

# Supporting ELL/Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students for Academic Achievement



## **Acknowledgment**

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# Introduction

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## Changing Demographics and Their Implications for K-12 Teachers

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U.S. Department of Education Office of English Language Acquisition [www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/index.html](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/index.html)

.....  
U.S. Census Bureau. *Language Use and English Speaking Ability*. Census 2000 Brief, 2003

**T**he demographics of America's public schools are changing dramatically as a result of the highest levels of immigration in American history. These changes are happening just as schools also face the highest levels of accountability for the academic performance of all children. The students and families served in K-12 classrooms reflect the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity of the nation. For these students to develop and learn optimally, teachers must be prepared to meet diverse developmental, cultural, linguistic, and education needs. More than ever, today's educators face the challenge of how best to respond to these needs. Today, every classroom teacher is an ELL/ESL teacher. See the last section of the Introduction for an explanation of the cultural and linguistic education terms used in this resource kit.

According to the U.S. Department of Education's survey of limited English proficient students and education programs, total Pre-K-12 enrollments increased 3.66% between 1995 and 2006, while LEP student enrollment increased a staggering 57.17% during that same time.

- More and more American students are born in other nations, speak different languages, and bring different cultural traditions to the classroom.
- The U.S. Census Bureau reports that about one in five students in public schools lives in a home where English is not the primary language, and predicts that by 2030, nearly 40% of the school-age population will speak a language other than English at home.
- During the 2005-06 school year, nearly every state recorded gains in their ELL populations; 191 districts enrolled students whose first language is other than English.

- Recent estimates place the number of language-minority students in K-12 schools at more than 14 million. The U.S. Department of Education indicates that more than 5 million school-age children in the United States are classified as ELLs.
- Nearly 8 out of 10 ELLs speak Spanish, but some districts have students who represent more than 100 different language groups.

These students are a diverse group of learners in terms of their education backgrounds, native language literacy, socioeconomic status, and cultural traditions. However, they are all held to the same accountability standards as their native English-speaking peers.

Today's teachers are faced with the complex responsibility of educating the growing student population who speaks a wide variety of languages/dialects (more than 177), come with varying levels of formal schooling, and represent a varying number of cultural traditions. Creating instructional environments as well as implementing instructional strategies to support learning outcomes aligned to state standards and core curriculum for this student population have become essential for classroom teachers.

Research identifies the pressing need for instructional strategies that will support CLD students who struggle with language, literacy, and content area academic needs as a priority for districts. Although many strategies for supporting native English speakers are applicable to the CLD population, significant differences exist in the way that successful academic gains for CLD students should be designed and implemented. These differences have many implications for K-12 classroom teachers, and this resource kit strives to highlight a variety of such research-based strategies.

.....  
August, D. and Shanahan,  
T. (eds.) *Developing  
Literacy in Second-  
Language Learners:  
Report of the National  
Literacy Panel on  
Language-Minority  
Children and Youth.*  
Lawrence Erlbaum  
Associates, 2006

.....  
National Clearinghouse  
for English Language  
Acquisition and  
Language Instruction  
Education Programs  
[www.ncela.gwu.edu](http://www.ncela.gwu.edu)

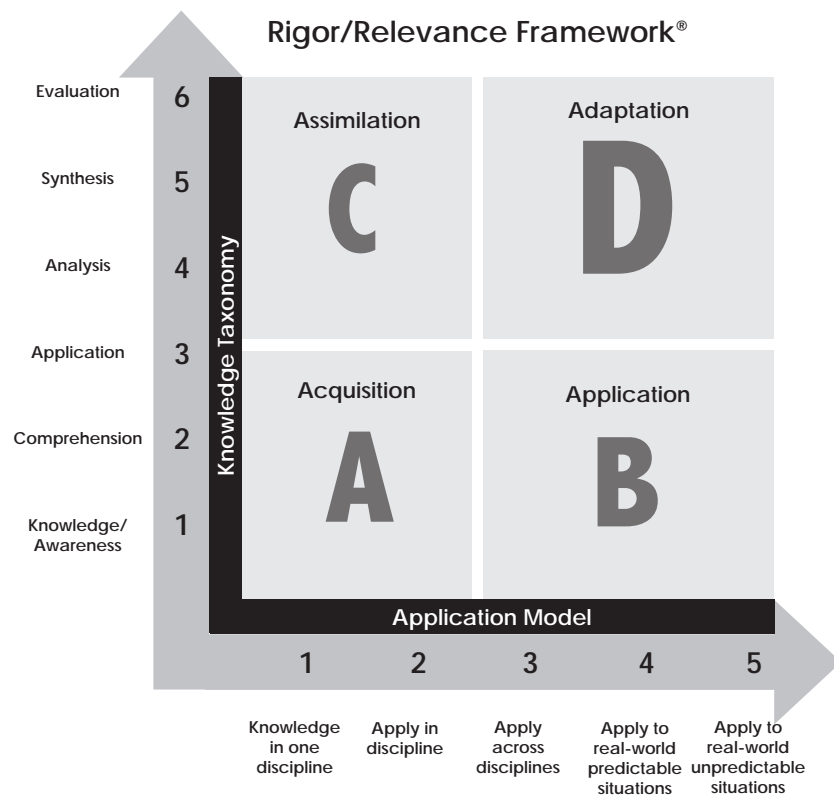
.....  
Center for Applied  
Linguistics [www.cal.  
org/topics/ell](http://www.cal.org/topics/ell)

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**Rigor/Relevance Framework<sup>®</sup> for Culturally Responsive Systemic Education Reform**

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The Rigor/Relevance Framework is a tool developed by the International Center for Leadership in Education to examine curriculum, instruction, and assessment. On the framework graphic, two continua — taxonomy knowledge and application model — form four quadrants that represent different types of learning experiences. The framework is a fresh approach to looking at curriculum that encourages movement to Quadrant D learning experiences with higher levels of rigor and relevance.



As a general rule:

**Quadrant A – Acquisition:** Experiences focus on recall or discovery of basic knowledge.

**Quadrant B – Application:** Experiences provide definite opportunities for students to apply knowledge, typically to a real-world problem.

**Quadrant C – Assimilation:** Experiences are often complex and require students to devise solutions frequently, which can lead to deeper understanding of concepts and knowledge.

**Quadrant D – Adaptation:** Experiences are high in rigor and relevance, and require unique solutions, often to unpredictable problems.

The chart on the following page provides examples of the types of learning experiences that can take place in each of the four quadrants of the framework for CLD students.

## Rigor/Relevance Framework for Culturally Responsive Systemic Education Reform

Educators across the United States are at different levels of implementing systemic education reform for CLD students. To support policymakers at the state, district, and school level with this very important process, the International Center has aligned its Rigor/Relevance Framework to the different stages of knowledge and application required for educating CLD students. On the following special version of the framework, Quadrant D reflects the ultimate goal of culturally responsive education reform: students achieving linguistic and academic proficiency, becoming fully engaged in school culture, and reaching their fullest potential. Policymakers and educators can identify the quadrant that comes closest to describing their district's current strategies and challenges for

responsive curriculum practices are the norm, and cultural and linguistic diversity is celebrated within the district and community through a shared vision of success.

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## About This Resource Kit

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.....  
 Garcia, G.E. "Factors Influencing the English Reading Test Performance of Spanish-Speaking Hispanic Children." *Reading Research Quarterly*, 26(4), 371-392, 1991

This resource kit is strategically designed to provide pertinent research and sound instructional strategies that will help CLD students achieve academically and reach their fullest potential.

“Culturally and linguistically diverse” is an education term used by the U.S. Department of Education to define students enrolled in education programs who are either non-English proficient (NEP) or limited-English proficient (LEP). The term is also used to identify students from homes and communities where English is not the primary language of communication. These students speak a variety of languages and come from diverse social, cultural, and economic backgrounds. The term most commonly used by educators to describe these students is “English language learners” (ELLs). English as a Second Language (ESL) is also used. Both CLD and ELL are used in this kit, but “culturally and linguistically diverse” (CLD) is preferred in recognition that the needs of diverse students are broader than just learning English.

This kit address a variety of considerations for supporting diverse learners in developing language skills *and* mastering grade level, standards-based content. These considerations include:

- general principles for teaching CLD learners
- theoretical foundations and implications for developing social and academic language
- specific instructional strategies and their benefits for CLD learners

- engagement strategies for CLD learners
- strategies for supporting comprehension, reading, and writing in the content areas
- scaffolding strategies for teaching grade level content
- assessment strategies

The kit is organized into the following chapters:

**Chapter 1. Teaching CLD Students: What Every Teacher Needs to Know** discusses the changing demographics in American classrooms and builds the case for why, today, every teacher is an ELL teacher. It provides a general definition of CLD students and explains the challenges they face. Also included is the role that culture plays in language learning as well as general guidelines for improving instruction for CLD students. This chapter discusses the significance of providing high quality education experiences for CLD students, giving them the skills and confidence to succeed in mainstream classrooms.

**Chapter 2. Developing Social and Academic Language to Facilitate Instruction** provides the theoretical foundations for language learning and defines the instructional implications of each theory. The chapter introduces the significance of comprehensible input, learner engagement, and culture and content. It also introduces social and academic language development. The role of the four language components: listening, speaking, reading, and writing are discussed. Instructional strategies for facilitating language development are presented.

**Chapter 3. Instructional Strategies for Supporting Academic Success** introduces instructional strategies for facilitating academic achievement, developing more rigorous and relevant instruction, and motivating CLD students to achieve at higher levels.

**Chapter 4. Strategies for Engaging CLD Students** features strategies for increasing student engagement. Since CLD students benefit from receptive and productive language produced during interaction, strategies for cooperative learning are featured.

**Chapter 5. Learning Strategies that Support Comprehension, Reading, and Writing** develops the significance of providing CLD students with comprehensible input. It presents specific strategies for sheltering the content to ensure that CLD students master grade level, standards-based content. It also presents strategies for supporting reading and writing in content area instruction.

**Chapter 6. Scaffolding Content for CLD Students** offers scaffolding strategies for teaching CLD students grade level content material. Scaffolding of content ensures that CLD students have access to a rigorous and relevant curriculum.

**Chapter 7. Formal and Informal Assessment Strategies** suggests formal and informal assessment practices that can be used effectively and fairly with CLD learners. The analysis provided will help teachers meet national accountability guidelines.

**Chapter 8: CLD Training Library for Schools and Districts** includes a glossary of over 150 terms and a comprehensive list of instructional resources for teachers of CLD students.

.....  
Look for this icon,  
which identifies  
items on the CD.



CD

Included with the kit are a CD and a DVD. The CD has selected items from the kit that schools/districts may want to use in electronic form and/or print for distribution. The 40-minute DVD, *Academic Achievement for ELL/CLD Students*, is a presentation by co-author Roger J. Gonzalez about the content of the resource kit and why it is important for educating CLD students. It was recorded at the 2010 Model Schools Conference.

**Top 10 Things That Mainstream Teachers Can Do *Today* to Improve Instruction for CLD Students**

1. Enunciate clearly, but do not raise your voice. Avoid idioms, slang words, and colloquial expressions that CLD students would not understand.
2. Whenever possible, support your words with visuals and gestures. Point directly to objects, dramatize concepts, and display pictures when appropriate. Visuals, gestures, and smiles help CLD students create meaning from a new environment.
3. Write clearly, legibly, and in print — CLD students may have difficulty reading cursive.
4. Develop and maintain regular routines. Use clear and consistent signals for classroom instructions.
5. Repeat information and review frequently. If a student does not understand, a teacher should try rephrasing or paraphrasing in shorter sentences and simpler syntax. Check often for understanding, but do not ask, “Do you understand?” Instead, have students demonstrate their learning in order to show comprehension.
6. Present new information in the context of known information.
7. Announce the lesson’s objectives and activities, and list instructions step-by-step in small “chunks.”
8. Present information using a variety of methods and delivery formats.
9. Provide frequent summations of the salient points of a lesson, and always emphasize key vocabulary words.

.....  
Derrick-Mescua, M.  
*General Principles  
for Teaching ELL  
Students*



## Chapter 2

# Developing Social and Academic Language to Facilitate Instruction

### Theoretical Foundations of Second Language Acquisition

Hadaway, N. L. and Young, T.A. *Changing Classrooms: Transforming Instruction*

“Good teachers make good choices, and good choices are grounded in theory.”  
 Jodi Reiss. *102 Content Strategies for English Language Learners: Teaching for Academic Success in Grades 3-12*

CLD learners have distinct learning needs that require understanding and specialized instructional strategies. Simply exposing learners to the English language and the American culture is not enough for academic success with core curriculum. Instructional strategies that facilitate instruction and assessment need to be based on comprehension of content through meaningful activities and assignments.

Teachers working with CLD students need to be familiar with the theoretical foundations of second-language acquisition principles and theory. The strategies presented in this resource kit facilitate instruction and assessment by helping teachers understand these theories and principles when making choices to empower their CLD students with effective instructional strategies.

The following five theoretical foundations have been considered in the strategies presented in this kit. Each foundation will be described in detail.

Theoretical Foundation	Instruction Implications
<b>Differentiation of Social and Academic Language - BICS and CALP</b>  Cummins, J. “Academic Language Learning, Transformation Pedagogy, and Information Technology: Towards a Critical Balance”	The language of the classroom requires more cognitively demanding language skills than the language of everyday experiences. With an understanding of the terms Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), teachers will understand the challenges of the process and product of content instruction for CLD learners.
<b>Comprehensible Input</b>  Echevarria, J., Vogt, M.E., and Short, D. Making Content Comprehensible for English Language Learners: The SIOP Model	Learning rigorous content material in a language CLD students do not speak or understand requires specialized techniques to make the content understood. By understanding the unique linguistic needs of CLD learners, teachers can undertake a conscious effort to make lessons understandable through a variety of means.

<p><b>Scaffolding</b></p> <p>Gibbons, P. <i>Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning</i></p>	<p>Scaffolding is a term used to ensure comprehensibility when teaching CLD students content material. The process of scaffolding involves various support strategies and approaches during lesson delivery. The use of pedagogically sound instructional approaches and scaffolding strategies across all subject areas will ensure CLD students' academic success.</p>
<p><b>Learner Engagement</b></p> <p>Abernathy, R. <i>Hot Tips for Teachers: 30+ Steps to Student Engagement</i></p> <p>Brown, R. and Evans, W.P. "Extracurricular Activity and Ethnicity: Creating Greater School Connection among Diverse Student Populations"</p>	<p>Student engagement is not a simple single technique; it is a complex and important dimension in providing an excellent and meaningful education for CLD students. With increasing amounts of student engagement, higher levels of achievement can be attained for CLD learners. Student engagement is the positive behaviors that indicate full participation by the student in the learning process.</p>
<p><b>Culture and Content</b></p> <p>Freeman, D. and Freeman, Y. <i>English Language Learners: The Essential Guide</i></p>	<p>The interrelationship between culture and content for academic performance is a factor to consider when planning instruction for CLD learners. Cultural learning affects the processes and content of instruction. The content of instruction related to culture includes aspects that teachers attempt to teach explicitly.</p>

## Differentiation of Social and Academic Language (Cummins)


CLD learners develop social language by being immersed in English language environments surrounding everyday activities. These students can function in face-to-face social interaction but may lack language skills for learning academic content. The language of the classroom requires CLD students to use language that is conceptually demanding and cognitively complex. Unlike social language skills used to retell events, talk about experiences, describe activities, or give personal opinions, academic language requires the use of different forms of language to accomplish specific academic tasks. Note the differences in the examples that follow.

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"One's whole person is affected in the struggle to reach beyond the confines of a first language and into a new language, a new culture, a new way of thinking, feeling, and acting. Total commitment, total involvement, and a total physical, intellectual, and emotional response are necessary to successfully send and receive messages in a second language."  
 - NCLR: *Educating English Language Learners: Implementing Instructional Practices*

### Performance Definitions for the K-12 English Language Proficiency Levels

At the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners will process, understand, produce, or use:



<b>5. Bridging</b>	The technical language of the content areas; a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse, including stories, essays, or reports <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English proficient peers when presented with grade level material</li></ul>
<b>4. Expanding</b>	Specific and some technical language of the content areas; a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related paragraphs <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with occasional visual and graphic support</li></ul>
<b>3. Developing</b>	General and some specific language of the content areas; expanded sentences in oral interaction or written paragraphs <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that may impede the communication but retain much of its meaning when presented with oral or written, narrative or expository descriptions with occasional visual and graphic support</li></ul>
<b>2. Beginning</b>	General language related to the content areas; phrases or short sentences <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• oral or written language with phonological, syntactic, or semantic errors that often impede the meaning of the communication when presented with one to multiple-step commands, directions, questions, or a series of statements with visual and graphic support</li></ul>
<b>1. Entering</b>	Pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• words, phrases, or chunks of language when presented with one-step commands, directions, questions, or statements with visual and graphic support</li></ul>

.....  
NCLR. *Educating  
English Language  
Learners:  
Implementing  
Instructional Practices*

## Create a Welcoming School Culture

A key component of engaging CLD students is creating a welcoming school environment in which all students can learn and be productive. Many CLD students, especially newcomers from other countries, have feelings of self-consciousness and inadequacy about their accents, grammatical errors, limited vocabulary, and lack of information about social behavior patterns and cultural norms within their new school and environment. This can lead to silence and lack of participation.

Educators can ease students' anxiety, make them feel more welcome, and thereby engage them better in the learning process by making a point of celebrating cultural and linguistic differences in the classroom. Classrooms filled with teachers and students who openly share their lives, their cultural identities, and their experiences build trust and foster stronger relationships. This climate leads to student engagement and excitement about learning together. Student engagement requires a school culture in which different values and experiences are understood, respected, and welcome.

## Use Cultural Relevancy Tactics

As culturally responsive educators embrace the diversity of their students, they should work to incorporate their cultures and backgrounds into the curriculum through examples in geography, literature, world cultures, the arts, thematic units, or even games. Students take pride in seeing their heritage and culture taught in the classroom and take comfort in the familiar, which then develops self-esteem and encourages all students to have greater understanding and respect for the unique experiences and contributions of different cultures.

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## Recognizing and Celebrating Cultural Differences

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.....  
White, K., Zion, S.,  
and Kozleski, E.  
"Cultural Identity  
and Teaching"

opportunity to practice listening, speaking, reading, and writing with each step, both independently and with a partner.

## Learning Logs

### Defining the Strategy

Learning logs can be used to help learners practice writing as they collect and organize information, pose and solve problems, and think visually about any and all matters concerned with their content area subject matter. Learning logs are an efficient way for students to communicate what they do and do not understand. They are also a way of letting teachers monitor vocabulary and writing development.

### Teaching the Strategy

#### *Objectives*

- Students will be able to determine key concepts they have learned.
- Students will practice writing for a purpose.
- Students will be able to synthesize what they have learned.

#### *Activity*

Students use learning logs to write about what they are learning and studying in a two-column graphic organizer format such as the following example. In the first column, students write (or teachers provide) questions or topics. In the second column, students write answers, notes, or details. Space is left at the bottom of the chart for additional notes and the teacher's response.

Learning logs can be used to help CLD students monitor the growth of their own comprehension, synthesize what they are learning, organize

ideas, and determine what is important. Students can be assigned a learning log every day or after being taught a particularly difficult concept. Learning logs can also be used as closure activities at the end of a lesson.

Teachers can respond directly to the learning logs with simple comments to encourage students to write in their logs. It is important for teachers to remember that the purpose of the learning log is to help students learn how to communicate a message or summarize their learning rather than focus on grammar and punctuation.



<b>Learning Log</b>	
Question/Topic	My Response
What was the most important thing you studied today?	
<p><b>My Thoughts and Notes:</b></p> <p>I still don't understand...</p> <p>I want to learn more about...</p>	
<p><b>Teacher's Response:</b></p>	

**Language Connections**

Learning logs provide opportunities for students to practice writing. For beginning language learners, model the strategy by maintaining a classroom learning log on large sheets of butcher or chart paper, or on the

**Common Greek and Latin Roots  
That Are Cognates in English and Spanish**

Root	Meaning	Origin	English examples	Spanish examples
aud	hear	Latin	auditorium audition	auditorio audición
astir	star	Greek	astrology astronaut	astrología astronauta
bio	life	Greek	biography biology	biografía biología
dict	speak, tell	Latin	dictate dictator	dictar dictador
mit, mis	send	Latin	mission transmit	misión transmitir
ped	foot	Latin	pedal pedestal	pedal pedestal
phon	sound	Greek	phoneme microphone	fonema micrófono
port	carry	Latin	transport portable	transportar portatil



.....  
Using Cognates to  
Develop  
Comprehension in  
English  
[www.colorincolorado.org/article/14307](http://www.colorincolorado.org/article/14307)

Please see the Appendix for a more comprehensive list of cognates. Another helpful list of Spanish-English cognates can be found on the ¡Colorín Colorado! website.

Teachers of secondary CLD students often find themselves in mixed ability classrooms where scaffolding and differentiation of instruction are necessary. This requires a great deal of planning and often the ability of the teacher to provide a variety of materials at different levels to address the needs of the learners in the classroom.

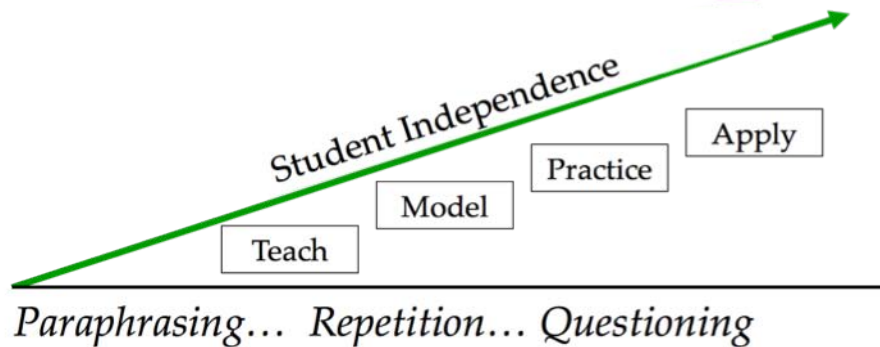
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**Scaffolding and  
Differentiation  
of Instruction**

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## Scaffolding: Verbal

Teachers use verbal scaffolding to prompt, guide, and support English language learners by using a variety of questioning techniques that promote higher levels of thinking as students develop their language skills.



### Building Background

- Make explicit connections between what students may already know from their previous schooling experiences and new information.
- Use visual supports such as photos, illustrations, demonstrations, and short videos.
- Model instructional processes and techniques such as brainstorming, anticipatory guides, K-W-L charts, quick writes, vocabulary previews, and text surveys to focus on information needed to develop concepts and understanding that may be culturally new or different for CLD learners.

**Communication with other teachers.** Portfolios can be used in a team within a department, school, district, or with other schools to which students may transfer.

**Student feedback.** Portfolios should enable students to comment and reflect on their progress and to plan what they will do to improve.

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## Adapting Content Assessment for CLD Students

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Students should be challenged to exercise critical thinking skills during all stages of language acquisition, even while they are in the beginning stage of English language proficiency.

## Assessing Content and Reducing Language Difficulties

It is important to remember that students who are still in the process of learning English must be supported in learning grade level academic content. Students should be challenged to exercise critical thinking skills, such as analysis or synthesis, during all stages of language acquisition, even while they are in the beginning stage of English language proficiency. At the same time, understanding of academic subjects must be assessed in a way that allows students to demonstrate their knowledge somewhat independently of their fluency in English. Three techniques for assessing content while reducing language difficulties are:

1. scaffolding assessment
2. differentiated scoring
3. visible (or explicit) criteria

**Scaffolding assessment** allows CLD students a variety of ways to demonstrate their knowledge. These can include:

- exhibits or projects
- labeled tables or graphs completed by the students
- graphic organizers (diagrams or semantic maps)
- short answers
- organized lists of concepts

CLD students may be allowed extended time for completing scaffolded assessments.

The **differentiated scoring** technique is scoring CLD students separately on content knowledge and on language. This technique integrates assessment of language arts in other content areas. Students might be scored on sentence structure and the use of key vocabulary from the lesson. In addition, they would be scored on how well they understood key concepts, how accurate their answers were, and how well they demonstrated the processes they used to derive their answers.

The **visible (or explicit) criteria** technique involves allowing CLD students to become familiar with scoring criteria before the actual assessment is given, especially if they will be scored separately on content knowledge and language conventions (differentiated scoring). Students may be involved in creating the criteria for a good science report or the steps in solving a word problem. They should practice applying these criteria to actual examples in order to become familiar with the criteria.

## Assessment Adaptations

The Center for Intercultural and Multilingual Advocacy (CIMA) at Kansas State University identified several types of assessment adaptations that permit teachers to determine student knowledge and understanding.

**Range.** Adapt the number of items the ELL student is expected to complete in a given assignment or assessment.

**Time.** Provide additional time for CLD students to process information, break the tasks into manageable chunks.

.....  
Herrera, S.  
*Assessment  
Accommodations for  
Classroom Teachers  
of Culturally and  
Linguistically Diverse  
Students*