures the intricacy of academic English in an accessible and comprehensive manner that is relevant for K-12 educators. First, when defining *literacy*, Scarcella (2003) adopts the “broader” view of literacy embraced by August & Hakuta (1997) and Wong

Fillmore & Snow (2000), which includes “mechanics, decoding, as well as higher-order thinking [skills]—conceptualizing, inferring, inventing, and testing” (p. 10). Academic English fluency includes proficiency in all of the components, or *dimensions*, of academic English. The three dimensions include the linguistic, cognitive and sociocultural/psychological features of academic English, all of which contribute to overall academic English fluency (see Figure 5). These dimensions were first articulated in a foreign language instructional context by Kern (2003), who argued that researchers investigating academic English must consider all three dimensions, as language practice is socially and culturally embedded (Scarcella, 2003, p. 10). What follows is a brief description of Scarcella’s conception of the three dimensions of academic English, highlighting the major features of each.

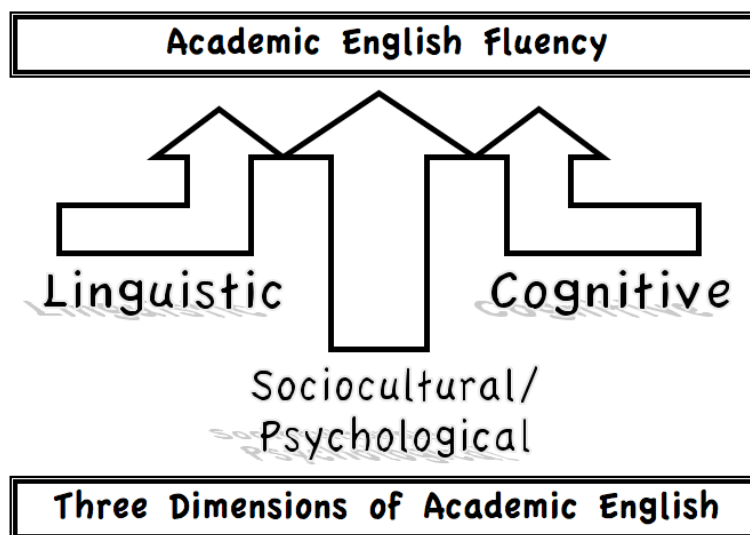


Figure 5. The three dimensions of academic English, as described by Scarcella (2003).

Linguistic Fluency

The linguistic dimension of academic English includes knowledge of how language functions, including proper use of grammatical rules, appropriate intonation, as

well as knowledge of word origins and word parts. In addition, the linguistic dimension includes an understanding of where and when to use certain genres, including exposition or argument, as well as how to organize one's writing in an academic setting, for example using transitions and other organizational signals (Scarcella, 2003, p. 12). Fluency in the linguistic dimension of academic English also requires students to possess a broad academic vocabulary, including words that are used across subject areas, for example *assert*, *explain*, or *bias*. Thus, while important, academic vocabulary alone makes up just one component of academic English fluency.

Cognitive Fluency

The cognitive dimension of academic English recognizes that readers must be able to think about a text before they can interpret or criticize it. This dimension highlights the language of *critical thinking* required to succeed academically. First, students who achieve cognitive academic fluency have acquired extensive knowledge of the world. Scarcella asserts that the ability to make sense of new information “involves, among other things, assimilation of new knowledge into existing schemata and accommodation of existing schemata to fit new knowledge” (p. 23). Schemas are “organized conceptual structures” that help learners understand new problems or information (National Research Council, 2000, p. 33). Second, Scarcella argues that students must master higher-order thinking skills, including “interpreting, evaluating, and synthesizing” ideas (p. 23), as well as distinguishing fact from opinion. Students must learn to read a text critically, and to write and speak persuasively, using evidence to support one's claims. Finally, students must learn how to think about their own language acquisition, evaluating

and monitoring their own learning, while also mastering the use of language as a tool for communication that takes different forms depending on the circumstances.

Sociocultural/Psychological Fluency

The third dimension of academic English according to Scarcella is the sociocultural/psychological dimension. Within this dimension lie the various “social and cultural norms, values, beliefs, attitudes, motivations, interests, behaviors, practices, and habits” embedded within academic English literacy (p. 29). As Vygotsky (1978) argues, “all the higher functions [students learn] originate as actual relations between human individuals” (p. 57). When mastering academic English, students learn “the particular conventions and norms that characterize the people who use it” (Scarcella, 2003, p. 29). As explained in Scarcella (p. 30), Gee (1996, 2002) points out that students learn these conventions by “participating in specific ways of being and acting in academic contexts.” Gee (1996, 2002) further argues that students learn through “apprenticeship into social academic practices” (Scarcella, 2003, p. 31). Therefore, students do not necessarily learn these codes through explicit instruction.

Students learn these attitudes and beliefs as they participate in academic culture over time, internalizing standard ways of speaking, writing, and behaving. As Rueda, Munzón and Arzubiaga (2003) note, immigrant students and their families “have little knowledge of our educational system” and may not possess extensive institutional knowledge of schools from their countries of origin (p. 7). It is thus up to teachers to assist students with acquiring this *cultural capital* (Rueda et al., 2003), namely, the values, beliefs and skills that define success in American schools. Cárdenas (2004), who was an immigrant student in American schools, explains teachers’ responsibilities in this respect:

[Teachers] need to find ways to connect to all their students—the eloquent ones and the quiet ones, the assertive ones and the reserved ones, the ones who are confident in their abilities and the ones who feel isolated because they do not have the mastery of the English language. They need to demonstrate an investment in and commitment to the successful engagement of all their students, establish patterns for achievement of personal potential, and promote societal transformation. (Cárdenas, 2004, pp. 124-125).

Making connections with students is crucial, for as Delpit (2002) points out, students acquire new language codes by “identifying with the people who speak it, from connecting the language form with all that is self-affirming and esteem-building, inviting and fun” (p. 39). This starts with conversation and building a culture of inquiry and inclusion. Unfortunately, as Delpit notes, in many classrooms “the percentage of talk by the teacher far outweighs that by all the students put together,” and academic English is “embedded in instruction that has little connection to children’s cultural lives and personal interests” (p. 40). If students are to become fluent in the sociocultural/psychological dimension of academic English, they must feel connected to the content, to the teacher, and to their peers.

Putting it Together

Scarcella (2003) argues that the three dimensions often work in concert with one another and that all three are critical for students’ success. Even a student who masters the linguistic and cognitive dimensions, for example, cannot be considered fluent in academic English without also mastering the skills embedded within the sociocultural/psychological dimension. However, Scarcella also recognizes that academic English acquisition does not occur on a linear continuum. Rather, she asserts that such learning may occur “in rapid spurts or with considerable backtracking,” and that students do not need to be fluent in everyday English in order to improve their academic English

skills (p. 26). Finally, Scarcella posits that teachers of ELs should consider these three dimensions when planning language instruction. To that end, this study will focus on developing students' academic English fluency across all three dimensions.

The remainder of this literature review seeks to link current research and theory regarding language acquisition, specifically, and sociocultural learning theory, generally, with Scarcella's framework. Out of such an analysis will emerge the features of an instructional approach that attempts to improve the overall academic English literacy of ELs.

Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

A logical starting point for considering how to improve students' academic English literacy is academic vocabulary instruction, an important component of the linguistic dimension of academic English (Scarcella, 2003). For students to become fluent in this dimension, they must amass a broad academic vocabulary. In a review of research on methods for developing vocabulary knowledge for ELs, August, et al. (2005) identified several promising instructional practices, including using students' primary language as a bridge to English, ensuring that ELs know the meanings of basic words, and providing opportunities for consistent review and practice of instructional routines. In her study of the implementation of a structured academic vocabulary intervention with fifth graders who were English dominant or who were learning English, Carlo, et al. (2004) found that a "challenging curriculum" that focused on teaching academic words, multiple meaning awareness, word inference strategies, and tools for analyzing word meanings improved students' reading comprehension (p. 203). Based on this research, Carlo, et al. (2004) argue that "learning a word requires learning (over a series of encounters)...various

aspects of its meaning... Thus, subsequent encounters build *depth* of word knowledge, which is as important in using words as the more commonly assessed *breadth*” (p. 192). Further, in their study of bilingual Turkish students who were learning Dutch as a second language, Verhallen and Schoonen (1993) found that “the fact that a child produces a word does not mean that he or she uses the word in all its conceptual implications” (p. 362). In fact, they found that students learning a second language often lack depth of word knowledge in that new language, even for words that occur frequently. As Coxhead (2001) states:

Direct teaching through vocabulary exercises, teacher explanation, and awareness raising, and deliberate learning using word cards need to be balanced with opportunities to meet the vocabulary in message-focused reading and listening and to use the vocabulary in speaking and writing (p. 228).

Thus teaching academic words *explicitly* in conjunction with giving students multiple opportunities to interact with such words is critical for mastery of academic English. This contributes to what Scott and Nagy (2004) refer to as *word consciousness*, or the ability to reflect on and manipulate words as a unit of language. As students learn to appreciate words, they develop “conscious control over language use and the ability to negotiate the social language of schooling” (p. 202).

Sociocultural Learning Theory: An Overview

Explicit vocabulary instruction offers a starting point, but academic English literacy is dynamic and complex. Given its multidimensional nature, Scarcella (2003) positions her definition of academic English within sociocultural learning theory, which posits that learning cannot be separated from its social and cultural contexts. For sociocultural learning theorists such as Vygotsky, learning, intelligence and culture make

up a “single entity,” and students can reach high standards only when encouraged to use all of their prior knowledge (Oakes & Lipton, 1999, p. 77). From Vygotsky’s perspective, an ideal classroom would include “teachers and students learning together through exploration and collaboration in an inquiry-based curriculum” (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 29).

For Vygotsky, language plays a central role in learning. In fact, all learning is “accomplished through the language that flows between individuals” (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 28). As Vygotsky (1986) states,

Thought is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them. Every thought tends to connect something with something else, to establish a relation between things. Every thought moves, grows and develops, fulfils [*sic*] a function, solves a problem. (p. 218).

Scarcella’s (2003) framework embodies this marriage of thought and language, taking into consideration the notion that action and language form a reciprocal relationship (Wink & Putney, 2002). According to Vygotsky’s principles, the ideal classroom, especially for English Learners, would empower students to use their experiences to connect to new knowledge, adequately support new learning, encourage learning and language development through dialogue, and move students toward mastery of the linguistic and cognitive language skills required for academic success.

The Zone of Proximal Development

Another key element of Vygotsky’s (1978) theory is the idea that learners maximize their potential when they operate within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky defines the ZPD as

The distance between the actual development 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 essence, “the zone of proximal development defines those functions that have not yet matured but are in the process of maturation” (p. 86). For Vygotsky, students do not develop beyond current levels of mastery unless they are adequately challenged, but are also supported in that challenge by adults or more capable peers. In a classroom context, paired or group collaboration enables students to work toward greater understanding, with more capable peers supporting the learning of maturing students. Because the ZPD is not fixed for any given skill for any given student, “the more capable peer in one context may not be the more capable peer in another” (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 110). Teachers who want students to operate within their respective ZPDs should therefore provide instructional structures that enable students to work toward mastery of difficult concepts with support. For English Learners working toward academic English fluency, those instructional structures must provide explicit language support, enabling students to make new meaning using the language of academic discourse.

Accessing and Building Prior Knowledge

Learning is a process, best facilitated with “purposeful activities” that “constitute a social process, with the actors bringing to the process their own lived experiences, from their own sociocultural-historical contexts” (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 102). According to Scarcella (2003), academic English fluency within the cognitive dimension includes “extensive knowledge of the world that is built upon their previous academic reading” as well as “ideas, concepts, definitions and stories” that they can use to “make sense of text and explain” their ideas (p. 22). While English learners might be behind their English fluent peers with respect to their exposure to academic English texts, they do bring to the

classroom a variety of experiences that teachers can use to help them connect to new learning. Providing meaningful, purposeful activities that encourage students to use their prior knowledge enables students to build upon their strengths while transferring their previous knowledge to create new understandings (National Research Council, 2000).

Activities designed to enable students to make connections between their prior knowledge and new concepts must be accessible to our students, especially English Learners. From a sociocultural perspective, Vygotsky would assert that the “acquisition of new concepts is most meaningful to students when they are given an opportunity to construct their own knowledge and to discover things for themselves” (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 20). As Bayer (1990) argues, “our students must be able to wrestle with the ideas before having to shape their thinking and language for the public” (p. 14). When students are given the opportunity to engage with new ideas using their prior knowledge, they use “expressive language” which allows the learner to “express freely thoughts, feelings and opinions about a subject” (p. 14). When students can express their understandings using language that is familiar to them, making connections to new information becomes more natural. Yamauchi (2005) continues, stating that “learning is promoted when students connect new information with what they already know from home, school and community” (p. 103) in a process called contextualization. Students learn to put new information into context, using their prior knowledge and language skills as a bridge to mastering new concepts, and new language skills.

Semiotic Mediation

The process of contextualization takes place when teachers use methods that integrate academic concepts with students’ prior knowledge (Yamauchi, 2005). Vygotsky

viewed human beings as “social and cultural beings who learn through interaction with others as they socially construct meanings through the mediational tool of language” (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 31). In semiotic mediation, learners continually use “language and thought to generate more meaning” and develop their mental abilities (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 152). According to Vygotsky,

In the classroom, as well as in interaction with others away from the classroom, learners use language to communicate thoughts, and, through the social act of verbalizing those thoughts, combine their experiences with those of others, a continual, lifelong learning process. (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 47).

As learners engage in semiotic mediation, “learning expands and deepens [their] knowing and...development” (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 43). Teachers play an important role in this development process, for “without specific guidance from teachers, students may fail to connect everyday knowledge to subjects taught in school.” (National Research Council, 2000, p. 69).

Instructional Conversation. In order to facilitate learning through semiotic mediation, Yamauchi (2005) advocates that classroom activities are “organized so that students have opportunities for discussions with the teachers and with peers,” including conducting research, reading alone and with partners, and creating activities (p. 117). In the classroom context, the term Instructional Conversation, as described by Dalton and Tharp (2002), is a helpful frame for considering how teachers help students construct meaning through semiotic mediation. During Instructional Conversations, teachers act as assistants for students through the Zone of Proximal Development, using conversation as the mediational tool (Wells & Haneda, 2005, p. 176). Instructional Conversation

Capitalizes on conversation as the means for students’ systematic intellectual development and identity formation, by drawing on each

student's personal experience, in school and out, and by bridging between class members' joint actions and their shared understandings. (Wells & Haneda, 2005, p. 175).

Connecting students' prior experiences with new concepts in the form of curricular goals allows Instructional Conversation to “function as a crucible in which all the relevant ideas and experiences are brought together and melded into an improved understanding and potential for future action” (Wells & Haneda, 2005, p. 176). From a sociocultural point of view, “the responsibility of the teacher is to facilitate the students' learning process and to coordinate the learning with others around a particular content” (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 12). For Bayer (1990), the benefit of engaging students in instructional conversation is that learners receive “expert guidance” from teachers and more knowledgeable peers (p. 11). Bayer labels this “an apprenticeship process” in which “novice learners increasingly assume more responsibility for their own learning” (p. 11).

Internalization

Ultimately, as learners become more competent, they integrate their new knowledge with their prior knowledge, enabling them to make meaningful use of their new skills. In this process of internalization, “students are actively negotiating ideas as they individually internalize what they have learned in collaboration with others” (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 35). When discussing a previous study of collaborative problem solving among teachers, Bayer (1990) notes that participants engaged in “ongoing internalization of negotiated meanings” (p. 15) when discussing the role audience plays in writing instruction. As the teachers internalized their understanding of *audience* in this specific, academic sense, they were able to use the term, transforming their expressive talk into more formal language that is used to inform or persuade (Bayer, 1990). Applying

Scarcella's (2003) framework to this process of internalization, the teachers in the study were improving their academic English skills by internalizing new vocabulary (the linguistic dimension), supporting their thinking with evidence (the cognitive dimension), and entering an academic discourse about the writing process (the sociocultural/psychological dimension), all of which was generated within what Bayer (1990, p. 13) refers to as the "social milieu." As Wink and Putney (2002) explain,

Vygotsky's framework teaches us that, after a student receives instructional support or tutelage from someone, who happens to be more capable in that particular context, the learner internalizes the new idea and will be more able to perform independently in the next similar problem-solving situation. (p. 86).

Internalization thus becomes the goal for teachers, who construct learning environments that enable students to master new content and demonstrate that mastery independently in new situations.

Conclusion

If promoting academic English fluency is critical for the success of ELs in American schools, then curricular approaches must take into consideration the dynamic and multidimensional character of academic English. Scarcella's (2003) framework, conceived within a sociocultural theory of learning, provides a useful lexicon for considering academic English. To achieve fluency in academic English, Scarcella argues, students must master all dimensions, including the linguistic, cognitive and sociocultural/psychological dimensions. In short, students must master the structure and function of academic English, the language of critical thinking, and the skills required to use academic English as a gateway toward academic discourse and, ultimately, higher education.

The next chapter evaluates three such approaches to teaching ELs through the lens of Scarcella's (2003) framework.

IV. Review of Existing Curricular Approaches for English Learners

The challenges facing English Learners (ELs) in our public schools are numerous. As discussed in Chapter III, immigrant students who enter American schools, often as older adolescents, must learn a new culture, a new language, and new educational expectations and norms. For many students, the biggest hurdle to gaining access to success in school is acquiring academic English, which includes the vocabulary, grammar and conventions, critical thinking skills, and discourse expectations that are prominent in academic texts and in academic culture. In her framework for discussing academic English, Scarcella (2003) points out that students must master a variety of academic English skills if they are to achieve success. Scarcella's framework serves as the lens through which this study was conducted.

Scarcella's (2003) framework for considering academic English includes three dimensions, which work together to contribute to academic English literacy (see Chapter III, Figure 5). The linguistic dimension of academic English includes knowledge of how the language functions, including proper grammatical rules, appropriate intonation, as well as knowledge of word origins and word parts. In addition, linguistic fluency requires students to have a broad academic vocabulary (see Figure 6). The cognitive dimension emphasizes proficiency using the language of critical thinking, including drawing upon a broad knowledge base to make meaning of new information, questioning assumptions and drawing conclusions about the world by evaluating claims and evidence in support of those claims (see Figure 7). Fluency in the cognitive dimension also implies that students can revise and edit their work, and can use language acquisition tools to improve their understanding. Mastery of the third dimension, the sociocultural/psychological

dimension of academic English, includes understanding the norms, attitudes, values, and behaviors associated with participation in academic discourse (see Figure 8).

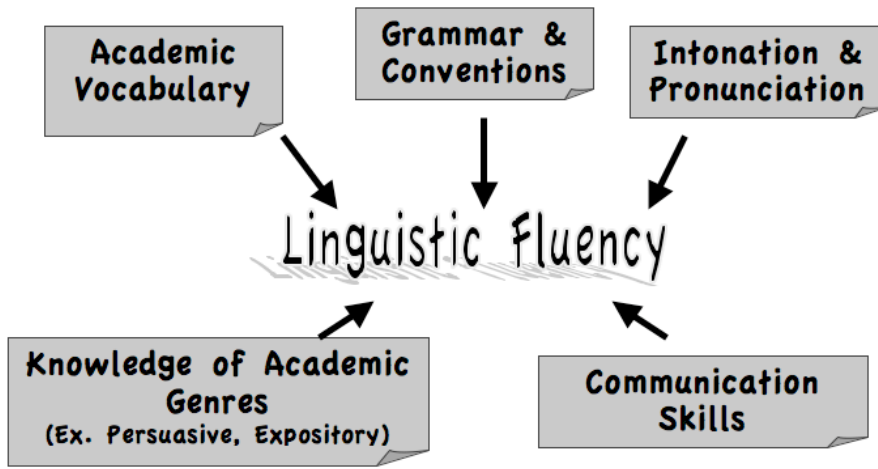


Figure 6. Competencies that contribute to linguistic fluency in academic English (Scarcella, 2003).

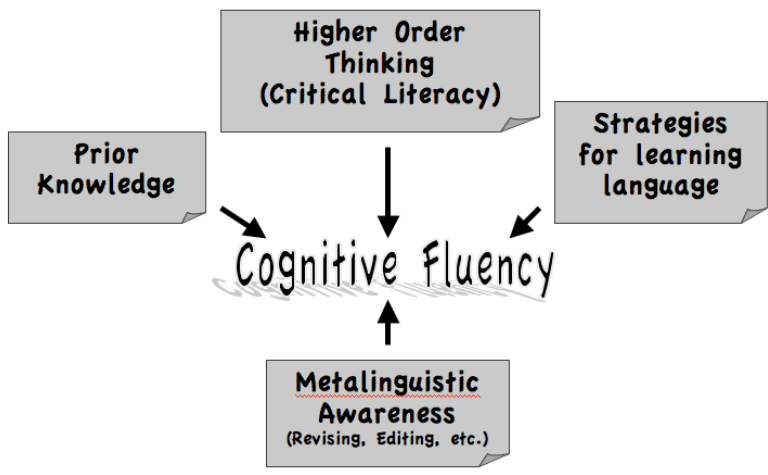


Figure 7. Competencies that contribute to cognitive fluency in academic English (Scarcella, 2003).

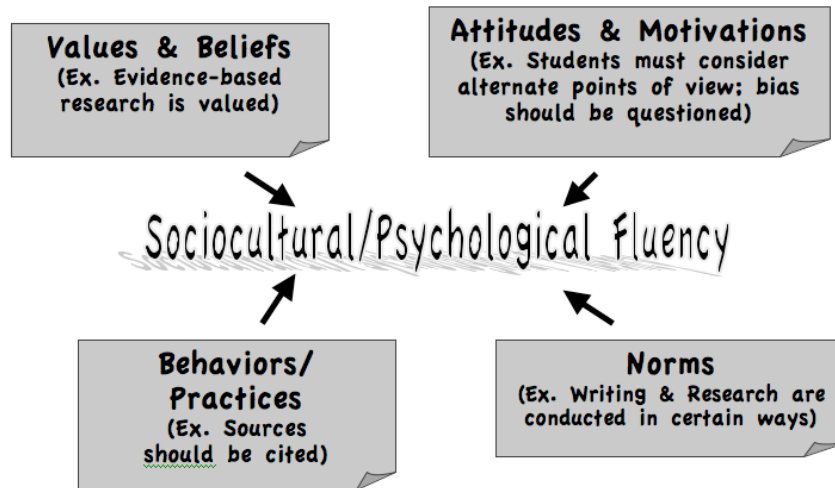


Figure 8. Competencies that contribute to sociocultural/psychological fluency in academic English (Scarcella, 2003).

When educators design curriculum for meeting the needs of ELs, Scarcella (2003) argues that they must take into account all three dimensions of academic English. In this review, I will consider three curricular approaches through the lens offered by Scarcella's framework, examining the extent to which each set of materials addresses students' linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural/psychological academic English skills. First, I will discuss an approach to sheltered instruction known as the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), which seeks to make all content materials accessible to ELs by placing specific emphasis on language acquisition (Echevarria, Vogt & Short, 2004). Second, I will evaluate Scholastic's *Read 180* Program, an intervention program for struggling readers that is often used with adolescent ELs (Read 180, 2008). Finally, I will review an approach published by Hampton-Brown entitled *Edge* (Moore, Short, Smith & Tatum, 2007a). Also designed as an intervention for struggling adolescent readers, *Edge* has been adopted by numerous school districts in California for use with ELs specifically.

I have chosen to review these particular approaches for a few reasons. First, content area teachers who teach ELs might be familiar with some of the strategies advocated in the SIOP approach, but may not have considered their effectiveness in terms of students' academic English fluency. Second, the students in this study have had extensive experience with the *Read 180* instructional model and materials. While there are several strengths to the program, using the lens offered by Scarcella's framework yields important observations to consider when implementing the program. Finally, Hampton-Brown's *Edge* serves as the focus text for the approach implemented in this study. Before describing that approach in the next chapter, it is helpful to consider first how effectively the materials alone address students' broad academic English needs as outlined by Scarcella.

Sheltered Instruction Overview

Sheltered Instruction (SI) is an instructional approach in which “teachers use the core curriculum but modify it to meet the language development needs of English language learners” (Genesee, 1999, pg. 4). Focusing on both content and language objectives, SI seeks to make content standards comprehensible for ELs. In developing a model for SI that could be used for curriculum planning, Echevarria, Short and Powers (2006) “determined that certain features must be present in instruction so that content concepts are made comprehensible at the same time that academic English-language development is promoted” (p. 207). SI seeks to deliver content instruction in history, math, English, or science using language development as the means toward greater content and English language understanding. Quality SI “draws from and complements high-quality instructional methods advocated for regular classrooms but adds specific

strategies for developing English-language skills” (Echevarria, et al., 2006, p. 207).

Teachers integrate opportunities for students to interact meaningfully with the content using writing, reading, speaking and listening strategies. In highly effective SI classrooms, Echevarria, et al. found that “explicit language instruction targeted to and slightly beyond students’ level of English proficiency is also presented in every lesson,” ensuring students access to the content while they simultaneously develop critical English language skills (p. 207).

The SIOP Approach

The Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), developed by Echevarria, Vogt and Short (2004), “operationalizes sheltered instruction by offering teachers a model for lesson planning and implementation that provides English Learners with access to grade-level content standards” (p. xi). Rather than offering a set curriculum, the SIOP model was initially conceived as an instrument for observing and assessing sheltered instruction in a research setting in content area classrooms (Echevarria, Short & Powers, 2006). The resulting rubric allowed researchers to “score teachers along a continuum of performance” for each of the following essential features of effective sheltered instruction: Preparation, Building Background, Comprehensible Input, Strategies, Interaction, Practice/Application, Lesson Delivery, and Review/Assessment. These components are meant to “emphasize the instructional practices that are critical for second language learners” (Echevarria, et al., 2004, p. 17). The model is designed to offer teachers a “framework” for presenting content standards to ELs through “strategies and techniques that make new information comprehensible to the students” (Echevarria, et al., 2006, p. 201).

The Scarcella Framework. One of the primary strengths of the SIOP model is its emphasis on language development, addressing both the linguistic and sociocultural/psychological dimensions of academic English. First, the designers of SIOP recognize that “for English Learners to succeed, they must master not only the English vocabulary and grammar, but also the way English is used in core content classes. This ‘school English’ or ‘academic English’ includes semantic and syntactic knowledge along with functional language use” (Echevarria, et al., 2004, p. 11). When the protocol is followed as designed, each lesson includes both content and language objectives that are derived from subject matter content and ELD standards. Language objectives might include vocabulary development, use of the writing process, revision, summarizing, or stating conclusions, all of which contribute to linguistic fluency (pp. 22-23).

In addition, the SIOP model recognizes that students must participate in the culture of schooling, thus enhancing their sociocultural/psychological academic English fluency. Since the “theoretical underpinning of the model is that language acquisition is enhanced through meaningful use and interaction,” various opportunities throughout the lesson planning process are established for students to interact meaningfully with the content and language objectives (Echevarria, et al., 2004, p. 13). The protocol makes explicit for teachers that students should be engaged during the majority of the lesson, be given frequent opportunities for interaction and discussion, and receive comprehensive vocabulary instruction and work in grouping configurations that support the language and content objectives of the lesson (p. 210). All of these strategies help build students’ participation in and mastery of the language and culture of school.

While the SIOP model focuses teachers' attention on developing students' linguistic and sociocultural/psychological academic fluency, the cognitive dimension receives much less attention. Although the SIOP lesson-planning template does require that teachers explicitly access students' prior knowledge during each lesson, an important component of cognitive fluency, the model provides little explicit emphasis on developing students' higher order thinking and critical literacy skills. The SIOP model assumes that the content objectives teachers choose will include activities designed to teach students how to think critically. However, as Vygotsky (1978, 1986) asserts, language and thinking are one and the same. Therefore, language objectives must also reflect this goal.

Scholastic's Read 180

The *Read 180* Program (Hasselbring, Feldman, & Kinsella, 2005) was designed as a reading intervention program for students not meeting grade level content standards, especially in English-Language Arts. The 90-minute instructional model for *Read 180* includes three phases. During the first 20 minutes, the teacher provides "systematic instruction in reading, writing, and vocabulary to the whole class" (Read 180, 2008). Next, the students divide into three groups and rotate through three 20-minute sessions focusing on different aspects of reading improvement. In one session, the students sit in a small group with the teacher, who "works closely with students so that individual needs can be met" (Read 180, 2008). In another session, students use the *Read 180* reading intervention software independently. The individualized software meets students' specific needs and allows teachers to track students' progress. Finally, students spend one session reading silently from high-interest fiction and non-fiction books. Students choose from

dozens of titles, typically selecting books that are well suited to their current reading levels. *The Read 180* instructional model ends with a ten-minute “wrap-up” session with the entire class.

The final component of the *Read 180 Program* is the “rBook,” a consumable student text that provides “daily instruction in reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing and grammar skills” (Read 180, 2008). The “rBook” contains a highly scaffolded collection of short pieces of writing, including expository, short fiction and poetry pieces, addressing nine student-friendly themes that are designed to promote academic literacy development. Students use the “rBook” during whole group and small group instruction.

The Scarcella Framework. Of the three dimensions of academic English, *Read 180* addresses the linguistic dimension most directly. The *Read 180* software helps students develop fundamental reading skills, including phonemic awareness, phonics detection, spelling skills and general vocabulary development (Hasselbring, Feldman, & Kinsella, 2005). The authors of the “rBook” have also highlighted key academic vocabulary words for pre-teaching during direct instruction. Vocabulary routines help students learn words more completely than students would by simply looking them up in a dictionary. In addition, the teacher materials provide straightforward teaching routines that help students develop their academic language fluency. For example, various strategies for structured student engagement allow students to write, speak with each other, and share their observations with the class. Writing frames are also included for all of the major writing genres, including expository, descriptive, persuasive and narrative forms.

The *Read 180* materials and instructional model attempt to welcome students into the culture of school as students improve their reading skills and gain confidence in their

abilities. The extent to which students improve their sociocultural/psychological academic language fluency, however, depends almost completely on the teacher implementing the curriculum. The student “rBook” does provide students with opportunities to discuss ideas raised in the texts, and the small group sessions are designed to facilitate similar conversations. In fact, the small group rotation is perhaps the strongest feature of the instructional model in terms of fostering sociocultural/psychological academic English fluency. But only a teacher who is aware of the competencies embedded within the sociocultural/psychological dimension can adequately address students’ needs in this area.

While the *Read 180* Program goes a long way toward fostering linguistic fluency, and to some extent improves students’ sociocultural/psychological fluency, it does not provide as much support for students’ cognitive academic English skills. The materials, including short videos that students watch prior to reading each selection, do seek to develop students’ background knowledge, as the authors recognize that struggling readers often have gaps in knowledge that often hinder reading comprehension. However, the materials largely do not push students beyond basic reading comprehension skills. For example, the reading skills emphasized in the “rBook” include summarizing, writing literature responses, identifying main ideas and details, describing the sequence of events, comparing and contrasting, making inferences and identifying story elements (Hasselbring, Feldman, & Kinsella, 2005). Unfortunately, improving students’ reading comprehension does not guarantee that students will engage in critical thinking about the ideas embedded within the articles. Teachers can supplement and extend the materials,

creating engaging projects and opportunities for students to develop their critical literacy skills, but the materials alone do not make critical thinking a central focus for instruction.

Hampton-Brown's Edge

Edge (Moore, et al., 2007a) was developed as a follow-up to *High Point*, another set of curricular materials adopted by the state of California for use with struggling readers and ELs. The core text for *Edge* is divided into nine theme-based units focused on essential questions, such as “What Influences a Person’s Choices?” and “Does Creativity Matter?” Within each unit the text highlights one genre, such as short stories, non-fiction, or poetry, while other genres supplement the genre of focus. Each unit also emphasizes one major reading strategy, such as making inferences or asking questions, all of which are reinforced in later units. Students use the consumable workbook as a companion to the core text. The “Interactive Practice Book” provides students with the opportunity to engage more directly with the texts. Some of the longer selections are duplicated in the Interactive Practice Book, with additional questions and scaffolds added to aid student understanding. Finally, each unit includes a selection of academic vocabulary words that have been pulled out for pre-teaching and are highlighted throughout the text.

In addition to the core text, three supplementary books are included for each unit. These books correlate loosely with the essential question for that unit, and within the three books there is a low, moderate and higher-level selection. The variety of books allows students to choose a book that is close to their reading levels for enrichment or more structured literary circles. Consumable grammar materials that correspond with the themed units contain dozens of mini-lessons that link to the main text and build on the

texts and themes throughout the year. Finally, at the end of each unit the text provides an opportunity for students to complete a “project” that extends the issues addressed in that particular unit.

The Scarcella Framework. The materials for *Edge* (Moore et al., 2007a) go a long way toward developing student’s linguistic academic English fluency. First, the authors pay particular attention to developing students’ academic vocabulary skills, with numerous academic words pulled out and defined in advance of texts. Students take notes on the vocabulary words in their Interactive Practice Books, and there are also many academic words and idiomatic expressions defined throughout the texts. Second, the grammar materials also help students improve their understanding of how English functions. Finally, the curriculum includes a strong focus on developing students’ awareness and understanding of the various writing genres, with targeted “How to Read” sections that provide explicit instruction regarding accessing poetry, short stories, or persuasive texts, for example.

Of the three curricular approaches reviewed in this chapter, *Edge* (Moore, et al., 2007a) most effectively addresses student’s cognitive fluency needs. First, the essential questions for each unit are designed to engage students’ thinking about larger issues, and many prompts help students access their prior knowledge about issues raised in the texts. Second, the “Monitor Your Reading” sections prompt students to check their understanding, re-read the text and apply their reading strategies to answer their questions. In addition, the “Reflect and Assess” sections at the end of each cluster provide opportunities for students to perform a “self-checks” regarding their use of reading strategies. Finally, the standards-based goals for each unit address students’

critical literacy skills, especially toward the end of the text. For example, the unit used for this implementation is a media literacy unit designed to get students to think critically about media representation of minorities and about the influence of advertising on society. As they read, the prompts and embedded supports guide students to distinguish fact from fiction and consider bias in persuasive texts.

As with any published instructional materials, the impact on student learning of the metacognitive and instructional strategies embedded in *Edge* depends wholly on the degree to which the classroom teacher engages students in those opportunities. While *Edge* provides numerous opportunities for readers to think about their own learning, teachers must make those opportunities explicit and model the necessary skills. Even if the materials are helpful for developing students' linguistic and cognitive fluency skills, without attention to students' sociocultural/psychological needs, students will struggle to make meaning of the texts and internalize the skills embedded within them. While the *Edge* teacher's edition does provide a section on collaborative grouping strategies, which is a start, it is up to the teacher to embed these approaches within his or her lesson plans. The instructions throughout the teacher's edition do not often provide suggestions as to when teachers should pair or group students, or how to use collaboration as a teaching tool at certain points in the text. Rather, the text often directs teachers to "explain" background information or "encourage students to consider" connections between the theme and other texts or students' lives; the students are not directed to explore such connections themselves. The authors do offer suggestions for challenging and engaging extension projects, but again, it is up to the teacher to use such suggestions effectively with students.

Finally, many of the texts and exercises in *Edge* are excessively challenging for ELs, as are the embedded reading strategies and writing applications. For example, in an explanation of the three types of arguments, the text defines “Appeals to Logic” the following way: “the argument makes sense. It is based on facts” (Moore et al., 2007a, p. 492). At the bottom of the page, the text provides the definition of “logic,” stating that it is “good or clear reasoning.” While this definition is clear and straightforward to a reader who understands the difference between “clear” reasoning and “unclear” reasoning, the text neglects to underscore what it means to use logic to support an argument. The text falls far short of allowing students the opportunity to engage in the critical discourse of “logic” or to think critically about the relative value of logical arguments. Since logical reasoning is a major focus of the unit, including the use of evidence to support an argument, the language and skills of logical argument require further exploration. Without proper guidance by a skilled teacher, many ELs would struggle with the cognitive demands of the text, and their linguistic and cognitive fluency skills would no doubt suffer.

Conclusion

When designing a curricular approach to improve students’ academic English literacy, the selection of teaching materials is just a starting point. In fact, many teachers, especially in the content areas, do not have the luxury of choosing which texts and teaching materials to use with students. However, teachers in all content areas are still charged with the responsibility of providing students with access to the most crucial gatekeeper to academic success: that of academic English fluency. In fact, the classroom teacher always plays a key role in the development of her students’ academic progress,

regardless of the available materials. The fact that the SIOP, *Read 180* and *Edge* approaches all leave room for teachers to innovate and engage their students is promising. But even the strongest materials placed in the hands of ill-trained or unprepared teachers will inevitably fall short of meeting students' academic English needs.

As this evaluation of curricular approaches reveals, no single set of instructional materials or approach can meet students' multi-dimensional academic English needs. The SIOP model calls attention to students' linguistic and sociocultural/psychological fluency, but does not emphasize students' cognitive fluency. While the *Read 180* Program targets students' linguistic fluency, it falls short when challenging students' critical thinking, or cognitive literacy skills. The *Read 180* instructional model, especially the small group rotations, is promising, but without guiding objectives or specific attention to students' academic English needs, there is no guarantee that students will internalize the skills they need. Even materials such as *Edge*, which offer numerous opportunities for students to develop their linguistic and cognitive academic English skills, must be made accessible for students. The next chapter outlines an instructional approach that uses principles of sociocultural learning theory to meet the overarching goal of improving students' academic English skills.

V. *Beyond Words: Building Academic English Literacy Across all Dimensions*

Meeting the needs of English Learners (ELs) begins with paying particular attention to students' academic English literacy needs. Embedded within academic English literacy are the linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural/psychological dimensions (Scarcella, 2003), all of which contribute to students' academic success. I designed the *Beyond Words* approach to put my students' academic English fluency needs at the center of the curriculum, using principles of sociocultural learning theory as my guide.

The *Beyond Words* curriculum builds from a unit in Hampton-Brown's *Edge, Level B*, entitled "Are You Buying It? How Do the Media Shape the Way People Think?" (Moore, et al., 2007a). As noted in the Chapter IV, this text is engaging and addresses some of students' linguistic and cognitive academic English literacy needs. However, like many textbooks, *Edge* falls short of engaging students in *authentic* use of key academic language so that students can internalize the vocabulary, skills and concepts targeted by the text.

Using *Edge* as a foundation, *Beyond Words* takes a balanced approach toward developing students' academic English skills, targeting each of the three dimensions as described by Scarcella (2003). Beginning with explicit vocabulary instruction, *Beyond Words* extends students' understanding of key academic concepts by engaging them in inquiry-based exploratory activities, small group "instructional conversations," and paired and small-group challenging tasks. The features and activities are designed to give students enriching, authentic experiences with the key vocabulary, skills and concepts embedded within the unit. This help students extract meaning from challenging texts while they hone their critical literacy skills. Each curricular feature extends and builds

upon the others, targeting each of the three dimensions of academic English fluency (see Table 1).

Table 1. Features of the *Beyond Words* approach and the targeted dimensions of academic English literacy.

Curriculum Features	Linguistic Literacy	Cognitive Literacy	Sociocultural/ Psychological Literacy
Explicit Academic Vocabulary Instruction	√	√	√
Inquiry-Based Activities	√	√	√
Small Group Instructional Conversations	√	√	√
Challenging Tasks	√	√	√

Because academic English literacy is complex, no six-week implementation could adequately address every component of each dimension of academic English. Instead, *Beyond Words* focuses on certain aspects of each dimension (see Figures 9-11, adapted from Scarcella, 2003). While I have designed some of the activities in *Beyond Words* to accompany the target text, *Edge*, teachers from all content areas may adapt many of the strategies embedded in this approach. Rather than a series of prescribed lesson plans, *Beyond Words* advocates a way of thinking about facilitating students' academic language acquisition that assumes that learning is socially and linguistically mediated.

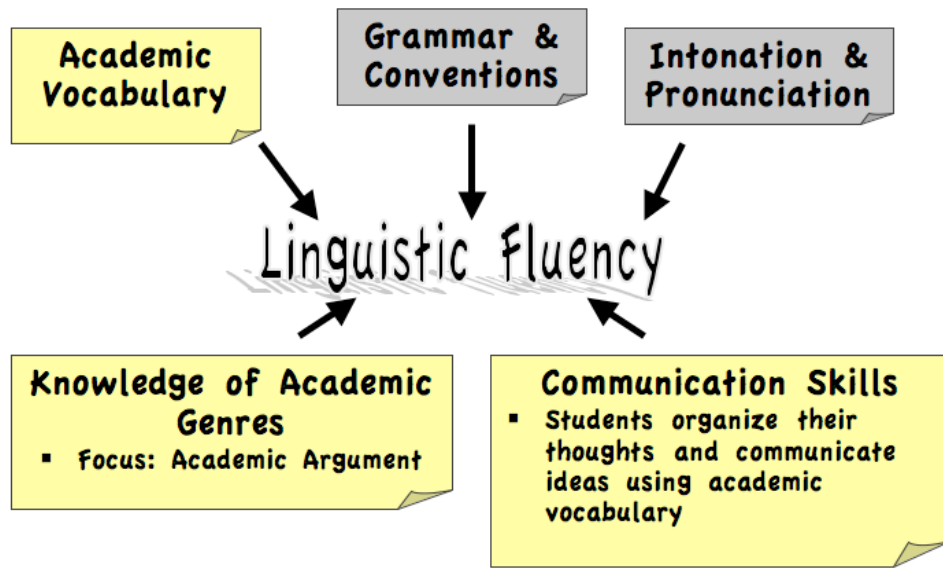


Figure 9. Targeted components of linguistic academic English fluency in the *Beyond Words* approach, highlighted in yellow.

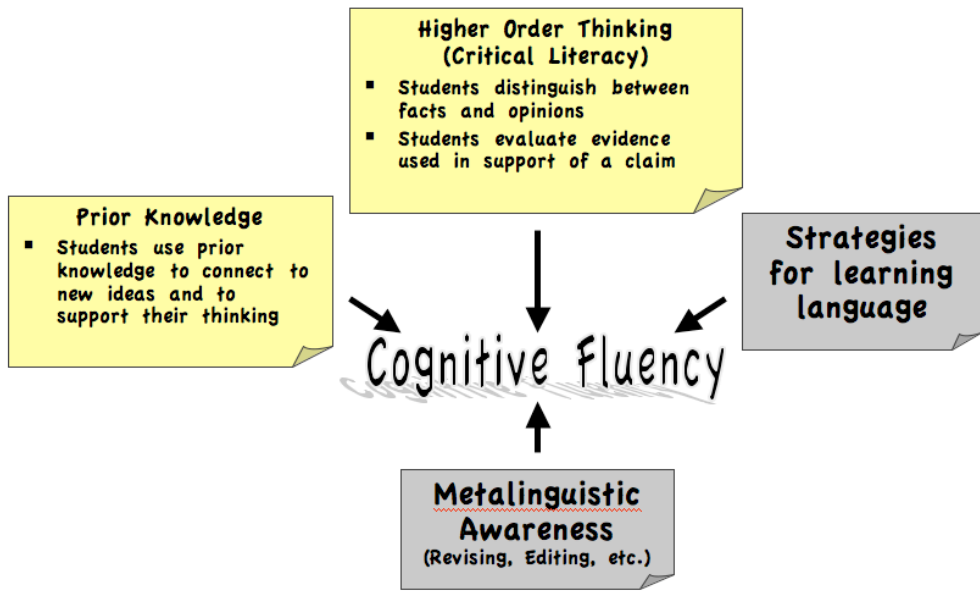


Figure 10. Targeted components of cognitive academic English fluency in the *Beyond Words* approach, highlighted in yellow.

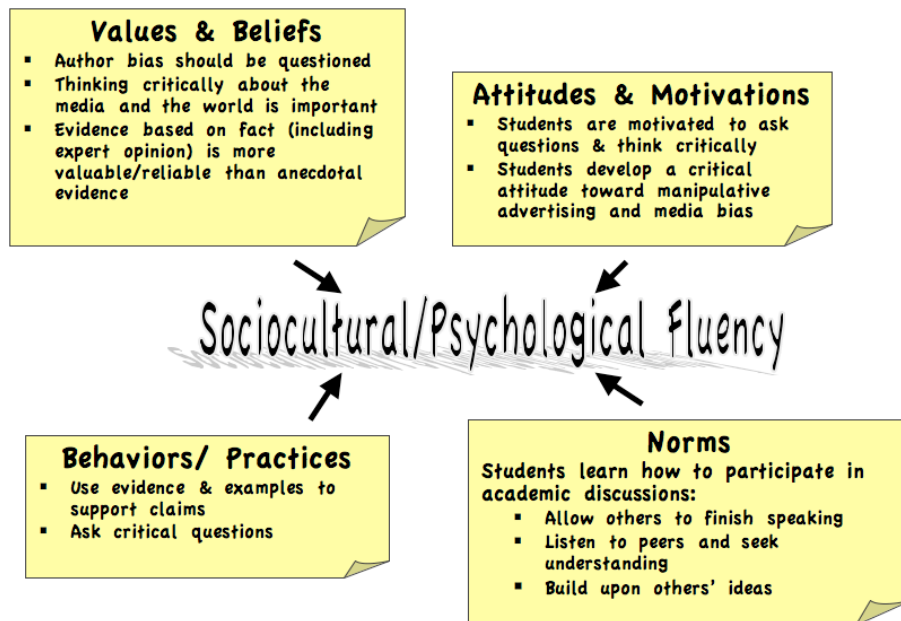


Figure 11. Targeted components of sociocultural/psychological academic English fluency in the *Beyond Words* approach, highlighted in yellow.

Beyond Words: Curricular Features

Explicit Academic Vocabulary Instruction

The first feature of *Beyond Words* targets students' academic vocabulary needs within the linguistic dimension. As Coxhead (2001) notes, direct teaching of academic vocabulary, including teacher explanations and opportunities for students to interact with the vocabulary in authentic settings, is key for students' success. In addition, teachers must foster what Scott and Nagy (2004) refer to as word consciousness, which allows students to negotiate the language of school and develop control over their language use. Exploring the complexity of academic vocabulary gives students the language they need to express and develop their critical thinking skills.

Beyond Words targets students' academic vocabulary needs by pre-teaching targeted words, providing models and sentence starters for proper use of the words, and

encouraging students' use of target words throughout the unit through scaffolding, discussion and challenging tasks.

Inquiry-Based Activities

According to Scarcella's (2003) framework, students' academic English literacy depends on knowledge of the world around them based on their experiences and their previous academic readings. Many EL students enter academic discussions under-prepared to make meaning of new ideas, mostly because they either do not possess the requisite knowledge, or they do not know how to connect what they do know to the new content. In order to make the language and concepts of academic argument real for students, and to connect them to the complex world of media criticism and literacy, the *Beyond Words* approach incorporates several inquiry-based activities that allow students to explore new topics, ask questions, and generate their own connections to the new information. For example, students work in pairs to make observations about deceptive advertising techniques, media portrayals of minorities, or to generate ideas about damaging stereotypes. Students bring to these activities their own experiences, using them to connect to new learning.

I've chosen to allow students to work in pairs for a number of reasons. First, I have observed that when students have a partner with whom they can discuss the topic at hand, they nearly always improve their understanding together, better than they typically would individually. Second, students have multiple and varied strengths and weaknesses in terms of their language acquisition. This enables all students to work within their Zones of Proximal Development (ZPDs), ensuring that they have the support of a more capable peer at least part of the time (Vygotsky, 1978). Because of their varied skills,

students have many opportunities to act as both a questioner and a leader. I have observed that often students move fluidly between these roles so that their learning becomes truly cooperative and interdependent. Finally, encouraging students to work in pairs ensures that students have at least one other perspective to consider. Since a crucial trait of a skilled critical thinker is the ability to entertain and understand multiple perspectives, partner work encourages students to develop this trait in cooperation with one another.

After each inquiry-based activity, students bring their observations and questions to the small group rotation, where the teacher facilitates Instructional Conversations (Dalton & Tharp, 2002) designed to help students connect their new and prior knowledge to the texts, master key vocabulary, and develop their critical thinking skills.

Instructional Conversations

As described earlier, Scholastic's *Read 180* Program (Hasselbring, Feldman, & Kinsella, 2005) employs an instructional routine that includes three 20-minute rotations in which students either work on the *Read 180* software program, read silently from high interest fiction or non-fiction books, or sit in a small group with the teacher to discuss the content. Continuing with this basic structure, *Beyond Words* seeks to engage students in small group discussions regarding the targeted goals and the essential question for the unit: How do the media shape the way we think? Small group discussions are scheduled strategically so that students have the opportunity to access their prior knowledge and improve their understanding of the unit vocabulary, and then bring their questions and observations to the small group setting.

The model for the small groups in the *Beyond Words* approach stems from Dalton and Tharp's (2002) description of Instructional Conversation (IC) (see Figure 12), in which

Teachers may work on a unit or thematic topic with the whole class, followed by Small Group ICs that focus on researching and analyzing selected aspects of the large group topic. Teachers combine ordinary conversations' responsive and inclusive features with assessment and assistance to help engage students and stimulate their learning. While any good conversation requires some latitude and drift in the topic, the teacher's leadership is used to focus on the instructional goal. While the teacher holds the goal firmly in mind, the route to the goal is responsive to student participation and developing understanding. (p. 191).

The ongoing assessment component of ICs allows the teacher to make adjustments to the rest of the curriculum, providing additional scaffolding or more challenging tasks, as needed based on student performance. Assessment also enables the teacher to ensure that the focused conversation addresses students' needs within their Zones of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978). The relaxed, conversational tone lowers the students' anxiety levels so that all students feel comfortable asking questions, expressing confusion, and taking risks with their thinking. The instructional goals help teachers facilitate students' understandings, enabling students to contextualize new information, making meaning of new concepts within their understandings of the world (Yamauchi, 2005). In short, ICs support students in their learning so that over time, they will engage in academic dialogue without teacher support, in conversation with their peers and in their interactions with written texts (Wells & Haneda, 2005).

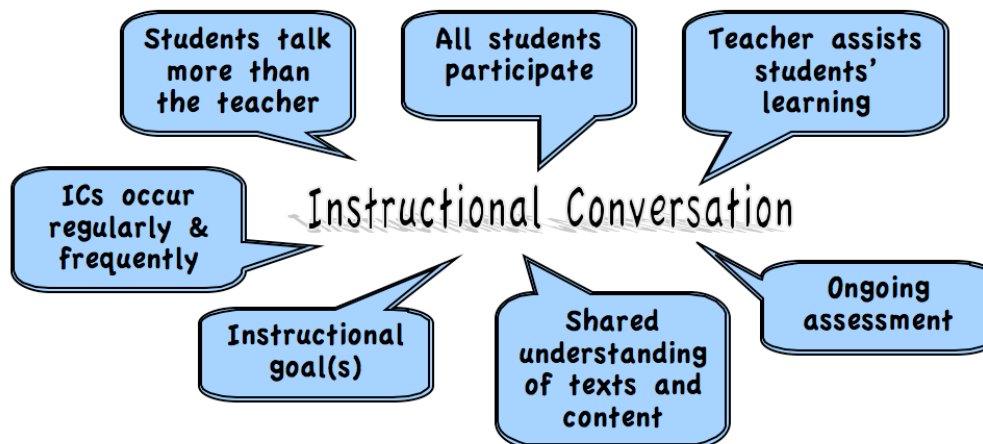


Figure 12. Features of Instructional Conversation, as described by Dalton & Tharp (2002).

Challenging Tasks

The final feature of the *Beyond Words* curriculum includes challenging tasks designed to promote students' thinking beyond the text, engage in consideration of complex issues, and internalize the target vocabulary and critical thinking skills. Students work in small groups to complete tasks in which they use the texts to support their thinking, create solutions for social problems, and evaluate evidence in support of authors' claims. Working in small groups provides students with the opportunity to build on the same skills of negotiation, cooperation and critical thinking that working in pairs provides. With small groups, however, students must negotiate multiple perspectives and attitudes. Negotiating meaning becomes more challenging, as all voices must be heard. These focused, challenging activities enrich students' understanding of the concepts in the texts and provide students with the opportunity to work cooperatively to apply what they are learning in meaningful ways.

For the challenging tasks in *Beyond Words*, students must consider and use the target vocabulary for the unit, such as *racism*, *influence*, *stereotype* and *convince*. By creating their own arguments, students gain a realistic, real-world understanding of the deeper meaning behind each of these words. They must go beyond simply identifying a stereotype, for example, to defining it, citing examples of it in the real world, and creating an argument to combat its use in the media. Students use evidence to support their claims, working together to evaluate and select appropriate facts and expert opinions to bolster their arguments. During this process, students work toward internalizing their academic vocabulary knowledge, as well as their critical literacy skills.

Conclusion

Rather than a series of specific lesson plans, the *Beyond Words* approach advocates a view of language and content area instruction that takes into account all dimensions of academic English. Explicit vocabulary instruction, inquiry-based activities, small group Instructional Conversations and challenging tasks all engage students in the active practice of developing their critical thinking skills alongside their language skills. Such an approach could easily be modified or adapted to any content area, as students in all subjects need to master skills within all three dimensions of academic English if they are to achieve academic success.

VI. Implementation

As is often the case with teaching English Learners, detailed plans I make in advance change dramatically once I begin implementing those plans with students. This is especially true when I am using material with students that I have not used previously. The implementation of *Beyond Words* proved no different. While the core features outlined in Chapter V remained the same, the daily plan I created in advance looked quite different from at the culmination of the unit. The continual assessment I conducted during the small group Instructional Conversations enabled me to modify the activities to meet students' needs. Making these changes, while keeping to the *Beyond Words* framework, proved far more effective than using the curriculum I'd planned in advance. My students have taught me that my assumptions can only take me, and them, so far. I must engage with them in a partnership that forces me to transform my approach as they develop new skills and transform their understanding of new ideas. This chapter outlines the somewhat circuitous route I took toward engaging my students in critical thinking, using their understandings and misunderstandings as my guide.

Implementation Setting

The School

Beyond Words was implemented in a large, suburban high school in Coastal San Diego County. Coastal Community High School (CCHS) enrolls approximately 2,500 students, about 6% of whom are classified as English Learners (ELs). The school provides a comprehensive English Language Development (ELD) program, complete with a number of content-area sheltered classes, which are designed to meet the needs of ELs. The school operates on a rotating block schedule, each class meeting every other

day for two hours, with three classes meeting in a single day. All ELD classes at CCHS are two periods long, so students meet for two hours daily, rather than every other day like most of the other classes.

The Classroom

Beyond Words was implemented in an Advanced English Language Development (ELD) class over a six-week period during the spring semester. The students in the class, enrolled in grades 9-12, were mostly classified as “Early Advanced” on the California English Language Development Test (CELDT) scale, according to students’ records. Typically, once ELD students reach “advanced” on the CELDT, the school promotes them to non-sheltered classes until they are redesignated as fluent English speakers. Therefore, this class marks the students’ last English support class before they enter mainstream classes. In this implementation, sixteen students enrolled in the class: one native Japanese speaker and fifteen native Spanish speakers.

Students’ Prior Instruction. At the time this curriculum was implemented, students had grown accustomed to a daily routine, which I generally followed during this study (see Figure 13). For the first 45-60 minutes of each two-hour block period, instruction took place as a whole class. During this time students completed short introductory warm-up exercises, received direct instruction regarding vocabulary or other content, and worked in pairs or small groups to complete assignments. Students kept a warm-up journal in class with them at all times that they used for short writing activities other brainstorming tasks. After whole group instruction, students entered a series of three rotations that lasted approximately 20 minutes each. The three stations that students visited during rotations included silent reading, in which students read a book of their

choice; *Read 180*, the computer-based reading intervention program, and small group Instructional Conversations (ICs) in which students sat with me at a U-shaped table for focused instruction. The bulk of the *Beyond Words* curriculum took place during whole group instruction and small-group rotations. On occasion, I modified the daily routine to accommodate certain activities. I will elaborate on those modifications where appropriate.

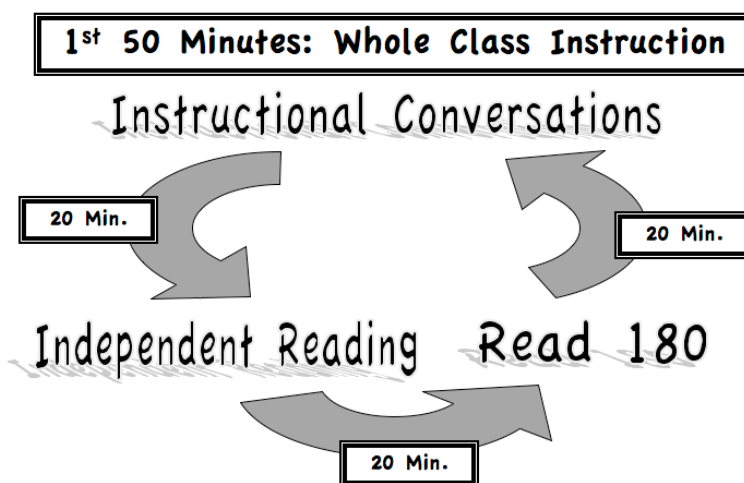


Figure 13. Instructional routine used during the *Beyond Words* implementation.

During the fall semester, students were engaged primarily with Scholastic's *Read 180* Program. Students used the interactive "rBook" as the core text, while also reading books of their choice independently during the silent reading rotation. Learning academic vocabulary played a key role in the culture of our classroom. During the fall, for example, students learned approximately 50 academic vocabulary words embedded in the "rBook," as well as several others outside the text. A number of the academic vocabulary instructional routines that students learned throughout the year were also used during this implementation and are detailed in the Appendix. Finally, students completed

several highly scaffolded process writing pieces in which they used academic language to craft complex theses and support them with text-based evidence and explanations. In short, students in this class were familiar with the importance of and various methods to learn academic vocabulary. What distinguishes this study from students' previous learning is the addition of targeted small group discussion and inquiry-based activities, as well as the explicit emphasis on critical thinking skills through academic vocabulary acquisition, as outlined in Chapter V.

The Focus Text: Hampton Brown's Edge

Hampton Brown's *Edge*, described in detail in Chapter IV, served as the focus text for this curriculum. As teachers may notice with many content-area textbooks, I found that *Edge* was written at a reading level somewhat above that of most of the students in this class. In fact, the units in *Edge* become increasingly more challenging as students move through the text, allowing students to develop their reading skills incrementally. When I examined the text prior to implementation, the media literacy unit seemed most promising as a focus for this study. I knew that the texts would prove challenging and engaging for the students, as would the academic vocabulary and concepts embedded within the texts. Thus, the first unit my students encountered in their new textbooks ended up being among the most challenging in the entire book. Knowing that my students would enter mostly non-sheltered courses the following year, I chose a unit within *Edge* text that I knew would engage my students linguistically, cognitively and socioculturally. I also sought to develop a curricular approach that would prepare students for future classes, while also providing guidance for other teachers seeking to adapt similarly difficult texts for their students.

The units in *Edge* are organized into three sections, or clusters, that include texts chosen to coincide with a common unit theme. Each thematic cluster links back to an essential question, which for this unit was “How do the Media Shape the Way We Think?” The first cluster in the focus unit, entitled “Ad Power,” includes articles that examine the role of advertising in our culture. The articles provide background information on the language of advertising, for example *slogans* and *logos*, as well as opportunities for students to consider the role advertising plays in their own lives (Moore, Short, Smith, & Tatum, 2007a). The second cluster, entitled “A Long Way to Go: Minorities and the Media,” contains articles that examine the history of minority representation and participation in various media categories, including television and movies. The cluster articles provide some background information regarding the language of representation, such as *stereotype* and *racism*, as well as opportunities to consider both the role of minorities in shaping the media messages as well as the role of the media in shaping our impressions of minorities in our culture. The final cluster, entitled “What is News,” contains articles that examine the role that news organizations play in shaping our understanding of the world. This cluster provides some background information regarding the language of news reporting, for example the difference between *objective* versus *biased* coverage, as well as opportunities for students to detect and critique bias in the news.

This project focused on the first two clusters for several reasons. First, I found the link between advertising and minority representation in the media to be particularly fruitful for discussion. Students were able to use their prior knowledge of each topic to make connections with the new language and concepts. I also found that the final

cluster, which focused primarily on the news media, could have easily stood alone and required a great of additional time, activities and background building. As many content teachers do when teaching English Learners, I chose to sacrifice coverage for depth, in this case covering two thirds of the unit in favor of more critical analysis of those concepts.

Beyond Words: Activity Sequence

The implementation of the *Beyond Words* curriculum unfolded in four parts. For the first two weeks, I worked with students to access their prior knowledge and build new knowledge in anticipation of reading the texts. In Part Two, lasting about another week, students read the selections from Cluster One, exploring the role advertising plays in society. In Part Three, lasting approximately two weeks, students read the selections from Cluster Two. Embedded within this unit were several exploratory activities designed for students to access their prior knowledge about the issues in that cluster and to apply their learning thus far in the unit to new critical thinking activities. Finally, the unit ended with a culminating class discussion that also served as a final assessment of students' progress during the six weeks. During this implementation, students were also engaged in other, unrelated activities, such as preparing for the California High School Exit Exam, which extended the total implementation time to six weeks, from beginning to end.

Part One: Accessing & Building Students' Prior Knowledge

Before students began reading from the text, I wanted to ensure that they had available to them a wealth of recent experiences as well as ready access to their prior

knowledge about the issues raised in the unit. The activities during the first two weeks centered on this purpose.

Day 1. Students entered the classroom, excited to dive into their new texts. Before reading, I introduced to the texts through a brief inquiry-based activity. As I handed the new textbooks out to the students, I asked them to look through the book to find a “cool” picture, poem or other text feature to share with a partner. After five minutes, I asked students to share their discoveries with their peers, and then with the entire class. We spent about 30 minutes talking about the text as a class. Thrilled, I saw that students were already asking questions, making connections with their own experiences, and anticipating our next unit.

I then directed students to the photo at the beginning of our chosen unit (Moore, et al., 2007a, p. 487). The photo showed man sitting in a chair opposite a giant collection of television screens that include such images as a man with a guitar, an Egyptian statue, an atom, a canopy of palm trees, and an announcement for “4 News at 10.” I asked students to look at each of the pictures, and respond to the following prompt in their warm-up journals using the following sentence starter:

“How might each picture influence the man’s thinking?”

“The picture of _____ might influence the man’s opinion by _____.”

This prompt is a variation on a suggestion in this unit of the text that prompts the teacher to ask a similar version of the first question, but does not suggest how students should respond, or in what manner. Since *influence* was a new word for students that would have been addressed until later in the unit, I wrote it on the board and proceeded to teach the word to students using an explicit vocabulary teaching routine developed by Kinsella (see

Appendix). Students then took about five minutes to examine the pictures, discuss their observations with partners, and write down a few responses using the sentence starter. I then had the students share their responses using the Idea Wave strategy, also developed by Kinsella (Hasselbring, Feldman, & Kinsella, 2005, p. T78). Students provided diverse, yet tentative, responses focusing on the image of the man with the guitar. Students commented that music has a profound impact on their lives.

Knowing that the first cluster of the unit addresses advertising, I sought to give students the opportunity to explore advertising in an engaging way. The online resources for *Edge* include a reference to the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's PBS Kids website for students entitled "Don't Buy It: Get Media Smart!" (2004). The website provides an advertising page that allows students to design their own cereal box, examine advertisements, and detect hidden or subliminal advertising in the public arena. I asked students to choose a partner who was not in their grade level (see Appendix for considerations when pairing students or creating small groups), proceed to a computer, and simply explore the website. I also projected the website onto the large screen and showed students all the different activities I wanted them to try. I then circulated the room while students explored the site, taking note of their questions and reactions. Maintaining the focus on inquiry, I did not want this activity to be difficult, or to include any kind of busywork or note taking. Rather, I wanted students to feel free to explore the site with a friend.

During my observations I noted that all students were engaged, and several students found the site quite amusing. Most students were completely "grossed out" by the section on advertising for food; it includes details about the chemicals and techniques

used to make food appealing on camera. I also heard a number of students mention their favorite cereals and restaurants. After about 20 minutes, we entered our daily rotations, proceeding to each of three small-group Instructional Conversations (ICs).

During the ICs, we discussed students' experiences with the website and with advertising in their own lives. I asked students about how advertising influences them, and about what surprised them when viewing the advertising tricks of the trade. Most students were initially surprised when they realized the amount of deception that advertisers use to sell products, but upon further discussion students realized that they just hadn't really stopped to think about it before. This point became a touchstone for the entire unit, as students later came back to their previous assumptions, or lack of awareness, about the impact of advertising on our culture. In addition, during our conversations some students pointed to each other and remarked on others' brand name clothes, discussing why they felt they should purchase brands. One student remarked, "I don't know, I just like it," while another boy admitted to having an affinity for VANS shoes, though he couldn't state a reason. Each of the three small group discussions took on a different character, but all involved active conversation, sharing, laughter and even some statements of shock or dismay at the prevalence of deception in advertising. I was pleased that the students already appeared engaged and excited about the coming unit.

Day 2. On the second day of the unit, students entered the classroom to see a prompt on the big screen asking them to think about the following propositions (see Appendix):

"Television is always teaching something," or

"Television is NOT always teaching something."


As with the previous activity, I took a suggestion in the text to hold a complex jigsaw discussion (Moore, et al., 2007a, p. 486) and modified it to fit my students' needs, focusing on engaging students in inquiry and discussion. I first asked students to choose which sentence on the board they agreed with, writing for five minutes supporting their opinions. Students had to generate at least three reasons to support their thinking. I intentionally chose these two statements because they are stark in their contrast, providing students with the opportunity to easily support their views with examples from their own experiences.

After five minutes, I then asked students walk to the side of the room that represented their opinion. About one third of the students proceeded to the "Television is always teaching something" side, while the remaining students chose the opposite opinion. I informed students that they could change sides at anytime during the discussion, encouraging them to be open to changing their minds. Starting with the smaller group, I asked each student to express his or her viewpoint. When all students had spoken, I proceeded to the larger group. After all students had shared, I then opened up the discussion to the entire class.

Students were generally reluctant to share their opinions at the beginning of the discussion. As on Day One, students' reticence did not surprise me in that they were new to academic discussion in this context. A few of the more generally verbal students dominated the conversation, with several long pauses between comments. I interjected several times to prompt students to respond to each other, asking open-ended questions and suggesting possible television programs to consider. A few lively exchanges ensued, especially regarding the idea that television always has a message or a point. Two

students did change sides, both moving from the television “is not always” teaching something to the opposite group, citing persuasive comments on the part of other students as the reason they changed positions. The discussion lasted about twenty minutes. During the follow up IC we debriefed the whole group discussion, discussing surprising and thoughtful points that students had made.

Day 3. The purpose of the activities on the third day was to introduce students to the concept of *media* as it would be used in the unit, building their prior knowledge about an idea that would be central to the unit. To start the class period, students worked in pairs on the “Thinking about Culture” activity in which they explored the types of media and their impact on people in general, and young people specifically. They answered four sentence starters (see Figure 14), working together to record their responses in their warm-up journals. Students considered how different types of media influence young people, providing examples to support their thinking and using the target academic vocabulary words *media* and *influence* in their responses. Students then shared their responses with the class using the Idea Wave reporting strategy (see Appendix).



Thinking about culture...

- With a partner, discuss and write responses to the following ideas:
 - Some types of **media** are...
 - The media **influences** people's thinking because...
 - The main types of **media** that young people prefer are...
 - The media's **influence** on young people is _____. For example...

Figure 14. Sentence starters for the Thinking About Culture activity on Day Three.

During the ensuing class discussion, students identified five major types of media as exerting influence over teenagers, including television, the Internet, music, news and movies. I quickly wrote each of those categories down on pieces of sticky butcher paper and posted them around the room. I then gave students directions for the next activity, a “Media Gallery Walk” (see Figure 15 and the Appendix). I asked students to proceed to one of the five posters, taking a marker with them. At each poster, students responded to the prompts in Figure 15.



Media Gallery Walk

- Around the room are posters with different types of media that you identified.
- At each poster, write words & sentences that come to mind when you think about that type of media. Think about:
 - How does this type of media impact your decisions?
 - What characteristics does this type of media have? What are some possible **positive** or **negative** issues with this type of media?
 - What audience(s) does this type of media target? How?

Figure 15. Instructions for the Media Gallery Walk activity on Day Three.

Initially, I intended students to participate silently, thinking this would allow them to share their thoughts without being influenced by others. The inability to ask questions of their peers frustrated the students, however, so I changed the directions to allow students to collaborate with their peers. At first, students resisted writing responses that they felt were not “correct,” but speaking with their peers lowered their anxiety. I also reassured them that there were no wrong answers, and that our purpose was simply to start thinking about these issues. After several minutes, I asked the students to rotate to the next poster, adding unique responses to those already posted.

After the Gallery Walk, I hung the posters behind the U-shaped table we use for ICs, as shown in see Figure 16. During the follow-up ICs, students remarked that many of the comments on the posters claimed that the media exert a negative influence on young people especially. Students also noticed that, according to the posters, magazines and the Internet magazines target younger audiences, while the news media target adult audiences. Finally, students repeatedly remarked that money plays a powerful role in the

media, which sparked further conversation about commercials and how they are created and paid for. I provided students with some background information about how companies calculate television ratings, explaining the relationship between ratings and advertising dollars. Students commented on the relative effectiveness of Super Bowl commercials, for example, generally favoring humorous advertisements over others.

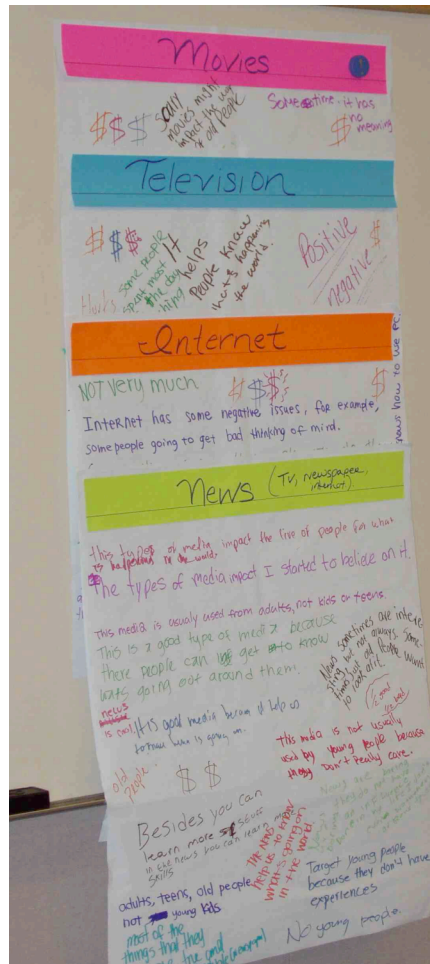


Figure 16. Students' responses to the Media Gallery Walk activity on Day Three.

Day 4. Within the overall goal of improving students' critical thinking, two of the curricular goals of this unit were for students to be able to distinguish between fact and opinion within a text and to evaluate the reliability of evidence used in support of a claim.

To introduce students to these skills and to the issues they would encounter in the articles, I asked students to create a “Making Connections” map (see Appendix) using some statistics about media consumption provided in the text (Moore, et al., 2007a, p. 488).

First, students examined and discussed various statistics about television in the United States, as shown in Figure _____. Providing a model (see Appendix), I asked students to create a visual “map” that described how the statistics might relate to each other. I also provided students with a word bank of academic vocabulary words they should use to express their thinking, including *indicate*, *demonstrate*, *imply*, *suggest*, *highlight*, *imply*, *cause* and *explain*. Students had learned these words previously during the year.

Television in the United States

Number of thirty-second **commercials** the average American teen sees each year: 20,000

Number of **dollars** American teens spend each year: 175 billion

Number of **violent crimes** the average American sees on TV by age 18: 200,000

Number of **arrests** of Americans under 18 for violent crimes in 2005: 66,748

Number of hours the average American spends **watching TV** each year: 1,745

Number of hours an American teen **attends school** each year: 900

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau *Statistical Abstract*, Tables 1116 and 1117; Norman Herr, *Sourcebook for Teaching Science*, 2001; U.S. Department of Justice, *Statistical Briefing Book*, 2003; Lueg, J.E. and Ponder, N. (2006) "Understanding the Socialization Process of Teen Consumers Across Shopping Channels," *International Journal of Electronic Marketing and Retailing*, Vol., 1, No. 1, pp. 83-97; www.fbi.gov.

Figure 17. Statistics students evaluated for the Making Connections activity on Day Four.

This activity was the first “challenging task” of the unit. It required students to evaluate a given set of data, make comparisons and connections between those data, and express their understandings both in writing and with images. Because of the high degree

of challenge, students asked numerous questions about how to describe the relationship between the facts, which required a great deal of intervention on my part. For example, I clarified for several students the difference between a cause and a correlation, which helped students more accurately describe their observations.

After students finished their maps, we discussed their progress during the ICs. During our group discussions students questioned the relationship between the amount of violent television teenagers watch and the number of violent crimes committed by teenagers. They expressed skepticism about a causal relationship between these two statistics. When we discussed the fact that teens spend 1,745 hours watching television and only 900 hours attending school each year, students asserted that it felt like they were in school many more hours. Students began to make the connection between media exposure and teens' habits and behaviors. A few students commented that the media exerts a much larger influence on teens than they had previously considered. This proved an important realization, as our next step would be to consider how the media exerts influence over its audiences.

Day 5. Using the vocabulary teaching routine detailed in the Appendix, on Day Five I introduced students to the target vocabulary words for Cluster 1, as listed in Figure 18. During the IC for the day, we read several short excerpts from the articles in the unit, discussing the issues and themes that we would encounter in the texts (Moore, et al., 2007a, p. 490). This pre-reading strategy enabled students to connect the work they had completed during the previous inquiry-based activities to the texts, focusing on the role advertising plays in influencing teenagers' decisions. I also reminded students of our principal objective of the unit—to engage in critical thinking. We discussed what it

means to think critically, noting that it doesn't involve criticizing a person, but rather questioning and critiquing a person's argument.

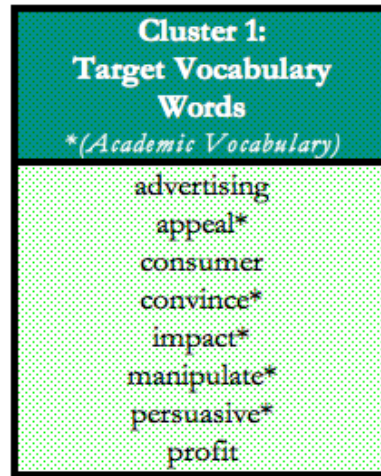


Figure 18. Target vocabulary words for Cluster 1.

Day 6. On Day Six I introduced students to the different types of argument, including appeals to logic, ethics and emotion, using the vocabulary teaching routine detailed in the Appendix. For the first step, I provided students with direct instruction regarding the different types of argument. Students used a graphic organizer (see Appendix) to take notes from my lecture and Power Point slides. After the 15-minute lecture, students then read the portion of the text that describes these same types of argument (Moore, et al., 2007a, p. 492), expanding our discussion to include the types of evidence used to support academic arguments, including facts, statistics, quotations, expert opinions and personal memoirs.

Next, I read aloud an excerpt from the main article (p. 493) using the Oral Cloze reading routine (Hasselbring, Feldman, & Kinsella, 2005, p. T74; also see Appendix). The excerpt, entitled "It's Not TV's Fault," is a letter from a television station owner who argues against limiting the amount of violence allowed on television. The teacher's

edition instructs students to talk with a partner and identify the author’s argument, determine whether the author appeals to logic, ethics or emotion, and to question whether “it matters who the author is” (p. 493). I expanded this suggestion, creating a graphic organizer, shown in Figure 19, for students to record their thinking, enabling students to focus on the most important information. Working with a partner, students worked to analyze this short text, recording their answers using the sentence starters provided in their handouts. While students worked, I circulated, clarifying the definitions of *appeal* and *ethics* in particular. Students worked for about 30 minutes before we entered rotations.

"It's Not TV's Fault"	
What is the author's argument ?	<i>The author is arguing that...</i>
How does the author appeal to the reader's sense of logic ?	The author appeals to the reader's sense of logic by...
How does the author appeal to the reader's sense of ethics ?	The author appeals to the reader's sense of ethics by...
How does the author appeal to the reader's emotions ?	The author appeals to the reader's sense of logic by...

Figure 19. Portion of the graphic organizer provided to students on Day Six.

During the ICs, I helped students consider the author’s position as a television station owner and evaluate the evidence he provided in support of his claims. Students noted the popularity of violence on television, noting that station owners likely earn a

great deal of money from the commercials they sell to air with violent programming. Students also placed a high degree of responsibility on parents to monitor their children's television viewing. Many students remarked that their parents pay close attention to their television watching habits, but they also recognized that parents of other students likely do not. Without prompting from me, students referred to the statistics about teen television watching behaviors discussed previously. In order to give students more practice evaluating arguments for logical, ethical and emotional appeals, I extended this lesson the next class period.

Day 7. On Day Seven, students extended their learning regarding the language of academic argument by analyzing a visual text, in this case a magazine advertisement. First, I modeled what such an analysis looks like. Using a document camera, I projected the image of a McDonald's advertisement (2006), as shown in Figure 20. The following advertising copy appeared on the ad:

my music: strictly r&b
my style: urban chic
my dreams: big
my voice: loud & clear
my opinions: strong
my salad: whatever I'm in the mood for

I'm a woman of many moods. And no matter what, McDonald's always has just the salad to suit my taste.



Figure 20. Magazine advertisement for analysis exercise on Day Seven.

Given that I had obtained the advertisement from *O Magazine* (2006), we discussed the likely target audience for the piece, namely young women or, as one boy put it, “ladies who don’t want to be fat.” While referring to students’ notes on *ethics*, *logic* and *emotion*, I asked students dozens of questions about the advertisement. For example, I asked: What colors were used? How attractive is the woman? How old do you think she is? What does the text say? Where is the text located? Why did the advertisers choose this particular woman? What is the message of the advertisement? We also discussed how the message appealed to the logic, ethics and emotions of the audience. Finally, I modeled the next step by taking notes using the same graphic organizer students would use.

Students made astute observations, noting the woman’s “natural” make-up, which they thought matched the “eat healthy” message of the advertisement. They also thought McDonald’s tried to counter their image as an unhealthy fast food restaurant, but they questioned the motives of the company. Students speculated that McDonald’s designed

the “healthy” advertisement to attract women to the restaurant, but when customers smelled the French fries, they would likely buy additional, less-healthy products. Students enjoyed inferring potential hidden meaning from the advertisement.

Once students possessed a solid grasp of what critiquing an advertisement looked like, students performed another Gallery Walk in small groups. I placed posters around the room with various advertisements attached to them. I then asked students to walk around the room with their teams, looking for advertisements that used appeals to logic, ethics, and emotion. Students recorded their observations using the same graphic organizer that contained their notes (see Appendix). I encouraged students to work with their teams to analyze the advertisements.

During the subsequent ICs, I asked each student to share at least one observation, using the academic language in the graphic organizer. To clarify students’ confusions regarding ethical appeals, we examined an advertisement that included three star basketball players. This helped students understand that advertisers use spokespeople to gain the trust of the audience. During our discussion several students provided creative interpretations of the hidden meanings in the various advertisements, feeling empowered by their new ability to identify the strategies advertisers use to sell products.

Day 8. On the eighth day I extended our previous day’s discussion regarding advertisers’ appeals to consumers. Returning to the unit vocabulary that students had learned on Day Five (see Figure 18), I encouraged students to use words in an academic context that was now more familiar to them. I arranged students into mixed-ability groups of three, paying particular attention to their skills and current understanding of these issues. I then gave each group one of the advertisements they had seen briefly on

the previous day. Each group was to create a poster identifying the purpose of the advertisement as well as its tools of manipulation (see Appendix). Student samples are displayed in Figures 21 and 22.

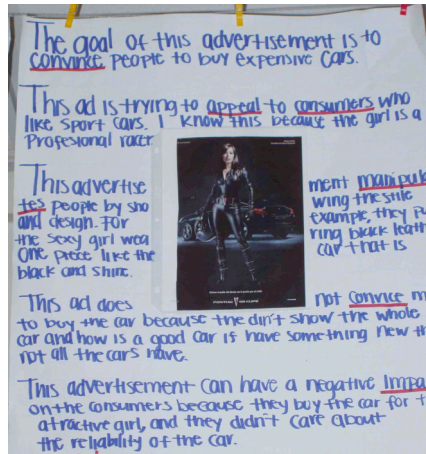


Figure 21. Sample student analysis of an advertisement using academic vocabulary.

All students were engaged and worked diligently to ensure their sentences were grammatically correct. Knowing that their posters would be displayed around the room for a public audience provided extra incentive to complete quality work. Some students were persuaded by the advertisements, while others remained unconvinced of the claims. While students used the target words correctly, some confusion arose over the word *manipulate*; I made a note to address this word during the next lesson. This activity took students over an hour to complete, but the well-spent time helped them internalize the unit vocabulary and make connections between their experiences with advertising and the issues in the unit.

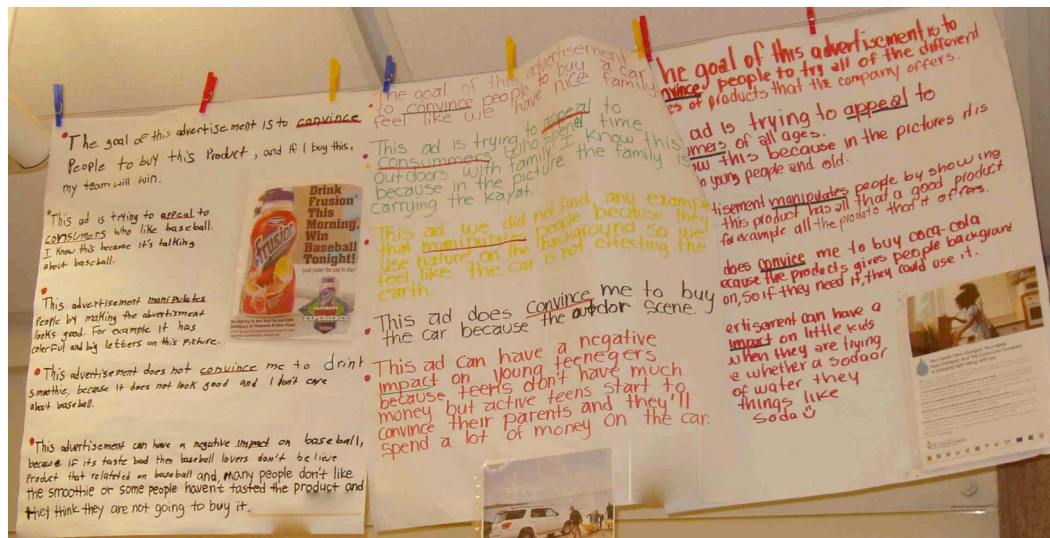


Figure 22. Sample student analyses of advertisements using academic vocabulary.

Day 9: The next day, students presented their posters to the class. Based on my observations from the day before, I clarified the meaning of *manipulate*, noting that *manipulation* is mostly a negative act designed to persuade by deceiving or hiding the facts. We discussed several examples and non-examples of *manipulation*, noting that simply trying to convince someone of something does not necessarily require *manipulation*.

During the follow-up ICs, we read aloud and discussed an excerpt from and the introduction to the main article in the cluster (Moore et al., 2007a, p. 4965). I specifically emphasized the idea of *synthesis*, as this word would be a focus of our reading of the main text for this cluster. We also discussed the author's use of facts to support her thinking. In the text, the author asserts, "some experts estimate that a young person growing up in North America is likely to see between 20,000 and 40,000 TV commercials every year." A few students immediately trusted this piece of evidence because "it's numbers," while others thought that the range between the low and high numbers was too large for it to

be reliable. Finally, students questioned the term “some experts,” noting that the author could either be making up the statistic or failing to cite unreliable experts.

Part Two: Reading and Analyzing Articles in Cluster 1

Students had spent the better part of two weeks learning about the language of academic argument and of advertising. They had engaged in critical thinking tasks using that language and had spent time building shared knowledge about these issues. Students were ready to read the text in guided fashion. The main objective for the next several lessons was to give students the opportunity to engage in a critical reading of an argument. They were to identify the writer’s claim, identify and evaluate the evidence presented, and finally draw their own conclusions from the text by synthesizing their ideas with the author. I guided students through this process, gradually giving them more independence as we moved through the article.

Day Ten. On Day Ten, we met as a whole class and revisited part of the text we had read the day before, entitled “Advergaming Reach Teens Online.” I first handed out a graphic organizer that I had created to accompany the text (see Figure 23), displaying a copy on the overhead projector. I then modeled how to respond to each of the prompts, making sure to point out my use of such academic descriptors as *explains*, *points out*, *emphasizes*, *remarks*, and others listed on students’ handouts. Students copied notes onto the graphic organizer from my presentation.

"Advergames" Reach Teens Online

What is the author's claim?	<i>The author is arguing that...</i>	<i>Instead of "says"</i> <i>explains points out emphasizes states remarks illustrates addresses highlights presents begins ends proposes answers discusses</i>
What evidence does the author use to support the argument?	<i>The author states that...</i>	
What experience do you have with this issue?		
Synthesize your idea with the writer's ideas. Draw a conclusion that makes a judgment, gives an opinion, or shows new understanding.		

Figure 23. Graphic organizer for Day Ten lesson.

We then proceeded to the main article entitled "Ad Power," which is divided into four sections. As a whole class, we read the first section (pp. 498-499), entitled "Advertising: You're Swimming In It," using the Oral Cloze strategy (see Appendix). I stopped periodically to check for students' understanding and to clarify idioms or other passages confusing to them. I then divided the students into pairs, making sure to pair a stronger student with one who needed more guidance. Students then worked collaboratively to re-read the text while completing another chart, exactly like the one I had modeled previously. When students finished, we continued the lesson with small-group ICs.

Day 11. The next day, students worked with their partners from the previous day to read the next section, entitled "Is Advertising Good for You?" This section is much shorter than the previous one and includes a number of discussion questions. I did not read the text aloud with students prior to their paired reading. Instead, I instructed

students to first read the text aloud to each other. Then, I asked students to re-read the text, and complete the next chart on their handout. This progression moved students toward greater independence while still providing the support of a peer collaborator.

During the ICs, we discussed their experiences reading the article, which addressed the conflicts that sometimes arise between children and parents over whether to buy healthy or sugary cereals. Students mentioned their utter confusion regarding a few phrases from the text, including “subject of debate,” “heavily-promoted sugary stuff,” and “no redeeming food value.” These terms, highlighted in bold text, were defined at the bottom of the page; I had falsely assumed that students would use these text supports during their reading. Only a few students had noticed the bolded words, however, so most students completely missed the message of the article, which implied that consumers make decisions about purchasing products “with their minds or hearts.” Given this confusion, I modified the lesson for the next day to call attention to the supports built into the *Edge* textbook.

Days 12 & 13: During the next two class periods, students read the third section, entitled “Slogans and Logos,” almost entirely independently. Given the confusion from the previous day, I first walked students through reading all of the supporting material in the text first, including defined terms, graphics, charts and text boxes. I then allowed students to read the rest of the text independently, checking in with a partner or with me if they had questions, while filling in the remaining graphic organizer (similar to the example in Figure 23). During the subsequent ICs, students expressed confusion regarding the terms *slogan* and *logo*, neither of which were explicitly defined in the text despite their appearing in the title of the article. Students who knew the terms provided

examples for the other students. We also examined our own clothing for sample logos, discussing what value, if any, logos contribute to clothing appeal. Further, we read the final section, entitled “How to Evaluate Ads Critically,” filling in the final chart together as a small group. Since students had been evaluating advertisements critically for the past two weeks, this section proved quite easy for them. It also allowed students to deepen and extend their thinking, comparing their new critical thinking skills with the suggestions provided in the article.

Once students had critically analyzed the entire text, students worked with a partner to complete the selection review activity in their practice workbooks (Moore, et al., 2007b, p. 218). This review asked students to locate examples of facts, statistics and expert opinions, and evaluate the reliability of the evidence they located. While they worked, I circulated and took notes on students’ questions and comments to their peers and to me. In general, students wrestled actively with the difference between a fact and an opinion. One student asked “What is the difference between data and statistics?” while one student approached me at least three times, pointing to sample sentences asking, “Is this a fact? Is this a fact?” Even though students had already read this article once before with support from their teacher, this second reading proved challenging for students. Re-reading the text helped them extend and deepen their critical reading skills, which would have been difficult for them on a first reading.

During the follow up ICs, several students made the distinction between agreeing with the author’s claim and trusting his or her evidence. Students started to understand the essence of critical thinking, specifically evaluating evidence independent of one’s own opinions and biases. Clearly moving between guided and independent work, as well as

reading the text multiple times, allowed students to ask for support if they needed it, while working toward greater mastery of reading the texts critically. I was pleased to see the evolution in their thinking over time.

Days 14 & 15: Students' improved critical reading skills grew apparent as we read the second article in the cluster, entitled "What's Wrong With Advertising," written by a former advertising executive. We read the entire article together in small groups so that I could assess students' understanding and continue to develop our shared understanding of the target vocabulary and key concepts. Since this article appears in full in students' consumable workbooks, we worked together to answer the guiding questions that accompany the text, all of which reinforced the key skills of analyzing the author's claim, evaluating evidence and drawing conclusions.

During our discussion we encountered a section describing subliminal advertising. I experienced difficulty explaining this concept to students without examples to show them. In an effort to make this concept clear for students, the next day during warm-up I showed students an example of subliminal advertising used during the 2004 presidential campaign (Museum of the Moving Image, 2004). I also showed students several other political advertisements, using them as a springboard for whole-group discussion about the tools and tricks that advertisers use to persuade voters. We revisited the three types of argument, including logical, ethical and emotional appeals, and identified components of each in the advertisements. Students expressed shock at some of the campaign tactics, asking whether it was legal to criticize a person using the methods employed in the advertisements, including making false and misleading statements about a person's background. Students also made connections with the current presidential campaign,

asking numerous questions about the candidates and their positions. Later in the unit, students referred to these campaign commercials to support their ideas.

Part Three: Reading and Analyzing Articles in Cluster 2

The second cluster in the unit, “A Long Way to Go: Minorities and the Media,” examined negative stereotyping in the media and its impact on public opinion. The target academic vocabulary words are displayed in Figure 18. Before reading the articles, students participated in an “Examining the Media” inquiry-based activity, as well as a challenging task (the “Avoiding Stereotypes” activity), both of which enabled students to engage their prior knowledge before reading the texts and to use their recently acquired skills of critical reading and analysis. For this section, I will describe the implementation of these two exploratory activities in greater detail, and summarize the other activities more briefly, as they were similar to the activities described in Part Two.



Figure 24. Target vocabulary words for Cluster 2.

Days 16-19: Before we read the first article in the cluster, entitled “A Long Way to Go: Minorities and the Media,” I wanted students to first examine the media,

recording their observations formally, before drawing any conclusions. For this activity, I divided students into pairs, assigning each pair to a computer. I then assigned to each pair of students an Internet network website to review, including ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, MTV, BET and TBS. To model the next step, I chose a television comedy show that I know students watch, *George Lopez*, and we discussed the show as a class. We addressed the setting of the show, the main characters, as well as the racial and ethnic background of the characters. Students noted that it was a comedy, that most of the characters were related to each other, and that the show was almost entirely cast with Chicano or Latino actors.

Next, students proceeded to their computers with the objective of browsing the descriptions for the main shows on their assigned network website. I asked them to record those observations on a graphic organizer (see Appendix), noting details about the types of shows and characters, paying particular attention to the racial and ethnic backgrounds of the actors. During the follow-up small group discussion, we examined students' observations, noting the similarities and differences between the networks and the popularity of certain types of shows, including reality and comedy shows. I avoided intervening too much or having students draw any specific conclusions, as this would be their objective for the next day.

When students entered class the following day, I asked them to pair up with their partners from the previous lesson. This time, I asked students to look for trends and patterns in their notes. Since *trends* was a new word for them, I first gave a mini-lecture on its meaning, using pictures and stories to make the word meaningful to students. I also put some possible sentence starters on the board that students could use in their

notes. This activity required students to examine their data, discuss any trends in their observations, and then draw conclusions about those observations. After students completed their analyses, we met in small groups to discuss their findings.

The next day, I introduced students to the vocabulary for Cluster 2, using the same teaching routines discussed in Part One (see Appendix). Students demonstrated difficulty with the word *stereotype* in particular, which would be a central focus of the unit's readings. To help students internalize this word, I designed an exploratory activity that would allow students to link their prior knowledge about this idea to the word itself.

When students entered class the following day, I asked students to complete a warm-up writing response on the following prompt:

Today I would like you to write about a time when you feel that you were discriminated against because of your language, your background, or your gender. What happened? What did it feel like? Why do you think it happened? How did you cope with it?

Students were familiar with the word *discrimination*, so I wanted to get them to connect that understanding with the new word, *stereotype*. After a brief class discussion regarding students' personal experiences, including an exploration of the differences between *racism* and *discrimination*, I asked students to work with a partner to read an excerpt from the main article printed in their consumable workbooks. The excerpt argues, "the media have a fascination with Latino gangs," and goes on to assert that a "stereotype" of Latinos has emerged "in which gangs are an important part" (Moore, et al., 2007b, p. 231). Students worked with their partners to answer some analytical questions about the text provided in their workbooks. Finally, we followed up with a whole-class discussion about the prevalence in the media of the stereotype of Mexican Americans as gang members, as well as other harmful stereotypes of minorities. Students engaged in a lively

discussion and easily found examples from their own lives to support their thinking. For example, they made an observation about the use of stereotypes in humor. Students felt that when a Latino person, like George Lopez, makes a joke about Latinos, it is funny, but if a White person makes the same joke it is “racist.”

After our class discussion, I showed the class a selection from the famous *Speedy Gonzales* cartoon (Dunn & Freleng, 1961) entitled “Mexican Boarders.” In the cartoon, Speedy, a bilingual fast-talking mouse, is trying to hide his slower, Spanish-speaking cousin Slow Poke, from the house cat, Sylvester. Similar to the “Examine the Media” activity in which students recorded their observations, I asked students to choose one of the main characters to observe, either Speedy Gonzalez or his cousin Slow Poke.

Students made observations regarding the characters’ speech and language, clothing and appearance, and their interactions with Sylvester. I played the six-minute cartoon twice, allowing students to enjoy it the first time, and analyze it the second time. After the film, students rewrote their observations using academic language. I then asked students to work with their partners to draw conclusions about each character based on their observations. Specifically, I asked them “how might the stereotypes represented by Speedy Gonzales and Slow Poke be harmful to Mexicans or Mexican Americans?” Finally, we spoke in small groups about students’ observations; I audio-recorded these discussions for research purposes.

During our small group discussions, students showed insight about the characters and their stereotypes. One student proposed that the cartoon was a “metaphor” for illegal immigration, with Slow Poke representing Mexican immigrants, and Sylvester the cat representing *la migra* (immigration authorities). He argued that the large net Sylvester

had erected to trap the mice represented the border between the United States and Mexico. Several other students commented that Slow Poke could represent a drug user, noting his shabby clothes, his slurred speech, and his constant hunger. In addition, Slow Poke sings the song *La Cucaracha*, which includes a reference to marijuana. I had never heard this reference before, but most of the Mexican students had, and they agreed that it was likely an allusion to drug trafficking. Once students looked critically at the cartoon that they had previously enjoyed watching, they realized that the characters of Speedy and Slow Poke were really crude stereotypes of Mexican people. Students were quite offended to think that these stereotypes were out there. In fact, *offended* was a vocabulary word students learned earlier in the year, and several students invoked it to describe their feelings in this situation. We then discussed the danger of stereotyping in the media and the impact it can have on audiences, especially when viewers do not think critically about what they see.

Days 20 & 21. During the next two days, students read the main article in this cluster, “Minorities and the Media: A Long Way to Go,” using similar whole group, small group and paired re-reading strategies as discussed in Part Two.

Days 22-25. After students read and re-read the main article from the previous two days, I wanted to provide them the opportunity to take what I sensed was a growing frustration with the media and channel it toward solutions. Over the next three days, students proposed their own solutions in the “Avoiding Stereotypes” activity (see Appendix). I divided students into small groups of three, giving each group a fictitious profile of a Hollywood actor who is looking for a job in movies or television. I had modeled the profiles after well-known actors and actresses. Students then had to first

identify stereotypical roles for which their actor would likely be chosen. I then asked them to review the “Minorities in the Media” article and to read the next article, “The Color Green,” to look for evidence to support their thinking. Students had not yet read the second article, so they had to read it together and discuss whether the author’s point was helpful to them. This added a challenging “research” dimension that encouraged students to negotiate their chosen evidence and evaluate it against their claims.

Initially, I asked students to create an advertising poster in which they gave five tips to actors for avoiding being “typecast” in certain roles. But as they worked, students advocated for changing their target audience to producers and executives, creating tips for them to incorporate more minorities into their shows. Based on students’ feedback, I reframed their guiding question to read, “How can actors and the media improve the way minorities are represented in the media?” In addition, I revisited the words *alternative* and *representation*, as these words were crucial ideas for their success on this project (see Figures 25 & 26). In essence, students proposed alternative ways for executives and producers to conduct business in order to improve the way minorities are represented in the media. Using pictures, textual evidence and academic language, students felt empowered to make meaningful suggestions for change. The next day, groups presented their posters to the class. See Figures 27 and 28 for examples of students’ posters.

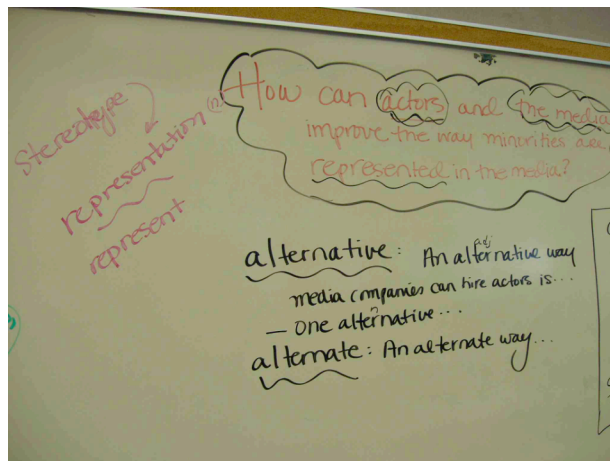


Figure 25. Notes written on the board during explanation of *alternative* for the Avoiding Stereotypes activity.

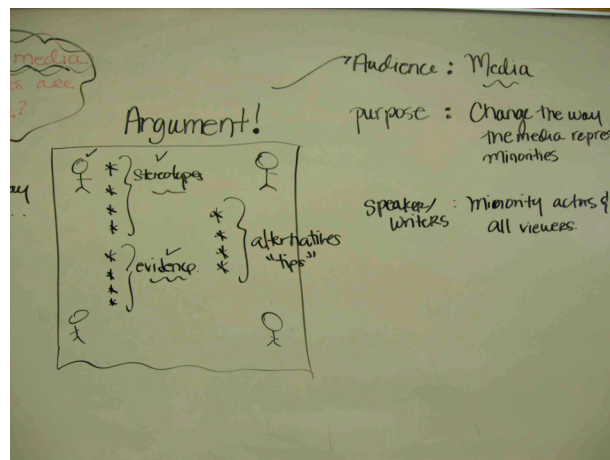


Figure 26. Notes written on the board during explanation of expectations for the Avoiding Stereotypes activity.

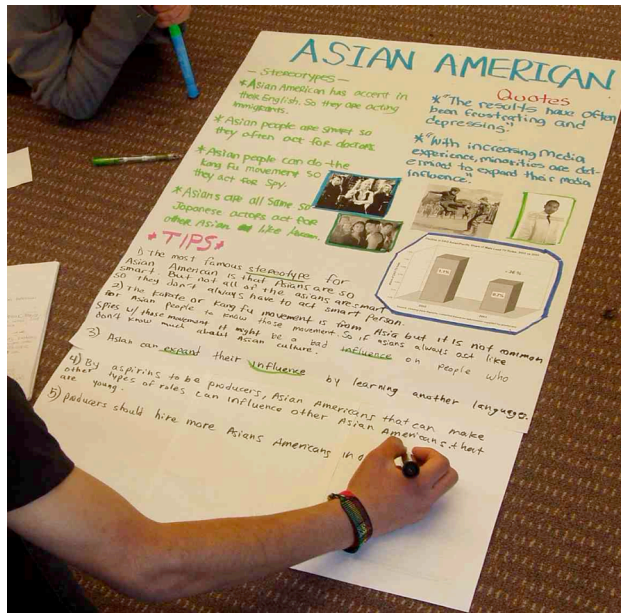


Figure 27. Student poster exploring stereotypes of Asian Americans.

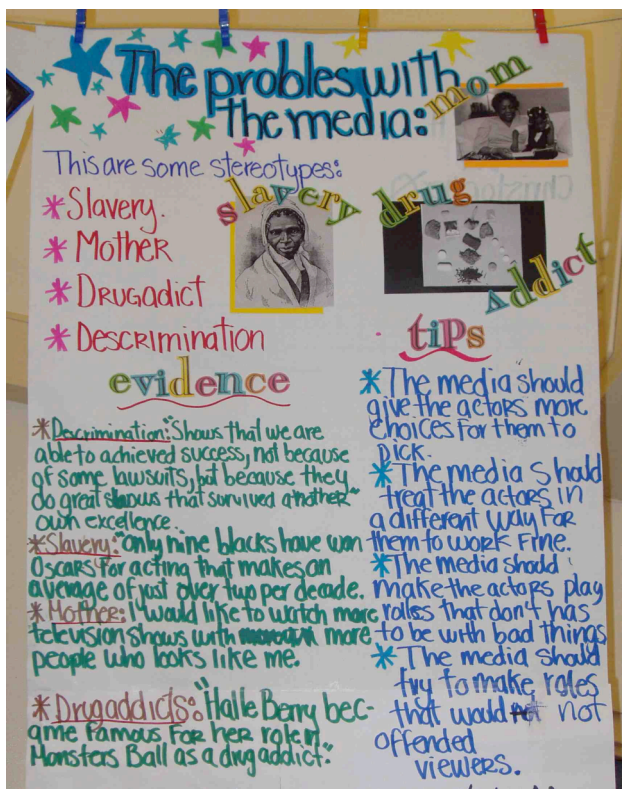


Figure 28. Student poster exploring stereotypes of African Americans.

After their group presentations, students read the second article, “The Color Green,” which examines the lack of minority representation on television, and argues that minorities should take more of an active role in changing business practices in Hollywood. Students had used the article during the “Avoiding Stereotypes” activity to look for evidence to support their thinking; during this lesson, students would read the article straight through but with a different objective. With a partner, students read the article, first looking for facts and opinions, highlighting each in a different color. As they read, students discussed the text to determine whether certain passages expressed facts or opinions. We then discussed the article in small groups, which I audio-recorded.

Part Four: Culminating Class Discussion

On the last day of our unit, I gave the students an opportunity to engage in a more open-ended discussion regarding all the issues we explored over the past several weeks. First, I wrote the following statement on the board:

“The way minorities are represented in the media is the biggest cause of racism in America.”

I then gave students ten minutes to write a response to the prompt, deciding whether they agreed, strongly agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the statement. Similar to a previous whole class discussion, I chose a prompt that forced a choice and could be argued from multiple perspectives. After students finished writing, I asked them to proceed to one of four corners of the room, each representing their opinions. None of the students chose to “strongly” agree or disagree, so the entire class discussion took place between the “agree” and “disagree” groups. I allowed the smaller group, on the “agree” side of the room, to present their points of view first, followed by the larger

“disagree” group. Finally, I opened the discussion to the whole class. As students spoke, I transcribed their comments verbatim and I largely stayed out of the discussion.

The discussion lasted for nearly 50 minutes, which was a stark difference from the first whole-class discussion we held several weeks earlier. Students who had said very little previously made several comments, and more students participated. In addition, students took the conversation in numerous directions, using their academic vocabulary to express their examples. During the discussion I rarely intervened, only to ask clarifying questions or to answer questions from students. The fascinating discussion proved to be an intellectually satisfying culmination for the unit for the students. Students’ comments are discussed thoroughly in the next chapter.

Conclusion

The implementation of this approach proved incredibly enlightening for me. First, I was thankful that I had allowed myself a great deal of flexibility in my design. Since I had not yet used this text with my students, I did not predict with great accuracy the concepts that would prove most challenging for them. For example, I had not originally intended on spending additional time on *stereotypes*, but students had expressed confusion during the Instructional Conversations, so I knew it required additional attention. The resulting activity and discussions proved transformative for a number of students, improving their understanding of the concept of stereotyping and its connection to the essential question, “How Do the Media Shape the Way We Think?”

The timing of the implementation also surprised me. Some activities proceeded much more quickly than I had anticipated, while others took much longer than I had planned. Again, flexibility became important as we moved through this exploration

together. Despite the requisite changes I made throughout the implementation, each of the four features of this approach, including explicit vocabulary instruction, inquiry-based activities, Instructional Conversations and challenging tasks, all combined to provide students with a stimulating journey through the complex world of advertising and evaluating media messages.

VII. Evaluation

Overview of Evaluation Strategies

The purpose of the *Beyond Words* approach was to improve students' academic English literacy skills across the three dimensions articulated by Scarcella (2003). To assess students' progress in the linguistic, cognitive, and sociocultural/psychological dimensions, I collected data in a variety of ways, as shown in Table 2. First, I evaluated students' performance on the objective exams that come with the publisher's materials. Second, I also audio-recorded and evaluated several small group discussions, reviewed several pieces of student work, and transcribed the final class discussion, coding each of the data sets for evidence of academic English literacy. Finally, I collected field notes throughout the implementation.

Table 2. Evaluation strategies for the *Beyond Words* approach.

Evaluation Strategy	Linguistic Literacy	Cognitive Literacy	Sociocultural/ Psychological Literacy
Objective Exams: Vocabulary Questions	√		
Objective Exams: Multiple Choice Questions		√	
Objective Exams: Short Answer Questions		√	
Audio Recordings of Small Group Discussions (Transcribed)	√	√	√
Student Work	√	√	√
Transcription of Final Class Discussion	√	√	√
Field Notes	√	√	√

Objective Exams

The teacher materials for *Edge* (Moore et al., 2007a) come equipped with assessments for each unit, including interim assessments at the end of each “cluster.” I administered two such exams, including one after students completed Cluster 1, and the other after students completed Cluster 2. The cluster exams include a combination of short answer and multiple-choice questions. The multiple-choice questions can be divided into three categories: vocabulary knowledge, reading comprehension, and literary analysis.

First, I examined students’ performance on the vocabulary questions (see Table 3). For each exam, I totaled the number of correct responses. I then compared students’ responses to a self-assessment they completed at the very beginning of each cluster. The self-assessment asked students to reflect on each target academic vocabulary word, rating each word on a scale of 1 to 3. Students give a 1 to words they have never seen, a 2 to words they have seen but cannot define, and a 3 to words they know and can teach to someone else. For each student, I added the number of 1s and 2s they assigned to the target words, combining them for a total number of vocabulary words that students could not define. I then counted the number of 3s students assigned to the target words. Finally, I compared students’ self-assessments to their final scores on each vocabulary test, determining whether students had demonstrated knowledge of previously unknown vocabulary words.

Using the objective tests, I also evaluated students’ performance on the reading comprehension and literary analysis multiple-choice questions. I only used the data from the Cluster 2 exam for this purpose because the publishers designed this portion of the

test to be taken “open book,” meaning students could refer to the readings when answering the questions. I erroneously did not give students access to their books for the first cluster exam, so students did not demonstrate knowledge of the assessed skills. On the Cluster 2 exam, four questions assessed students’ ability to distinguish between facts and opinions, four questions required students to evaluate evidence in support of a claim, and six questions assessed students’ understanding of the readings, including the main idea and the author’s attitude toward the subject. For each question, I added up the number of correct student responses, and then added the number of correct student answers in each category, allowing me identify trends in students’ responses based on particular skills. Finally, after the exam, students reviewed their incorrect responses and reflected in writing how and why they arrived at the incorrect response. I used their reflections to help me understand some of the patterns in students’ scores.

The final portion of the objective exams included short answer questions in which students were asked about what they learned in the unit. I examined students’ responses to two questions in particular on each exam, since those questions assessed students’ understanding of how to use and evaluate evidence as well as how to distinguish between facts and opinions. I coded students’ responses based on whether they demonstrated understanding of the targeted skill, as shown in Table 4.

Table 3. Clusters 1 and 2 exam components and targeted dimensions of academic English fluency.

Cluster 1 and Cluster 2 Exam Components	Linguistic Literacy	Cognitive Literacy	Sociocultural/ Psychological Literacy
Cluster 1: Vocabulary (8 Multiple Choice Questions)	√		
Cluster 2: Vocabulary (8 Multiple Choice Questions)	√		
Cluster 2: Evaluating Evidence (4 Multiple Choice Questions & 2 Short Answer Questions)		√	
Cluster 2: Distinguish between Fact & Opinion (4 Multiple Choice Questions & 2 Short Answer Questions)		√	

Audio Recording of Small Group Discussions

In addition to studying the objective exams, I also audio-recorded and reviewed several small group Instructional Conversations (ICs) throughout the unit. I transcribed each small group discussion and examined students' statements for evidence of academic English literacy across all dimensions, as shown in Table 4. In the linguistic dimension, I examined the transcripts to determine whether students used targeted vocabulary words to express their thinking. In the cognitive dimension, I looked for evidence that students distinguished between facts and opinions, used prior knowledge and experiences to support their thinking, and evaluated evidence used in support of a claim. Finally, I examined the audiotapes to assess students' literacy in the sociocultural/psychological dimension.

Student Work

Throughout the implementation, students completed assignments that included short responses to writing prompts, close readings of texts, and explanations supporting their textual interpretations. I chose a representative sample of student responses and examined each student's response for each of the chosen assignments. I chose open-ended assignments that were not highly scaffolded so that I could determine the degree to which students had internalized their academic vocabulary knowledge. I examined these responses for evidence that students had used academic vocabulary words in their writing, including the target words for the unit as well as other academic words they had learned earlier in the year or knew previously. Selecting a few responses at random, I highlighted and added the number of academic words students used, including target vocabulary and other academic words they had learned previously. I also examined students' responses for evidence of understanding across the cognitive and sociocultural/psychological dimensions, using similar coding as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Sample evidence of linguistic, cognitive and sociocultural/psychological fluency in students' work, including small group and whole class discussions.

Dimension of Academic English Literacy	Definitions	Sample Words & Phrases Showing Evidence of Fluency in the Dimension
Linguistic Literacy	Students use academic vocabulary to express their thinking	Cluster 1 Target Vocabulary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternative • Expand • Influence • Media • Minority • Racism • Stereotype • Token Cluster 2 Target Vocabulary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertising • Appeal • Consumer • Convince • Impact • Manipulate • Persuasive • Profit
Cognitive Literacy	Students distinguish between facts and opinions Students evaluate evidence used in support of a claim Students support their thinking with evidence from their prior knowledge and experiences	"A fact is..." "An opinion is..." "Facts are important because..." "But if..., then..." "I disagree because..." "For example..." "I remember when..." "I agree because I also..."
Sociocultural/ Psychological Literacy	Students question bias Students value factual evidence Students believe that thinking about the media & world are important Students participate in academic discussions	"manipulate" "power" "money" "Evidence is good because..." "It is better to use facts..." "I have to think about..." "We need to remember that..." "I never realized that..." "What do you mean?" "Can you explain?" "I agree with ___ because..." "How do you know?"

Transcription of Whole-Class Discussion

Another source of data I examined comes from the students' culminating class discussion. At the beginning of that class period, I put the following prompt on the board:

“The way minorities are represented in the media is the biggest cause of racism in America.”

Students responded to the prompt in writing, decided to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement, and listed several reasons for their opinions. Students then participated in a class discussion of the statement, with little input or interruption from me. I transcribed their discussion verbatim. I then evaluated students' statements for evidence of linguistic, cognitive and sociocultural/psychological academic English fluency, coding their responses according to the applicable dimension of academic English as shown in Table 4.

Field Notes

Throughout the implementation, I took field notes using my laptop, noting student comments as well as their questions. I used the notes during the implementation to make adjustments to the unit plan based on student needs. For evaluation purposes, I used my field notes in conjunction with the students' work to evaluate their progress toward developing academic English fluency throughout the unit. In addition, the field notes provided insight into the possible impact on student learning of the various curriculum features, including explicit vocabulary instruction, inquiry-based activities, instructional conversation, and challenging tasks.

Findings

The overarching goal for the *Beyond Words* approach was that students would demonstrate their academic English skills across the three dimensions. The findings address whether or not students were able to demonstrate those skills, and to what degree. When evaluating students' progress toward developing academic English literacy skills, it is important to note that I did not measure growth in this area. That is, I did not give a pre-test and a post-test with respect to their academic literacy skills. Rather, after the unit ended I examined the data for evidence that students understood key concepts and used their academic language skills to engage in critical thinking and academic discourse. When discussing implications for these findings, I will address the contributions to student learning that the curricular features made toward student learning, based on my field notes and observations throughout implementation.

Linguistic Fluency

The first dimension within Scarcella's (2003) framework for academic English is the linguistic dimension and includes several components, including academic vocabulary knowledge, understanding of academic genres, and communication skills. These components were the target for the *Beyond Words* curricular approach (see Chapter V, Figure 9).

Finding: Students demonstrated understanding of target academic vocabulary words, using the words to communicate their ideas. Students performed quite well on the objective vocabulary tests, demonstrating that they understood the basic definitions of the target academic vocabulary words. On the first exam, 10 out of 15 students who took the exam earned a perfect score, no students missed more than two questions, and all but two students

demonstrated understanding of words they had previously stated they did not know. The words students most often missed were *impact* and *profit* (see Figure 29). On the second exam, 8 out of 14 students earned 100% on the exam, no students missed more than two questions, and all but 1 out of 11 students who had completed both the self-assessment and the exam demonstrated understanding of previously unknown words. The words most often missed were *alternative*, *influence* and *racism* (see Figure 30).

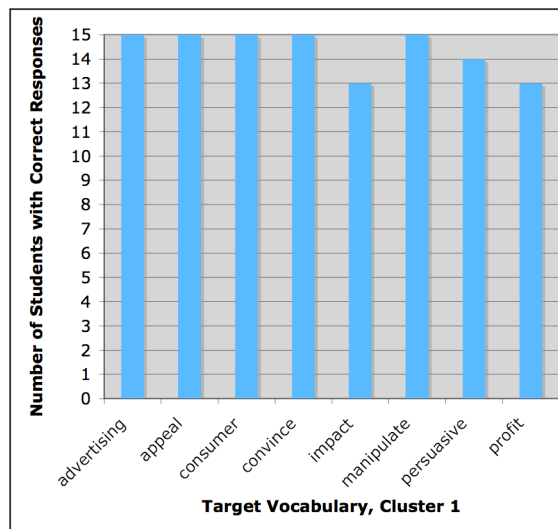


Figure 29. Students' performance on vocabulary questions for the Cluster 1 exam.

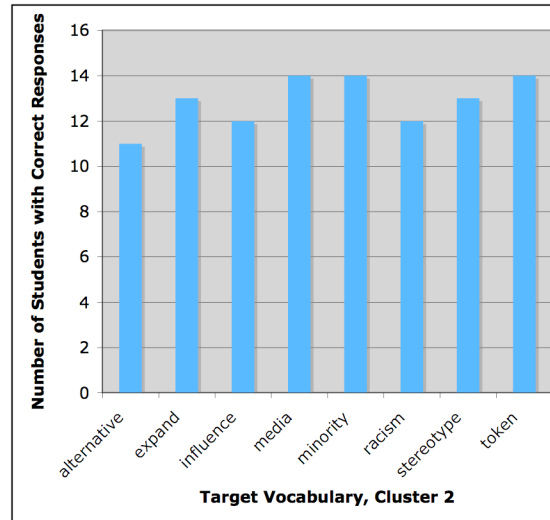


Figure 30. Students' performance on vocabulary questions for the Cluster 2 exam.

In addition to their strong performance on the objective exams, students demonstrated understanding of target vocabulary words throughout their student work samples and during whole class and small group discussions. For example, students responded to the following prompt after a small group discussion:

Why should people care about the way minorities are represented on TV?
Write an opinion statement. Use your own reasons and examples...to
support your opinion. (Moore, et al., 2007b, p. 237).

On average, including repeated words, students used 4.3 targeted vocabulary words, and 2.5 academic vocabulary words they had previously learned. This yielded an average of 6.8 academic vocabulary words per response; the average student reflection was 50 to 75 words in length. I observed this same pattern of frequent academic vocabulary use throughout students' written work.

Students also used academic vocabulary to express their ideas when speaking, during both small group and whole-class discussions. In the following excerpt, Mayra, a particularly strong student, discusses the impact on minority audiences of having more

non-White actors on television. The target words for the unit are in highlighted in bold text:

I think it might **impact** the people, the **minority**, to make the **minority** to...work on movies or films, and that can help, like, hmm...If they saw **minorities** on TV, that can help to grow up **minorities** of people. I think it's going to be like a positive **influence** because more people are going to watch the TV or movies they make because they saw the **minority** of people on TV, not just like a **token** group, like a big group, that **minorities** are on TV. (Audio Transcript, March 27, 2008).

Mayra used four different target words, some of them multiple times, to express her contention that hiring of minority actors can have an impact on television audiences.

Even students who struggled or who were less proficient with academic language at the beginning of the unit used academic language to express their thinking. Manuel, a student who scored poorly on his objective exams and rarely spoke in whole class settings, explains why he changed his mind, moving from “agree” to “disagree,” during the culminating class discussion about the role of media representation of minorities on racism:

Because the people, there were time when there was most **racism** on the streets [in the past]. They are old people and they are trying to **convince** their children to believe what they believe. (Transcription, March 28, 2008).

Prior to this unit, Manuel had never heard the word *racism* before, not even the Spanish cognate for the word, *racismo*. In this discussion, however, he explores complex generational differences regarding how people experience and understand racism. Throughout the unit, in students' writing and in their speaking, students used the target vocabulary to explore the issues at hand.

Discussion. Students demonstrated a strong grasp of the unit vocabulary by the end of the implementation. I attribute students' success to a combination of factors.

First, students had received direct instruction regarding academic vocabulary all year, so they were accustomed to the value of and methods for learning academic words. Second, I routinely directed students to use academic vocabulary in their writing, speaking, and when completing their challenging tasks. Finally, and perhaps most important, the small group Instructional Conversations (ICs) had an enormous impact on students' vocabulary knowledge. In examining the audio transcripts and my field notes, I note numerous times when I used the small group sessions to clarify vocabulary words for students, either explicitly as part of the objective for that discussion, or as needed. When students struggled to find the right word, I would help them find the way through careful questioning. Sometimes, when students made statements using informal language, I would help them rephrase their comments to include the academic words. When helping students learn the words, I corrected students while supporting their efforts and providing explanations, so students did not feel inhibited when trying to express themselves. In short, we spent a great deal of our time during the ICs simply discussing language, fostering the "word consciousness" that Scott and Nagy advocate (2004).

Cognitive Fluency

As Scarcella (2003) explains, in order for students to achieve proficiency in academic English, they must "obtain factual information," question sources, and "identify others' and one's own assumptions" (p. 22). Within the cognitive dimension, she also includes a knowledge component, recognizing that students must acquire and learn to access their prior knowledge, as well as a higher-order thinking component that addresses students' critical literacy skills. The *Beyond Words* curriculum focused on these two components of academic English (see Chapter V, Figure 10).

Throughout this unit, cognitive demands on students throughout this unit were intense. The unit exposed students to academic argument for the first time in their educational careers and asked them to think critically about the media, which many students had never previously done. Some of the skills embedded within the unit challenged the students more than others, as evidenced by students' varied performances across assessments. Overall, students demonstrated some understanding of the cognitive dimension of academic English, but had not moved toward mastery of this dimension.

Finding 1: Students demonstrated some understanding of how to distinguish between a fact and an opinion, but had not achieved mastery by the end of the implementation. Students' performance on the objective portion of the second cluster exam was relatively poor with respect to this skill. Four questions assessed students' understanding of how to distinguish between facts and opinions, and of the 14 students who took this exam, 1 student answered three out of four questions correctly, 5 students answered two questions correctly, 8 students answered only one question correctly, and 1 student did not answer any of the questions correctly. When I examined students' response patterns on each multiple-choice question, I could reach no conclusion about students' understanding of how to distinguish between facts and opinions (see Figure 31), for there is no discernable pattern across the responses. For question 18, which asked students to identify which words "signal" that the statement is an opinion, only two students correctly identified *great* and *excellence* correctly. In their reflections, students expressed general confusion with question 18, with one student stating that she "totally forgot" which words signal an author's opinion (Student Exam Reflection, April 2, 2008).

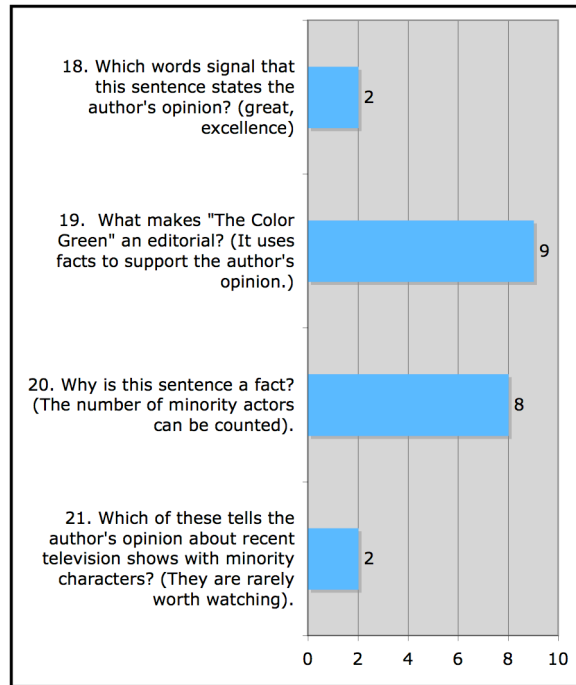


Figure 31. Students' performance on multiple-choice questions assessing knowledge of how to distinguish between facts and opinions, Cluster 2 exam.

In addition to the students' performance on the multiple choice questions, I also examined their responses to one of the short answer questions, which asked students, "What did you learn about fact and opinion that will help you the next time you read an editorial?" Of the 14 students who took the exam, 9 students demonstrated they knew the difference between facts and opinions. Four others did not explain the difference, but all expressed the importance of knowing the difference. One student did not finish the exam. Sample student responses from the Cluster 2 exam short-answer responses are displayed in Table 5.

Table 5. Sample responses showing evidence of higher-order thinking (by distinguishing between facts and opinions) within the cognitive dimension.

Feature of Cognitive Fluency	Definition	Sample Responses Showing Evidence of Fluency in the Cognitive Dimension
Higher Order Thinking (Critical Literacy)	Students distinguish between facts and opinions	<p>“A fact is something that we can prove it and an opinion is that we can argue about it.”</p> <p>“I learned that facts you can prove that what they are saying is true and that the opinion’s something that they think is right. It will help me a lot because when I read an editorial I can find facts and opinions that can help me understand everything better.”</p> <p>“I learned that facts can be looked up. In other words you can looked up to see if it is true and the opinion you can’t look up to see if it is true.”</p> <p>“I learned that the fact is what we can’t argue with and the [sic] opinion is what we can argue with.”</p>

Finding 2: Students demonstrated some understanding of how to evaluate evidence in support of a claim, but had not achieved mastery by the end of the implementation. As with distinguishing between facts and opinions, students demonstrated a degree of understanding regarding how to evaluate evidence in support of a claim, but it was not consistent across data sources. Starting with the Cluster 2 objective exam, of the 14 students who took the test, 4 students answered three out of four questions correctly, 5 students answered two questions correctly, 4 students answered only one question correctly, and 1 student did not answer any of the questions correctly (see Figure 32). Several students stated in their reflections that on question nine, they chose the answer “familiar,” one student explaining that she “thought if the data was familiar, [she] could trust it” (Student Exam Reflection, April 2, 2008). Even though this student answered the question incorrectly,

she had evaluated evidence based on reliability. Other students wrote similar explanations for missing this question. In addition, students performed most strongly on two questions, numbers 11 and 12, both of which provided the evidence directly for students to examine in the form of direct quotations (see Figure 32).

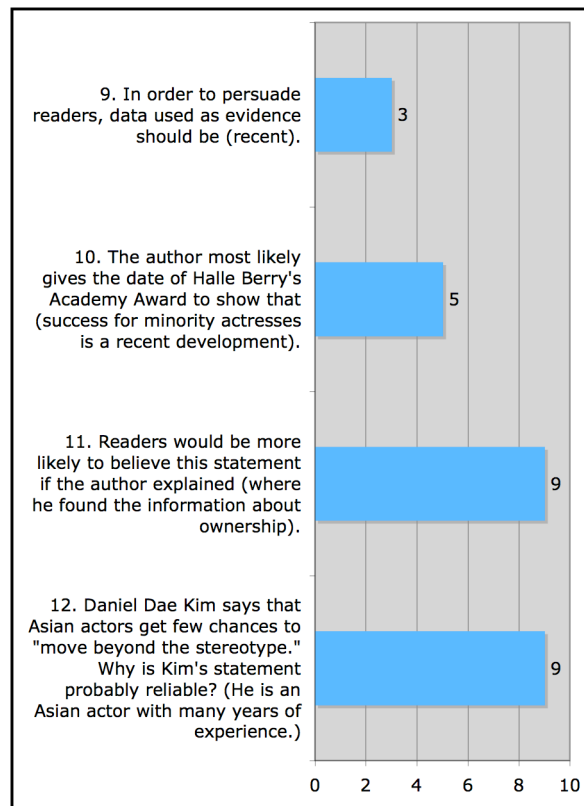


Figure 32. Students' performance on questions assessing knowledge of how to evaluate evidence, Cluster 2 exam.

While not perfect, the results in this dimension are promising, especially when results from the Cluster 2 exam are combined with evidence from students' class discussions. For example, when students engaged in a dialogue about a controversial topic on the last day of the unit, they often questioned the evidence put forth by other students. In addition to the sample student responses listed in Table 6, the following exchange highlights students' comfort with this skill:

Student 1: But teens watch cartoons, and they start acting like the cartoons, so they start acting like the cartoons.

Student 2: Can you prove that? (Transcription, March 28, 2008).

During the conversation, Student 1 made an assertion about teenagers' habits, when Student 2 promptly questioned him outright, asking for proof of his claim. Student 1 then described his own experience with a friend who had once started acting like a cartoon character by repeating offensive comments. This anecdotal evidence supported Student 1's claim. Other students exhibited this same questioning behavior throughout the culminating class discussion, as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Sample responses showing evidence of higher-order thinking (by evaluating evidence) within the cognitive dimension.

Feature of Cognitive Fluency	Definition	Sample Responses Showing Evidence of Fluency in the Cognitive Dimension
Higher Order Thinking (Critical Literacy)	Students evaluate evidence used in support of a claim	<p>“So you said that you don’t see it that often? But if you see it in the media, it doesn’t mean it’s the biggest problem. The statement says “it’s the biggest problem” but I don’t see it. Do you watch TV and see racism all the time? When you are watching TV everyday do you think there is racism?”</p> <p>“I disagree with both students because they both say they haven’t seen on TV racism. Maybe when they watch TV it is not the racism hour. [laughter]. Racism is happening in the whole world because a lot of TV read the newspapers. Maybe there is racism on the other channels. But there is racism. They may just not see it.”</p>

Finding 3: Students used their prior experiences and knowledge to support their thinking and make sense of new ideas. Another feature of cognitive fluency in academic English is the ability to draw from one's own readings and experiences to support one's claims and

make sense of new ideas. Given its importance, accessing and building prior knowledge was a key focus throughout the *Beyond Words* approach. When evaluating students' work, I noticed that students often referred to the texts, or used their own experiences to support their thinking. In no other forum was this behavior more evident or powerful than during the final class discussion. In addition to the examples listed in Table 7, the following statement from a student is worth examining closely:

I think that most of the reason racism is a problem [is] because people believe they are better than others and they want to show that. For example, by my house, there is a White American guy who put his American flag in his window. My uncle is from Guatemala. The man hate[s] my uncle and put paint on his truck. They put a sign on his window that he doesn't belong here and he better go back. So I think people think they are better, so that is the cause of racism. They don't see that people come here to work or for their family. (Transcription, March 28, 2008).

In examining the major causes of racism in society, this student brought into the discussion a powerful example of racism at work. In addition, he made the connection between his uncle's experience and the power dynamic that defines racism. Following this example, several other students spoke up to convey similar stories, keeping the focus of the discussion on the cause of racism in society. Students were careful not to generalize to all White Americans, noting their own experiences with White people who did not display racist behaviors. They kept their assertions grounded in support, which made for a dialogue marked by solid argumentation.

Table 7. Sample responses showing evidence of accessing prior knowledge within the cognitive dimension.

Feature of Cognitive Fluency	Definition	Sample Responses Showing Evidence of Fluency in the Cognitive Dimension
Prior Knowledge	Students support their thinking with evidence from their prior knowledge and experiences	<p>“Another thing. This people called the Minute Men. They racism against immigrant people. They are coming in taking jobs. But let me ask you this question. How many times do you see Americans in the fields picking fruits and lemons? You don’t see any. We’re not taking American jobs.”</p> <p>“I agree with him because one time I went with my family to church. We parked a car in the bank. There was this guy, an American who was leaving. I just looked back. He said ‘this is not parking for going to this church. So if you don’t know this because you don’t understand English then go back.’”</p> <p>“Yeah, there are because some people think that Japanese people are smart. But some people that is wrong. Maybe they use Japanese actor as smart person, but it’s not going to be the biggest cause to think that Japanese people are smart. People have experience, like “so stupid, Japanese people.” [People have experienced smart and “stupid” Japanese people, so they’ve had both experiences.] If people believe what media shows, it’s like they are stupid.”</p>

Discussion. In evaluating students’ work along with my field notes for insight into students’ difficulty distinguishing facts from opinions, I noticed that students were more adept at identifying facts than they were opinions. When assessing whether a statement was a fact, students knew that they had to determine whether the evidence could be argued. When writers cite statistics or historical information, students knew they could “look it up.” But with less straightforward assertions, for example those that did not

provide direct evidence, students expressed confusion, particularly regarding the vocabulary of opinion. While the unit did include some explicit instruction regarding the language of facts versus opinions, clearly students would benefit from more direct instruction and practice in this area.

However, while students did not exhibit mastery over every skill within the cognitive dimension of academic English, the data do suggest that students engaged in academic argument, used their knowledge and experiences to support their thinking and questioned assertions based on the evidence provided. In examining my field notes, I find further evidence of their growth in this area. For example, when students worked with each other to complete challenging tasks, they sought evidence to support their thinking, often without prompting from me. During one such activity, a student approached me for assistance in finding statistics to support his claim about stereotypes (Field Notes, March 26, 2008). Locating statistics was not required, but he ended up using several pieces of data, including two graphs, on his group's final product.

When I examined the students' performance on the reading comprehension portion of the Cluster 2 exam, I noted that they performed much better overall than on the literary analysis portions discussed in the findings. Of the 14 students who took the exam, 8 students answered 5 or more of the 6 questions correctly, while only 3 students answered fewer than 50% of the questions correctly. Students for the most part understood the articles, including the main idea and the supporting details, but they had not mastered the analysis portion. This finding has great implications for teaching English Learners (ELs). First, many exams, including the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), only test basic reading comprehension, so objective tests

that show students performing well obscure students' lack of understanding of more complex, critical literacy skills. In addition, unless teachers continually assess students on these skills, there is no way to adjust instruction to fill the gaps in students' learning. Finally, these data suggest that English learners would benefit from more direct instruction regarding, and opportunities to engage in, complex reasoning across all content areas. Mastering these skills takes time, and ELs need more opportunities to develop these vital cognitive literacy skills.

Finally, the data suggest that students drew on their prior experiences throughout the implementation. During the final class discussion, I rarely intervened to draw out student responses or to facilitate the conversation. And yet, students discussed their own experiences frequently support their claims or to seek understanding. Supported by a text that was already strong in this area, the *Beyond Words* curriculum provided ample opportunities for students to develop their cognitive academic English skills, which will serve them well in their future endeavors.

Sociocultural/Psychological Fluency

In her framework for considering academic English literacy, Scarcella (2003) defines the sociocultural/psychological dimension as arising not just from “knowledge of the linguistic code and cognition, but also from social practices in which academic English is used to accomplish communicative goals” (p. 29). These social practices include values and beliefs, attitudes and motivations, behaviors and practices, and social norms that define participation in academic discourse. The *Beyond Words* approach sought to address students' needs in all of these areas (see Chapter V, Figure 11).

Finding: As a class, students demonstrated progress toward understanding each component of the sociological/psychological dimension of academic English.

One objective within this dimension was for students to internalize the values of thinking critically, including questioning the bias and intentions of an author or speaker, and favoring credible empirical evidence over anecdotal support. Students expressed these values in their short answer responses on their Cluster exams, during class discussions, and throughout their work, as shown in Table 8.

In addition, another objective within this dimension was for students to exhibit certain behaviors associated with academic discourse, including using evidence and examples to support one's claims and asking critical questions of others. Students demonstrated these behaviors both in their class work and in class discussion, often without explicit prompting from me, as illustrated in Table 8.

The final objective within this dimension was for students to engage in academic dialogue adhering to the norms of this academic practice, including allowing others to finish speaking, listening to others, seeking understanding, and building upon others' ideas. Field notes indicate that students demonstrated respectful behaviors during small group and class discussions, never exhibiting inappropriate behaviors or using offensive language. Students allowed each other to finish speaking and respectfully engaged in conversation. In addition, as expressed in Table 8, students frequently asked respectful but critical questions, seeking clarification before making assumptions about a speaker's intent. Finally, students built upon each others' ideas skillfully. During one memorable exchange, Mayra agreed with Fausto, who had just argued that producers hired more minority actors in order to "get more people to watch more TV," because "the producer

wants people to watch the commercial, so he might think if I put an Asian, Mexican or African American, those people might watch” (Transcript, March 28, 2008). Mayra built upon Fausto’s statement, referring back to the last text students had read:

I agree with what Fausto said because we read in the book that ‘they didn’t care about the black or white, they just cared about green.’ They just cared about the money. (Transcript, March 28, 2008).

Immediately after finishing her statement, the entire class erupted in spontaneous applause. Not only was Mayra building upon Fausto’s idea, but the entire class immediately recognized the value of Mayra’s contribution, expressing how impressed they were with her use of textual evidence to support her thinking.

The previous student example illustrates a larger phenomenon. Throughout the implementation, students demonstrated strong motivation to engage in academic discourse, as evidenced by their high degree of participation in the small group Instructional Conversations, the depth and fervor of the final class discussion, and the strength of their work habits, especially when engaging in challenging tasks and inquiry-based activities. Only 2 students out of 16 had to be reminded to stay on task more frequently than the others, and even those students had a positive attitude toward the majority of lessons.

Table 8. Sample responses showing evidence of understanding within the sociocultural/psychological dimension.

Feature of Sociocultural/ Psychological Fluency	Definitions	Sample Responses Showing Evidence of Fluency in the Sociocultural/Psychological Dimension
Values & Beliefs: Questioning Bias	Students express the value of questioning the attitudes, experiences, or biases of the speaker	“The media is a business and the people who have power sometimes use it to attract people that have less than the power people. There are always power people who manipulate people who don’t have power because they don’t have someone to look [after] to take care of them.” (Transcript, March 28, 2008)
Values & Beliefs: Value factual evidence	Students express the value of factual evidence to support one’s thinking, and/or the belief that evidence based on fact (including expert opinion) is more reliable than anecdotal evidence	“That I have to ha[ve] evidence if I want to someone to believe on what I’m talking about.” (Cluster 1 Exam) “I learned that’s more better to analyzed first all the facts or statements that the author gives you and see if the claim is right.” (Cluster 2 Exam) “I learned that the evidence is the data or facts that I can most likely trust, and the argument is what the author is trying to say.” (Cluster 2 Exam)
Behaviors & Practices: Use evidence & examples to support thinking	Students use facts, statistics, textual support or examples from their own experiences to support their claims	“The majority of today’s shows fail’ because they don’t include different people. For example, they should have a least some African American, Latinos and Asian people. That’s what I think. They should do in order to have a nice and successful show.” (Student Work, quoting text.) “I disagree because not all the media show racism. When I watch TV I don’t really see that.” (Transcript, March 28, 2008)
Behaviors & Practices: Ask critical questions	Students question the attitudes, experiences, or biases of the author or speaker, or question the evidence that an author or speaker uses in support of a claim	“So you said that you don’t see it that often? But if you see it in the media, it doesn’t mean it’s the biggest problem. The statement says “it’s the biggest problem” but I don’t see it. Do you watch TV and see racism all the time? When you are watching TV everyday do you think there is racism?” (Transcript, March 28, 2008)
Norms: Listen & seek understanding	Students listen to peers and ask clarifying questions	“Student 1: We’re not saying that there is no racism in America but it its not the biggest cause. Student 2: What is the cause, then?” (Transcript, March 28, 2008).
Norms: Build upon others’ ideas	Students build upon other students ideas by agreeing and extending a thought or by respectfully disagreeing and supporting the new idea	“I disagree with both students because they both say they haven’t seen on TV racism. Maybe when they watch TV it is not the racism hour. [laughter]. Racism is happening in the whole world because a lot of TV read the newspapers. Maybe there is racism on the other channels. But there is racism. They may just not see it.” (Transcript, March 28, 2008).

Discussion. Upon reflecting on this finding and reviewing my field notes, I attribute the students' success in this dimension to the Instructional Conversation feature of the *Beyond Words* curriculum. By meeting almost daily in small groups to engage in academic discussion, students learned gradually, through modeling from the teacher and practice with peers, how to respectfully and effectively engage in academic discourse. Some students, like Mayra, even demonstrated mastery over some components of this dimension, relative to where students began, and nearly all students expressed some degree of competence in this area, which is promising. Internalizing the complex and often hidden rules of academic discourse takes time. But the data suggest that explicit instruction within the sociocultural/psychological dimension of academic English improves students' literacy within this important yet often neglected dimension.

Conclusion

Given the multidimensional approach of the *Beyond Words* curriculum, students demonstrated a degree of competence in each of the three dimensions of academic English. The Instructional Conversations, a prominent feature of the curriculum, appeared to have a strong impact on students' linguistic and sociocultural/psychological literacy skills. Based on the data, students would likely have benefited from further instruction within the cognitive dimension, although they did demonstrate some understanding of the targeted skills within this dimension.

VIII. Conclusion

Conducting research in my own classroom proved transformative for my own teaching and learning. In trying to establish a new way of thinking about academic language instruction, I emerged with a deeper understanding of what my students encounter each day. My own process of inquiry and discovery mirrored that of my students, each of us fumbling through new concepts and vocabulary words, trying to make meaning from our studies by connecting our learning to our experiences.

The approaches embedded within the *Beyond Words* approach reflect my intention to place academic language at the center of my students' learning as a means toward providing them access to the language of school, and with it, academic success. As I consider how to apply the instructional approaches in *Beyond Words* to other disciplines, I realize that there exists no one solution, no single strategy, graphic organizer or other remedy that will ensure students learn and internalize all the skills embedded within the three dimensions of academic English. Even a text designed as an intervention for struggling readers can be limited by the way in which the teacher implements the curriculum in the classroom.

But while there exists no perfect text or set of strategies, teachers must remember the enormous influence we have on students' success and on how students view themselves as learners. Thinking back to Jasmine, who despite her greatest efforts still struggled to distinguish the big ideas from subordinate issues, I feel even more compelled to transform my teaching to prepare my English Learners for rigorous content. Any teacher could easily alleviate Jasmine's feelings of isolation, for example, through the introduction of routine Instructional Conversations into her classroom routine. Jasmine's

confusion over key vocabulary words could be allayed through explicit vocabulary instruction. Her sense of helplessness could be transformed into a sense of empowerment by engaging her in challenging tasks with skilled peers. In short, I am advocating that teachers alter the way we think about teaching so that academic language instruction becomes central to our approach to teaching and learning.

Changing the way we plan instruction requires a broadening of our perspective toward academic English, moving beyond isolated vocabulary lists and assignments devoid of critical thinking. The reason we teach world history, biology, and language arts is that we hope students will leave our classrooms thinking like historians, scientists or writers. We must engage all students, including English Learners, in the discourse of each discipline and provide them with ample opportunities to use academic language in context, through multiple and varied methods. If we do alter our curricular approach to reflect the priority of academic language, students like Jasmine can learn to view themselves as active, competent and creative thinkers, empowered to pursue higher education and, ultimately, their dreams.

Beyond Words:
Making Academic Language *Real*
For Secondary English Learners

Tools and Tips for Teachers in all Content Areas

by

Suzanne Michele Van Steenbergen

2008

Table of Contents

Opening Letter to Teachers.....	128
Part I: Explicit Vocabulary Instruction.....	129
Teaching a New Word: A Vocabulary Teaching Routine	130
Reinforcing Learned Words: Strategies for Deepening Students’ Vocabulary Knowledge	133
Engage Students in Application.....	133
Use the Words During Instructional Conversation.....	134
Use Word Walls.....	134
Use the Idea Wave Strategy.....	134
Use the Oral Cloze Read-Aloud Strategy.....	135
Part II: Instructional Conversations	136
Part III: Inquiry-Based Activities.....	140
Before Reading: Preparing Students to Read a New Text.....	141
Sample Activity 1: Introduction to Advertising.....	143
Sample Activity 2: Media Gallery Walk	145
During Reading: Extending Students’ Understanding of Key Ideas	147
Sample Activity 3: Examining the Media-What do you Notice?.....	148
Sample Activity 4: Analyzing Racial Stereotypes	151
Part IV: Challenging Tasks.....	154
Sample Activity 5: Making Connections	155
Sample Activity 6: Introduction to Argument.....	158
Sample Activity 7: Analyzing an Advertisement.....	162
Sample Activity 8: Avoiding Stereotypes.....	164

Dear Teachers,

Thank you for looking to the *Beyond Words* approach for some guidance in your efforts to support English Learners toward mastery of all dimensions of academic English. The *Beyond Words* curricular materials are designed to coincide with a media literacy unit in Hampton Brown's *Edge* Level B (Moore, Short, Smith & Tatum, 2007a). However, the activities and strategies can easily be adapted to other content areas. Teachers of any subject who wish to help students improve their academic English skills can easily make use of the hints, suggestions and teaching approaches that have been helpful in my classroom. Content teachers, including math, science and social science teachers, possess substantial expert knowledge regarding the role language plays within their disciplines. When teachers across all subject areas address the language demands of school, students have even more opportunities to thrive academically.

The *Beyond Words* approach includes four principal features, including explicit academic vocabulary instruction, Instructional Conversations, inquiry-based activities, and challenging tasks. The *Beyond Words* components work in tandem to improve students' academic English fluency by targeting the various dimensions of academic English, including students linguistic, cognitive and sociocultural/psychological literacy needs (Scarcella, 2003). This guide is designed to articulate a way of thinking about teaching academic language rather than a prescribed set of lesson plans. As needed, this guide provides the context for a given activity within *Edge* textbook, but teachers should feel empowered to adapt the lessons, especially the grouping and instructional strategies, to all subject areas.

This curriculum description begins with an overview of several explicit vocabulary instructional techniques I have used in my classroom. Influenced in large part by the work of Kinsella (2008), the tools and instructional routines that comprise the *Beyond Words* approach have contributed greatly to my students' academic vocabulary knowledge. Following the explicit vocabulary techniques, the curriculum provides an overview of the Instructional Conversation (IC) approach, providing hints and suggestions for successfully integrating ICs into any classroom. Next, this guide outlines ideas for accessing and building students' prior knowledge through inquiry-based activities. Additionally, this guide includes tips and suggestions for designing challenging tasks that foster critical literacy and critical thinking skills. Finally, throughout these materials you will find suggestions for maximizing learning through strategic grouping of students.

I hope you find the *Beyond Words* approach to academic English instruction useful for enhancing your own teaching. Of course, as with any curriculum, these materials offer a starting point. It is up to you to make academic language *real* for your students. I wish you all the luck in doing so!

Sincerely,

Suzi Van Steenberg

Part I: Explicit Vocabulary Instruction

Explicit vocabulary instruction provides a fundamental starting point for improving students' academic English literacy skills. "Explicit" implies that academic vocabulary instruction is integrated *intentionally* throughout the curriculum, giving students multiple and varied opportunities to see, use and explore academic language. Through explicit instruction, students develop "word consciousness," (Scott & Nagy, 2004) learning to see language as a tool for learning. This section outlines the explicit vocabulary teaching routines and strategies embedded within the *Beyond Words* approach. The majority of these routines originate with the work of Dr. Kate Kinsella, a researcher, teacher-educator and advocate for academic language instruction. Where applicable, I have included citations and links to Kinsella's online resources.

In Part I, you will find the following sections:

- Teaching a New Word: A Vocabulary Teaching Routine
- Reinforcing Learned Words: Strategies for Deepening Students' Vocabulary Knowledge
 - Engage Students in Application
 - Use the Words During Instructional Conversation
 - Use Word Walls
 - Use the Idea Wave Strategy
 - Use the Oral Cloze Read-Aloud Strategy

Teaching a New Word: A Vocabulary Teaching Routine

Following are instructions for teaching a new academic vocabulary word to students.² Remember that this routine may seem lengthy at first, but once students become accustomed to it, they pick up new words much more quickly. Also, words that are central to the text you are reading (academic words) should be highlighted using this strategy. Less frequent words might receive some attention, but do not need this type of involved instruction. Finally, I recommend limiting the number of words per unit to between 5 and 10 words over a period of a few weeks. Many teachers make the mistake of teaching too many vocabulary words, thus reducing the chances students have to meaningfully interact with and learn the target terms.

1. First, present the word in writing (on the board, overhead, computer). Students should have some type of graphic organizer or template on which to take notes.

Our first word is accurate.

2. Pronounce the word and have students read and pronounce the word several times as a class.

Say the word accurate after me: (ac' cu rate). (Students repeat.)

3. Clarify the part of speech and specify whether it is formal, high-use, rare, etc.

Accurate is a formal academic word. Accurate is a describing word, or adjective, that is often used at school and in the to describe information in reports or measurements.

4. Explain the meaning using familiar language, drawing upon synonyms when possible. Keep the definition simple, using words the students are likely to know. Very often definitions provided in textbooks can be confusing for ELs, so it is helpful to have a good dictionary on hand. I use the Longman or Advanced Longman dictionaries, recommended by Kinsella and others.

² Adapted from Kinsella; original can be found at <http://www.corelearn.com/calendar/documents/VocTeachStrategy08.doc>. See also (Hasselbring, Feldman, & Kinsella, 2005, p. T72-T73)

The word accurate means true, correct or exact. It means that all your measurements to solve a word problem on a math test are 100% correct.

5. Provide at least two concrete examples, in complete sentences, that enable students to create vibrant mental anchors. It is also helpful to include an image or two that students can use to remember or grasp the word.

If all of the facts in a newspaper article about our school test scores are 100% true, we could say the article is true or (Students substitute the word aloud.)



When teachers grade students' research projects, they check to see that all of the information is correct or (Students substitute the word aloud.)

6. Assign a sentence frame to guide application of word knowledge to a new context, preferably to the context in which students will encounter the word.

One TV show/movie/novel that presents an ___ view of teen's lives is ___ because ___.

Following is an example of a PowerPoint slide I created to teach the word *appeal* to students. This template was adapted from a Kinsella workshop I attended, and incorporates the suggested teaching steps. While it may seem time consuming to create a slide for each new word, I have found that it helps students "see" and "hear" the key words more clearly. In addition, once a slide is created, it is easy to use again and to create new ones from the template.

appeal (v, n.)

Meaning	Examples	Image
something that gets a good reaction from you	That jacket <u>appeals</u> to me!	
	She <u>appealed</u> to me to let her make up her test.	
	His <u>appeal</u> for help was answered.	

To appeal to teens, a TV commercial should have...

Definition in simple, easy to grasp terms

Images that coincide with the examples.

Sentence starter that engages students using the word in the same context as the text.

Example sentences using the verb and noun forms.

A note about content texts:

Often in math, science and social science textbooks the publishers will highlight and define terms that are central to that content area. For example, in World History, the terms *Enlightenment* or *Reformation* might be highlighted. In Biology, the terms *photosynthesis* or *mitosis* might be defined. These words are certainly important and deserve much attention, but students must also learn the underlying *academic* words required to learn these concepts. If the publisher does not identify such words, choose just a few (perhaps 4 or 5 per chapter or unit) to emphasize. This will prevent students from feeling overwhelmed and will allow students to develop mastery and deep understanding of the academic words, which they can apply across content areas.

For a comprehensive list of academic words, see the Academic Word List (Coxhead, 2000). Also, Haywood (2008b) provides an online tool that enables users to input text and have all of the academic words highlighted. Citation information for both sources is located on the References list.

Reinforcing Learned Words: Strategies for Deepening Students' Vocabulary Knowledge

Introduction

Once students have encountered a new word, they must also use the word, both in writing and in conversation, in order to internalize its meaning and use. Following are some tips for reinforcing students' academic vocabulary knowledge, many of which were adapted from Kinsella's work.

Engage Students in Application

It is helpful to actively engage students with the word by assigning a brief partner application task.

Provide a sentence starter to frame their oral responses grammatically and syntactically:

Example: *Identify two sources of accurate information for a science report on global warming: Share with your partner one source of accurate information using our sentence starter: (Students share examples using the starter: One source of accurate information is...)*

Example: In order to engage students in more authentic use of the targeted vocabulary words in *Edge*, I put the following sentence starters on the overhead projector. Students then used the sentence starters to analyze a magazine advertisement (see activity 7 for more details).

Vocabulary Rewind!

-
- The goal of this advertisement is to **convince** people to_____.
 - This ad is trying to **appeal** to **consumers** who_____. I know this because_____.
 - This advertisement **manipulates** people by_____. For example,_____.
 - This ad does/does not **convince** me to_____ because_____.
 - This advertisement can have a negative **impact** on _____ because_____.

Use the Words Actively During Instructional Conversations

When meeting with students in small groups, it is helpful to use the academic vocabulary words frequently and explicitly. In addition, encourage students to do the same. They can respond formally to sentence starters (as in the above example), or you can encourage students to replace casual language with the targeted words. Frequent but brief vocabulary reviews in small groups also help reinforce and clarify students' understanding.

Use Word Walls

Posting up learned words prominently in the classroom reminds students to use their new vocabulary frequently. During warm-up or writing exercises, have students choose some familiar words, along with some new words, to use in their writing. Refer to the word walls frequently, making connections between words, noting synonyms, antonyms and even cognates.

Use the Idea Wave Strategy

Providing students with numerous, quick opportunities to use and to hear academic vocabulary words in context facilitates internalization of such words. The Idea Wave (Hasselbring, Feldman, & Kinsella, 2005, p. T78) sharing strategy meets this goal by enabling all students in the class to quickly share an idea using academic language.

1. Give students a sentence starter, and a few minutes to generate some possible responses in writing.
2. Have students share their responses orally with a partner near them.
3. After about a minute, ask each student to share ONE of his or her ideas with the class. Going from student to student, whip around the room quickly, allowing each student to share one idea.
4. While students share, the listeners should write down two additional ideas that they hear.
5. You can also record students' ideas on an overhead projector, poster paper or on the board.
6. Avoid elaborating on student responses. The objective is to give every student a chance to share and to generate many ideas in a short period of time.

Following is a sample *Idea Wave* prompt I used during the implementation:

Introduction

- Look at the photo on page 487.
- Look at each of the little pictures.
- How might each picture influence the man's thinking?

The picture of _____ might influence the man's opinion by_____.

Use the Oral Cloze Read-Aloud Strategy

One goal of explicit vocabulary instruction is that students will comprehend the targeted texts more fully if they are pre-taught key words. The Oral Cloze strategy (Hasselbring, Feldman, & Kinsella, 2005, p. T74) helps highlight such words within the targeted texts. The Oral Cloze strategy involves a modified choral read-aloud from a shared text. The steps are simple and easy to follow:

1. Make sure all students have a copy of the text. For new or more struggling readers, have students point to the starting point of the text, or provide a bookmark for students to use to follow along.
2. The teacher then reads aloud from the text. Students follow along, reading silently.
3. When the teacher comes to a key academic or target word, he or she leaves that word out, allowing the class to fill in the gap together as a class.
4. Tip: Be sure not to leave out the last word in a sentence. This can confuse students!
5. Tip: Choose words that students know how to pronounce or are familiar with. This will make the reading go more smoothly.
6. Tip: I use the Oral Cloze often when students are reading a text for the first time. It helps students become familiar with the text while identifying key vocabulary words in text.

Conclusion

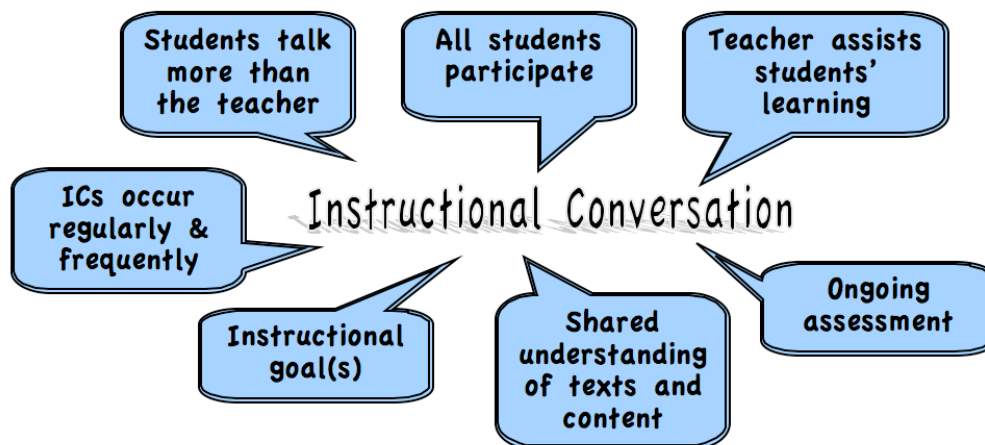
Regardless of your content area, using one or more of these explicit vocabulary instructional techniques will contribute to your students' academic English skills. Using multiple strategies over the course of the year helps build a culture of language learning that empowers students to view language as a path toward academic success.

Part II: Instructional Conversations

Introduction

A centerpiece of the *Beyond Words* approach includes frequent Instructional Conversation (ICs). According to Tharp's (2002) description of (IC) (see Figure below), teachers

May work on a unit or thematic topic with the whole class, followed by Small Group ICs that focus on researching and analyzing selected aspects of the large group topic. Teachers combine ordinary conversations' responsive and inclusive features with assessment and assistance to help engage students and stimulate their learning. While any good conversation requires some latitude and drift in the topic, the teacher's leadership is used to focus on the instructional goal. While the teacher holds the goal firmly in mind, the route to the goal is responsive to student participation and developing understanding. (p. 191).



This section outlines some tips for incorporating ICs into *any* classroom. These suggestions derive from my own experiences using IC with my students, as well as from Dalton & Tharp's (2002) description of the key features of IC (above).

Make it Routine

- ICs should occur often and as part of students' instructional routine. If you teach in an alternating block schedule, you may be able to find room

for ICs daily. If your periods are shorter, incorporating ICs a few times a week would work as well.

- Assign students to mixed-ability groups, or groups that address the needs of your class. If you have a class with students from multiple grade levels, create heterogeneous groups. Younger students learn a tremendous amount from older students, while older students benefit from becoming role models for the younger ones. Finally, periodically rearrange and redistribute the students in the groups, as this gives students an opportunity to work with everyone from the class.
- If you have large classes and cannot hold ICs for all students in one class period (using a rotation model), consider holding ICs daily, with each small group meeting once per day. While you meet with a particular group, other students can be working independently, reading silently, or working in pairs or small groups on an assignment. Their work should require little support from you, as your attention will be focused on one small group. This approach would at least allow every student to have meaningful contact with you and her peers each week. You can still modify instruction for the whole class based on meeting with one group, as there is a good chance that students who express confusion in one group echo other students' questions.

Encourage Participation

One benefit of small group discussions is that students cannot easily “hide” from the teacher or avoid participation. Small groups also make it easier for students to share their ideas publicly. Following are some suggestions for encouraging student participation in ICs:

- Allow Students to Get Used to the Routine. One way to get students accustomed to speaking in small groups is to have each student respond to the same question, going quickly around the circle. First, give students some time to write or think about the question (either in whole group discussion, or during the small group period). Then, ask each student to respond briefly to the question. It is ok if students repeat the same or similar answer. The goal is to get them used to speaking in front of the group. Then, ask students to elaborate on the question or make connections with the readings or with their own lives. You can facilitate this by modeling for students.
- Use Students' Names. Throwing a question to the group sometimes doesn't get their attention, but addressing each student by name helps students feel attentive and welcome.
- Let Students Talk. At first, you may do a majority of the talking as students learn how to participate in this type of academic discussion. Remember that it is likely new to them. But over time, your role should

recede to that of a facilitator. Students should eventually do most of the talking during ICs.

- Complement students and reinforce appropriate academic discussion behaviors. When a student uses evidence to support her thinking, builds upon another's ideas or disagrees politely, point it out to the group. Over time, students will internalize the norms of academic discussion based on your positive feedback.

Support Student Learning

ICs are designed to include the teacher. Letting students work together in small groups on assignments or projects, without your presence, is a great idea. But the IC strategy requires teachers to sit with the students during the conversation. This allows you to support students as needed. Do not be afraid to interject and help students when they get stuck. For example, you might:

- Refer students back to the text when they can't remember an idea.
- Help students use appropriate academic vocabulary words correctly.
- Ask clarifying questions or paraphrase students' responses back to them. Be careful! Some students may just nod and say, "yes, that's what I meant." It is a good idea to ask them to then restate their idea in their own words.
- Remind students of relevant prior learning that might help them. "Remember when we learned about...?" or "This reminds me of..."

Have an Instructional Goal

Your instructional goal can be very simple or complex depending on the content or lesson. Following are some goals I have set in my own classroom, many of which may be relevant across content areas.

- Familiarize students with new academic vocabulary words.
- Refresh students' memories of past vocabulary words.
- Re-read a text for a specific purpose, for example, to locate the main idea, supporting details, evidence or opinions.
- Access students' prior knowledge about a relevant topic.
- Build students' knowledge about a relevant topic.
- Assist students with applying newly acquired skills to a new topic or task.
- Review for an exam or quiz.
- Make connections between a text and students' lives or other texts read in class.
- Teach and model for students the norms of class discussion, including how to interject a comment, or how to agree, disagree, or use evidence to support one's thinking.

Modify Instruction Based on Assessment

Perhaps the most useful feature of ICs from the teacher's perspective is that they enable teachers to gather immediate feedback about students' understanding of the content. But that information is only helpful when teachers use it to modify instruction based on what they observe. Modifying instruction does not need to be time consuming. Following are some examples of modifications you might consider when students express confusion or need additional time on a subject:

- Add a warm-up activity the next day that addresses the previous day's questions. If you have a warm-up routine built into the period, it makes this change much simpler to implement.
- At the end of the period, do a quick "wrap-up" activity that addresses the issue.
- Determine who the "experts" are in each small group, and ask those students to pair up with a lesser skilled student in that area. Use the small group session to facilitate a cooperative activity that pairs the two students to complete a task, while you check for understanding and intervene when needed.
- Teach the necessary words! Often students become confused about new topics simply because they are missing the vocabulary they need to make sense of the new information. This might become apparent during an IC. It could be that a simple vocabulary lesson could assist students with their learning.
- If the confusion is significant, or if the concept is fundamental to the unit, design an activity that encourages students to work collaboratively toward understanding. See the section on creating challenging tasks for some ideas.

Conclusion

Implementing ICs in your classroom can do wonders for students' learning. ICs also have the added benefit of enabling you to get to know your students beyond what you typically see in class each day. Students have numerous experiences that can prove fruitful for extending and deepening their understanding of concepts. ICs enable you to access and harness those experiences, empowering students to become active agents in their own learning.

Part III: Inquiry-Based Activities

Introduction

Another feature of the *Beyond Words* approach includes frequent opportunities for students to work collaboratively to engage in critical thinking about a new topic by accessing their prior knowledge about that subject, and also building prior knowledge so that they can develop a context for understanding. For English Learners, using inquiry-based activities can facilitate activation of prior knowledge while also engaging students in exploration of new information, preparing students to read difficult texts and to extend and deepen their understanding of those texts.

The purpose of this section is not to encourage an exact duplication of these lessons, but rather to illuminate the thinking process behind the activities so that you may begin to create your own inquiry-based activities that will help your English Learners engage more deeply and meaningfully with your content area *and* with academic English. The first section outlines considerations for developing inquiry-based activities in the classroom as a means toward preparing students to read a text. Two sample activities from the *Beyond Words* media literacy unit illustrate such considerations. Next, the second section provides suggestions for using inquiry-based activities to deepen students' understanding of key ideas from texts they have read. An additional two activities from the *Beyond Words* unit provide insight into what such activities might look like.

In Part III, you will find the following sections:

- Before Reading: Preparing Students to Read a New Text
 - Sample Activity 1: Introduction to Advertising
 - Sample Activity 2: Media Gallery Walk
- During Reading: Extending Students' Understanding of Key Ideas
 - Sample Activity 3: Examining the Media-What do you Notice?
 - Sample Activity 4: Analyzing Racial Stereotypes

Before Reading: Preparing Students to Read a New Text

Engaging students in inquiry prior to reading a new text activates prior knowledge and piques students' curiosity about the content. Such activities do not need to be lengthy or complex. However, working with English Learners requires particular attention to students' language needs, including the linguistic demands of the text. Some considerations for creating inquiry-based activities for ELs are:

- Encourage Collaboration. Facilitating collaboration in pairs and small groups enables student to share their experiences orally with peers, making connections between past learning and new information and engaging students in cooperative discovery. For some activities, pairing students with a friend ensures that students will feel comfortable asking questions and sharing prior experiences. For other activities, pairing or grouping students in mixed-ability arrangements facilitates peer-to-peer teaching and learning.
- Keep it Simple. Often, ELs become overwhelmed with new procedures, especially when encountering new information. Early on in a unit, design activities that are simple and easy to follow, with few steps. This enables students to concentrate on the exploration, rather than the rules of the activity. As students acquire more knowledge and become more comfortable with the content, you can increase the complexity and depth of the activities to match students' new levels of mastery.
- Keep it Engaging. Inquiry-based activities only succeed when students are actively engaged in the task at hand. Strategic use of technology can help engage students in new tasks, especially when the technology is user-friendly and interactive. For example, thousands of high-quality, educational websites offer students multiple and varied ways to encounter new subjects, across content areas. In fact, some textbooks offer lists of online resources teachers can use to extend students' learning beyond the book.
- Follow Up. Whether you facilitate a whole-class discussion or small group Instructional Conversations, be sure to follow the activity with teacher-mediated discussion. This will allow you to help students make connections between their observations and the terms and concepts within the target texts. Ensure that all students have the opportunity to share their experiences, whether in pairs or individually in front of the group. Finally, providing students with the opportunity to write about what they've learned helps them internalize their observations so they can refer back to their notes for guidance and clarification once they encounter the text.

- Address Select Vocabulary in Advance. Even though you will likely be pre-teaching vocabulary from your unit, occasionally you will also need to teach one or more words that students will need to understand if they are to successfully engage in a given activity. For example, if you want students to *explore* a website, or *analyze* an image, you will need to ensure that students understand those terms. In fact, using inquiry to teach such words provides a highly effective method for enriching students' academic language skills.

Activity I: Introduction to Advertising

Context & Purpose: This activity serves as an introduction to a media literacy unit, focusing on the role advertising plays in our lives. The activity is engaging and fun, taps into their prior knowledge about advertising, and builds new knowledge about the background behind advertising decisions.

Grouping: Students work with a partner of their choice, outside of their grade level. This gives students choice, but prevents students from working with a best friend in his or her grade.

Overview: Students log on to the PBS “Don’t Buy It: Get Media Smart” website, which is designed to educate young people about advertising. The website is student-friendly, easy to follow, and low in academic language. It also uses familiar products to demonstrate a number of advertising tricks that companies frequently use to sell their products. Students use the guidelines below to explore the website together while the teacher circulates the room, asking students probing questions and pointing out interesting website features for students to explore. After about 20 minutes, students proceed to small group Instructional Conversations to debrief their observations.

Introduction

- With a partner, find a computer! Go to:
<http://pbskids.org/dontbuyit/advertisingtricks/>
 - Advertising Tricks
 - Food advertising tricks
 - What’s an Ad? Watch the videos!
 - Be the ad detective
 - Create Your Own Ad!

Tips and Suggestions:

- This activity works because it is simple, easy and fun for students. Students are not occupied with writing anything down or completing a complex series of tasks. This frees them to talk, laugh and explore the website using their own curiosity and language.
- Use of an engaging website automatically attracts students to the content.
- Allowing students to choose their partners for this activity enhances the social/conversational intent of the task.

- Following the activity with an IC enables all students to compare notes with other pairs, to bring up stories and observations from their own lives and to engage in a fruitful conversation about the role advertising plays in our lives.

Activity 2: Media Gallery Walk

Context & Purpose: During the media literacy unit, students read several articles that explore the role of the media in shaping the way we think. Students are likely not familiar with the word *media*, however, and thus need the opportunity to learn about the term. This activity has several goals: to introduce students to the various types of media, to engage students in discussion about the role those types of media play in our decision making, and to identify the audiences targeted by each type of media.

Grouping: Students are grouped together in small groups according to assigned seating. This facilitates quick transitions and allows students to work with students they feel comfortable with.

Overview: After students have learned the target words for this activity, including *media* and *influence*, students complete a collaborative think/write/pair/share in which students work with a partner to answer the following sentence starters:

Thinking about culture...

- With a partner, discuss and write responses to the following ideas:
 - Some types of media are...
 - The media influences people's thinking because...
 - The main types of media that young people prefer are...
 - The media's influence on young people is _____. For example...

Next, students share their responses with the class. During the discussion, the teacher should note the types of media that students identify. Then, create one poster for each type of media, displaying the posters throughout the classroom. Students will then proceed to one of the posters in their small groups. Spending about 5 minutes at each station, students should read and respond to the following prompts by making notes on the posters. Students should also respond to others' comments. When 5 minutes pass, alert the groups to rotate, enabling all groups to respond to each poster. When all groups have visited each poster, collect them so that you can use them during a follow-up Instructional Conversation.

Media Gallery Walk

- Around the room are posters with different types of media that you identified.
- At each poster, write words & sentences that come to mind when you think about that type of media. Think about:
 - How does this type of media impact your decisions?
 - What characteristics does this type of media have? What are some possible **positive** or **negative** issues with this type of media?
 - What audience(s) does this type of media target? How?

Tips and Suggestions:

- Gallery Walks are often conducted without conversation. However, allowing students to talk with their peers about the questions enables them to clarify their thinking, share ideas and help each other understand the topic more fully.
- Asking students to generate ideas related to the topic (identifying types of media, for example) empowers students to bring their own experiences to the conversation.
- Using academic language in the instructions (for example, *media*, *influence*, *positive* and *negative*) provides one more opportunity for students to use the language in context.
- Gallery walks are fun, interactive and easy to facilitate. No matter the content or topic, this strategy serves a number of purposes, from accessing students' prior knowledge, engaging them in discussion and using academic language in meaningful ways.

During Reading: Extend Students' Understanding of Key Ideas

Reading a text, especially one that is rich with academic English, often requires multiple readings. Using inquiry-based activities after students have had some exposure to a new text allows students to deepen their understanding of key concepts and reinforce connections between the texts and their own experiences. In addition to the “before reading” suggestions listed previously (encourage collaboration, address key vocabulary in advance, etc.), following are several suggestions for using inquiry to deepen students’ understanding of essential ideas after students have read a challenging text at least once.

- Provide Scaffolding. Since students will be extending their knowledge of texts they have already read, the inquiry-based activities you use can be more complex. However, you must provide students adequate support if they are to be successful. For example, provide note-taking templates, graphic organizers, models and other scaffolds that will support students in their inquiry.
- Challenge Students’ Thinking. Once students have done their exploration, provide them with the opportunity to draw conclusions about their observations and make connections with the texts they have read. Engaging their critical thinking skills will facilitate deeper understanding of the texts and empower students to ask questions and explore the underlying themes further.
- Use Visual Texts. Analytical skills are crucial for developing students’ academic English skills. Teaching students how to analyze visual texts often facilitates textual analysis skills, especially when the teacher assists students with transferring students’ skills between media. Using cartoons, advertisements, photographs, and film clips provides an engaging medium for developing students’ critical reading skills.

Activity 3: Examining the Media—What Do You Notice?

Context and Purpose: Several articles in the *Beyond Words* media literacy unit address stereotypes of minorities in the media, including television programming. The purpose of this activity is to engage students in an objective exploration of hiring trends, specifically regarding minority actors, within major television networks.

Grouping: Students work with a partner. I recommend assigning partners, pairing lower-skilled students with a strong partner.

Overview: For this activity, students will work with a partner, sharing a computer between the two. First, assign to each pair of students a network website to review, including ABS, CBS, NBC, FOX, MTV, BET and TBS. Next, choose a show that you know your students watch. Modeling the procedure, discuss with students the setting of the show, its main characters, as well as the racial and ethnic background of the characters. Once students know how to analyze a show, hand out the following graphic organizer to each pair, asking students to proceed to their assigned website, making observations and notes about the types of shows displayed by the network. Students should pay particular attention to the racial and ethnic backgrounds of the actors. Following is a sample graphic organizer for this activity.

EXAMINING THE MEDIA WHAT DO YOU NOTICE?		
NAME OF CHANNEL: _____		STUDENT NAMES: _____
SHOW TITLE & BRIEF DESCRIPTION	ACTOR / ACTRESS & BRIEF DESCRIPTION (GENDER, RACIAL / ETHNIC BACKGROUND)	CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

During the follow-up small group discussion, discuss students' observations, noting the similarities and differences between the networks and the popularity of certain types of shows, including reality and comedy shows. Avoid intervening too much or having students draw any specific conclusions, as this will be their objective the next day.

When students enter class the following day, ask them to pair up with their partners from the previous lesson. This time, ask students to look for trends and patterns in their notes. First, it is important to define *trends* for students, as this is likely a new term for them. Using the vocabulary teaching routine, provide students with numerous examples of trends, as expressed in the figure below:



Students then work in pairs to complete the next step, transforming their observations into concrete, evidence-based conclusions. The next graphic organizer helps students organize their thinking.

EXAMINING THE MEDIA: WHAT TRENDS OR PATTERNS DO YOU NOTICE?

Now that you've had a chance to study some of the major television networks for their programming choices, it is time to analyze what you have found.

Student Names: _____

First, start by calculating your data.

The network we reviewed:	
Type of network (cable, network TV):	
# of TV shows we examined:	
# of TV shows we examined by <i>type/topic:</i> (Sample types: Reality, Drama, Comedy, Game Show)	

Now, looking at your data and notes, what observations or conclusions can you draw about what types of shows and characters are most common on television, or on your particular channel? Write as many observations (in complete sentences) as you can.

Once students complete the graphic organizer, students should proceed to Instructional Conversations in small groups to discuss their findings.

Tips and Suggestions:

- Providing step-by-step instructions for students, along with graphic organizers to record observations, enables students to concentrate on their analysis, rather than memorizing complex tasks.
- This activity works best in pairs, rather than small groups. Encourage students to divide tasks, with one student using the computer and the other student recording the duo's observations.
- During the follow up ICs, emphasize the key purpose of the activity.

Activity 4: Analyzing Racial Stereotypes

Context and Purpose: One of the target vocabulary words in the media literacy unit is *stereotype*. After reading one or two articles that use the word, students might still demonstrate confusion about how a stereotype really works, and how damaging they can be. The purpose of this activity is to teach students how to analyze a visual text (in this case a cartoon) so that a concept becomes clear, in this case, a *stereotype*.

Grouping: Students work individually, in pairs and in small groups for this activity.

Overview: For this activity, students first read a short passage about stereotypes of Latinos in the media. They then answered some short questions about the passage, and shared their responses with their partners. Students then share questions and comments with the entire class. Since the video students will watch also depicts stereotypes of Latinos, the reading passage (from the student text) provides a short introduction to similar ideas. Note: The reading serves as a scaffold for the analysis of the video; your student textbook likely includes captions, images and sample passages that could be useful for this purpose.

After the whole-class discussion, students then watch a short cartoon. In this case, students view the Speedy Gonzalez short cartoon entitled *Mexican Boarders*, in which Speedy's cousin, Slow Poke, tries to enter Speedy's home, evading Sylvester the Cat. While students watch, they take notes individually on one of the two mouse characters. Students are to observe their chosen character's speech & language, clothing & appearance, and interactions with Sylvester the Cat. Show the film two times, as this provides students with an opportunity to enjoy watching it the first time, and analyze it the second time.

After the film, ask students to take their brief notes and summarize them more formally, using academic language. Then, students should compare notes with a partner who studied the other character, using the bottom two squares of the graphic organizer to draw conclusions about the portrayal of each character.

Finally, after students have discussed their observations with a partner, proceed to small group Instructional Conversations in which you lead students through a discussion and analysis of the "text." In particular, have students consider how the stereotypes created by Speedy and Slow Poke might be damaging to Mexicans or Mexican Americans (see analysis questions).

Analyzing Racial Stereotypes:
Speedy Gonzalez & Slow Poke ("Mexican Boarders")

Some Key Vocabulary:

stereotype, representation, influence, media, racism, minority, impact, manipulate

Slow Poke
<p>My observations regarding speech & language:</p> <p>A summary of my observations (using academic language):</p>
<p>My observations regarding clothing & appearance:</p> <p>A summary of my observations (using academic language):</p>
<p>My observations regarding his interaction with the cat:</p> <p>A summary of my observations (using academic language):</p>
Speedy Gonzalez
Slow Poke



Analysis

- How can the stereotype demonstrated by Speedy Gonzalez be damaging to Mexicans or Mexican Americans?
- How can the stereotype demonstrated by Slow Poke be damaging to Mexicans or Mexican Americans?

Tips and Suggestions:

- Choose a visual text that is engaging for students. I chose this video because I had a feeling students had seen Speedy Gonzales cartoons previously, but had not considered how they might create damaging stereotypes of Mexicans and Mexican Americans.
- Encourage students to bring in their own experiences during Instructional Conversations, especially if the concept you are illustrating resonates in their lives.
- Encourage students to use academic language to express their thinking in writing and during discussions. This helps them internalize key words and structures, essentially translating their observations into formal academic speech and writing.
- Choosing a small excerpt from your textbook is a simple, easy way to shine a spotlight on an important but challenging concept. You do not always need to look far for excerpts that will engage students' thinking.
- Return to your target text, during discussion and during subsequent lessons. This way students will be able to apply what they've learned to the texts they have encountered, thus deepening their understanding of key ideas.

Part IV: Challenging Tasks

Introduction

The final feature of the *Beyond Words* approach includes creating challenging assignments that engage students in critical thinking and analysis beyond the text or content. Taking students beyond memorization of facts or vocabulary terms into analytical reasoning helps them develop their critical literacy and academic English skills.

Part IV will highlight some points to consider when creating challenging tasks for English Learners through four sample lessons from the *Beyond Words* approach. As with activities discussed previously, the assignments detailed here should provide models for creating your own challenging activities in your content area classrooms. I hope that you will look to your curriculum to find ways to extend students' thinking beyond the text, encouraging them to become critical thinkers in the process.

- In Part IV, you will find the following activities:
 - Sample Activity 5: Making Connections
 - Sample Activity 6: Introduction to Argument
 - Sample Activity 7: Analyzing an Advertisement
 - Sample Activity 8: Avoiding Stereotypes

Activity 5: Making Connections

Context and Purpose: This activity serves as both an introduction to an article (a “before” reading activity), as well as a critical thinking exercise.

Grouping: Students work in pairs to complete this task. Pair a stronger student with a student who struggles, either with reading or oral language fluency.

Overview: One of the articles in the *Beyond Words* unit addresses advertising and its impact on viewers (Moore, Short, Smith & Tatum, 2007a, p. 488). In the student text are listed several statistics about television viewership and consumer purchasing habits, particularly among teens. See below for the statistics listed in the student text:

Television in the United States

Number of thirty-second **commercials** the average American teen sees each year: 20,000

Number of **dollars** American teens spend each year: 175 billion

Number of **violent crimes** the average American sees on TV by age 18: 200,000

Number of **arrests** of Americans under 18 for violent crimes in 2005: 66,748

Number of hours the average American spends **watching TV** each year: 1,745

Number of hours an American teen **attends school** each year: 900

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau *Statistical Abstract*, Tables 1116 and 1117; Norman Herr, *Sourcebook for Teaching Science*, 2001; U.S. Department of Justice, *Statistical Briefing Book*, 2003; Lueg, J.E. and Ponder, N. (2006) “Understanding the Socialization Process of Teen Consumers Across Shopping Channels,” *International Journal of Electronic Marketing and Retailing*, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 83-97; www.fbi.gov.

The text does not provide connections between the statistics, but there are connections that can be made. Empowering students to consider the connections engages them in the issues the statistics address, namely, the relationship between advertising and buying habits among teenagers. First, instruct students to discuss each of the statistics with a partner. Depending on your students, you may want to clarify some terms listed in the text (for example, what are some examples of violent crimes?). Then, provide a model “map” that visually displays the relationship between two phenomena. In the following example, I use arrows to mean “can cause,” arguing that smoking cigarettes can cause cancer and poor health, noting that it does not always cause these issues, and that smoking is not the only cause of these issues. Point out the nuance in your map, as students might be tempted to state that one thing

causes another, when in fact there might only be a *correlation*. Students' maps should be creative and use images to express their thinking.

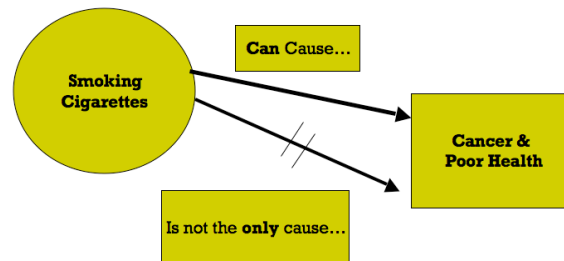
After students create their maps, instruct them to bring them to the small group for an Instructional Conversation follow-up.

Making Connections

- Look at the facts & statistics on page 488. With a partner, create a MAP that explains how you think the statistics **might be** related to each other. Use images and sentences to explain your idea.
- Words to use:

Indicate	Demonstrate	Suggest
Highlight	Imply	Cause
		Explain

Making Connections-Example



Tips and Suggestions:

- Encourage students to use academic vocabulary words to express their thinking, along with complete sentences.
- Circulate the room to answer students' questions and provide guidance.
- Choose statistics or facts that have some ambiguity to them. You may find examples in your content text, or you can locate online resources that prove illuminating.
- Encourage students during IC to question each others' assumptions about the relationship between the statistics.

- When reading the target text, refer back to these statistics, asking students for their impressions and connections.

Activity 6: Introduction to Argument

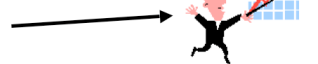
Context and Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to introduce students to the three types of academic argument (Moore et al., 2007, p. 492). In the media literacy unit, the student text addresses these complex ideas briefly, but not enough for students to grasp them fully. This activity extends the introduction provided in the text, and uses images as a means toward analyzing arguments.

Grouping: Students work both individually and in small groups to complete this task.

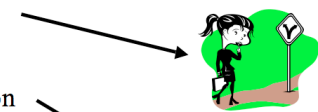
Overview: As with other tasks, you must first clarify the key terms for students before they can use them accurately. For this activity, provide students with a graphic organizer on which to take notes about the types of academic argument (see the sample provided). In addition, provide direct instruction about the three types of argument. Along with the vocabulary teaching routine discussed in Part I, use images, stories and examples to demonstrate the terms. Be sure to point out that just because an argument uses logic or credible speakers, it does not mean that the argument is true. Note that the images on the graphic organizer match the images provided on the vocabulary slides. This is intentional. Any connections you can help students make to understand these terms will help them tremendously.

Types of Arguments

□ Appeal to Logic



□ Appeal to Ethics



□ Appeal to Emotion




Argument

□ A statement that uses evidence to support an idea as true or false, right or wrong, good or bad.


*She made a good **argument** about why we should vote for her.*

*His argument to the judge wasn't successful because he couldn't support his **claim**.*


Logos*/Logic

Synonyms	Explanation/ Examples	Image
Logic	<p><i>Refers to the attempt to appeal to intellect; use of logical reasoning and facts to support a claim.</i></p> <p>Sample logical argument: If a teenager is legally required to register for the draft at 18, he or she should also be allowed to purchase alcohol.</p>	

Ethos*/Ethics

Synonyms	Explanation/ Examples	Image
A source you can trust	<p><i>Refers to the trustworthiness of the speaker.</i></p> <p>Even though I didn't understand all the information, I trusted my doctor's advice</p>	

Pathos*/Emotion




Synonyms	Explanation/ Examples	Image
Emotion	<p><i>Refers to the appeal to one's emotions (love, fear, patriotism, etc.) in an argument.</i></p> <p>Appeal to emotion of patriotism: All Americans should support the war because it hurts the troops otherwise.</p>	

Types of Arguments

What is Argument? _____

She made a good _____ about why we should vote for her.

His _____ to the judge wasn't successful because he couldn't support his _____.

<p>Appeals to LOGIC (logos):</p> <p>Synonym(s):</p> <p>Explanation:</p> <p>Example:</p> 	<p>Examples of appeals to LOGIC:</p> <p>1. The advertisement for _____ appeals to logic by _____.</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Appeals to ETHICS (ethos):</p> <p>Synonym(s):</p> <p>Explanation:</p> <p>Example:</p> 	<p>Examples of appeals to ETHICS:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Appeals to EMOTION (pathos):</p> <p>Synonym(s):</p> <p>Explanation:</p> <p>Example:</p> 	<p>Examples of appeals to EMOTION:</p> <p>1. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>2. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>3. _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>

After students have a grasp of the main ideas, they must now apply their new knowledge to a challenging task. Since this activity is designed to coincide with a media literacy unit (you can adapt it to any subject that addresses argument), choose five or six magazine advertisements to post around the room. Students should work in small groups of three or four to circulate the room, examining

each argument for samples of logical, ethical and emotional appeals. It is crucial that you allow students to work together, as they need to negotiate and discuss the intentions behind the advertisements. Walk around the room and assist students as needed.

Finally, once students have collected examples for all three types of argument, assemble in small groups to discuss their results. Bring the advertisements with you, and be sure to address students' misconceptions and misunderstandings.

Tips and Suggestions:

- This may seem like a simple activity, not challenging at all. Remember, though, that for English Learners, they are likely new to the language and concepts behind academic argument. They have seen many advertisements, so using ads to introduce this analytical skill allows them to focus their energy on the target skill (using the language of academic argument to analyze a “text”) rather than on comprehending a difficult text. Later, when students understand the terms, introduce challenging written texts to them for analysis.
- Encourage students to use academic vocabulary words and complete sentences to express their thinking.
- Choose a wide variety of advertisements that you know use the three types of argument. This will give students many opportunities to successfully identify each type of argument.

Activity 7: Analyzing an Advertisement

Context and Purpose: This activity extends students' work in the "Introduction to Argument" activity, encouraging students to examine the intention behind advertisements. In addition, this activity gives students the opportunity to use academic vocabulary from the unit in context. Finally, students must analyze a visual text for bias and impact on the intended audience (which students must define), all of which are crucial critical thinking skills.

Grouping: Group students in mixed-ability groups of three.

Overview: Students should choose an advertisement from the previous activity to analyze. They will then use the following sentence starters below to analyze the argument and create a poster that summarizes their results. The posters must include the sentences as well as images that represent their thinking. Encourage students to show you their sentences before they write them on the posters. This will help you correct any misunderstandings and push their thinking to new levels.

After students create their posters, have each group present them to the class. Audience members should come up with questions and feedback for each group. Finally, proceed to small group Instructional Conversations in which you discuss the groups' work and address students' questions.

Vocabulary Rewind!

- The goal of this advertisement is to **convince** people to_____.
- This ad is trying to **appeal** to **consumers** who_____. I know this because_____.
- This advertisement **manipulates** people by_____. For example,_____.
- This ad does/does not **convince** me to _____ because_____.
- This advertisement can have a negative **impact** on _____ because_____.

Tips and Suggestions:

- Have students create a draft poster before they create the real one. This helps teach them the revision process, and also allows you help them clarify their thinking before they finalize their work.

- Display the posters around the room and refer to them often during the rest of the unit.
- Use the language of academic argument students have learned previously to connect to this analysis. For example, if an advertisement is manipulating people, is it using ethical, logical or emotional appeals to do so? Which are more effective? Why?

Activity 8: Avoiding Stereotypes

Context and Purpose: The purpose of this challenging task is for students to use their knowledge of unit content to provide solutions to a social program, after having read numerous articles and completed other inquiry-based and challenging tasks. In this activity, students will propose changes that members of the media, including writers, actors, producers and executives can make in order to reduce the number of harmful stereotypes of minorities found in the media.

Grouping: Students should work in mixed-ability groups of 3.

Overview: The first step is to assign each small group an “actor profile” of a fictional actor trying to get work in the television or movie industries. Sample profiles are included. Students must first spend some time discussing the possible roles that actor might be hired for, based on stereotypes of actors of that description that are common in the media. Students must consider shows and movies they have seen in order to define the stereotypical character(s) their assigned actor might be asked to play.

Next, students should reread articles from the media literacy unit to locate evidence to support their claims. For example, if students think that an African American woman might be asked to play the role of a drug user, they need to locate evidence in the text that supports that claim directly or indirectly. You will find a sample graphic organizer (reduced in size for printing) that students can use to record and organize their thinking.

Students will then gather their evidence and create a poster that outlines five tips or suggestions for media industry members to follow to avoid creating harmful stereotypical roles. On the poster they must identify and describe the stereotypes, use images to support their thinking, include evidence from the texts to support their claims, and list the five calls for change. They should address their audience of professionals using appropriate academic language.

Finally, students should present their posters to the class, while audience members ask questions and provide feedback to each of the groups.

Actor Profiles

1. Anita is a 36 year old Latina woman who was born in the US and speaks both Spanish and English. She is about 5'8 and has long dark hair. She started her acting career as a singer.
2. Carlos is a 48 year-old Mexican-American man who speaks with a pretty strong Spanish accent. He started his career as a stand-up comedian, but now is an actor.
3. Jennifer is a 31-year-old white woman. She is tall (about 5'10") and has an athletic build. She has long dark hair.
4. Heather is a 35-year-old African American woman with very short hair. She has been acting for many years but only became really successful within the past 5 years.
5. Andrew is a 36-year-old Asian American man originally from Japan (he speaks both Japanese and English). He has had few acting jobs in the US, but his career is improving.
6. Jamie is a 44-year-old African American man who started his acting career in comedy, but he wants to try more dramatic (serious) roles. He is good looking, but is only about 5'8" tall.
7. Stephanie is a 61-year-old white woman who started her acting career after age 40. She has grey hair, but she colors it (brown or blonde) for her photos and auditions.

AVOIDING STEREOTYPES: ADVOCATE FOR CHANGE!

Actors in Hollywood have a big challenge in front of them. First, they must work hard to get jobs in TV and the movies. Second, they must work to avoid being "type-casted" in stereotypical roles. Your job is to help these struggling actors develop careers they can be proud of by arguing for better representation of minorities in the media. Your audience includes writers, producers and television and movie executives.

With your small group, think about the actor profile Ms. V has given you. You will first think about all the different stereotypes that the actor might be asked to play. You will then look in the articles from this unit ("A Long Way to Go" and "The Color Green") for evidence to support your ideas. Finally, you will come up with a list of 5 changes that you think people in the media should make in order to improve the representation of minorities in the media. All of your information will go onto a large poster. Remember to use your academic vocabulary to express your thinking—throughout your argument!

Student Names: _____

Common Stereotypes	Quote(s) from the text to support the idea that this is a common stereotype...

Your Advertisement Must Include:

- **Headings for each part of your poster**
- **At least 4 graphics (Photos, charts, graphs, etc.)**
- **4 Sentences outlining the stereotypes that are often associated with your actor's profile**
- **2 Quotes from the text(s) to support your thinking**
- **5 "tips" for writers, directors and producers to change their practices.**

Tips and Suggestions:

- If you have computers available, encourage students to conduct Internet research to support their ideas. They might include facts and

statistics about media hiring, for example, or images from recent movies or television shows to illustrate their claims.

- Encourage students to use appropriate language when referring to minority ethnic groups. Teach proper terms explicitly and insist that they use them on their posters. This will encourage respectful dialogue.

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