English Language Learners in Literacy Workshops

Marsha Riddle Buly

Staff Editor: Bonny Graham
Interior Design: Jenny Jensen Greenleaf
Cover Design: Pat Mayer
Cover Background Design: iStockphoto.com/aleksandarvelasevic

NCTE Stock Number: 22884

©2011 by the National Council of Teachers of English.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission from the copyright holder. Printed in the United States of America.

It is the policy of NCTE in its journals and other publications to provide a forum for the open discussion of ideas concerning the content and the teaching of English and the language arts. Publicity accorded to any particular point of view does not imply endorsement by the Executive Committee, the Board of Directors, or the membership at large, except in announcements of policy, where such endorsement is clearly specified.

Every effort has been made to provide current URLs and email addresses, but because of the rapidly changing nature of the Web, some sites and addresses may no longer be accessible.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Riddle Buly, Marsha.
English language learners in literacy workshops / Marsha Riddle Buly.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references.
ISBN 978-0-8141-2288-4 (pbk)
1. English language--Study and teaching--Foreign speakers. I. Title.
PE1128.A2E4873 2011
428.2'4--dc23
2011035728

Contents

PERMISSION ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ix

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS xi

INTRODUCTION xiii

CHAPTER 1 Fundamentals of the Literacy Workshop 1

CHAPTER 2 Language Learners in the Literacy Workshop 20

CHAPTER 3 Reading Workshop and Considerations for Language Learners 45

CHAPTER 4 Writing Workshop and Considerations for Language Learners 70

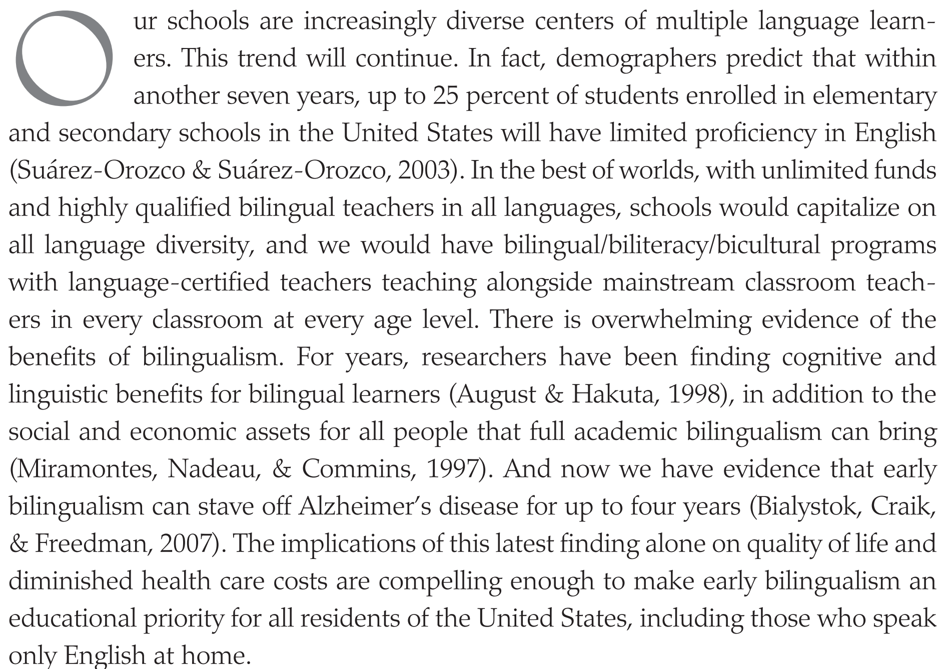
CHAPTER 5 Language Workshop and Considerations for Language Learners 90

CHAPTER 6 Common Questions and Practical Answers 107

WORKS CITED 123

AUTHOR 129

Introduction



Our schools are increasingly diverse centers of multiple language learners. This trend will continue. In fact, demographers predict that within another seven years, up to 25 percent of students enrolled in elementary and secondary schools in the United States will have limited proficiency in English (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2003). In the best of worlds, with unlimited funds and highly qualified bilingual teachers in all languages, schools would capitalize on all language diversity, and we would have bilingual/biliteracy/bicultural programs with language-certified teachers teaching alongside mainstream classroom teachers in every classroom at every age level. There is overwhelming evidence of the benefits of bilingualism. For years, researchers have been finding cognitive and linguistic benefits for bilingual learners (August & Hakuta, 1998), in addition to the social and economic assets for all people that full academic bilingualism can bring (Miramontes, Nadeau, & Commins, 1997). And now we have evidence that early bilingualism can stave off Alzheimer's disease for up to four years (Bialystok, Craik, & Freedman, 2007). The implications of this latest finding alone on quality of life and diminished health care costs are compelling enough to make early bilingualism an educational priority for all residents of the United States, including those who speak only English at home.

The current reality, however, is that many of the growing numbers of bilingual students will spend all or part of their school day in general education or mainstream classrooms with teachers who do not speak their language. To further complicate instruction, at the same time that the number of language learners in classrooms is increasing, we continue to have many mainstream education teachers with little or no training in instructional understandings or strategies to engage and enhance the learning of language learners in mainstream classroom literacy instruction. The result is that we end up focusing on adding English, often disregarding the benefits of other languages students may bring when they enter our classrooms.

Even in the "perfect situation," teaching is hard work, but it doesn't have to be any harder with a roomful of diverse language learners. All of the students in

our classrooms are diverse; all should expect to receive instruction that meets their individual needs. Regardless of our language of instruction, capitalizing on the benefits of biliteracy and multilingualism must remain a primary goal for students who come to us with a language other than English. Differentiated instruction based on the assessed needs and next steps of students is a key to success throughout any student's instructional journey. And while setting up and managing differentiated literacy instruction may seem too difficult or time-consuming for many teachers, literacy workshops provide just the answer in an easily manageable, accessible format.

This book is a result of my work with teachers and those becoming teachers. As I searched for the book I needed in my courses and workshops, I found many amazing books with helpful elements but no one single book that provided mainstream K–8 classroom teachers solid instructional ideas with a combined focus on reading, writing, and language workshops and on the diverse and growing numbers of language learners in the mainstream classroom. When I first sat down to draft a book, I planned to write about helping language learners by integrating literacy instruction and content areas in a workshop format. But each time I attempted to present this to teachers, I found that many didn't have experience working with language learners, or that their idea of a literacy workshop was very different from the successful workshop formats I had studied. Many models they shared with me didn't include the powerful explicit instruction possible within a workshop framework. So I needed to back up and begin with language learners in the literacy workshop from the perspective of the mainstream classroom teacher.

In the pages that follow, I have attempted to synthesize what I have learned, what I present, and what I have observed in classrooms with teachers who successfully reach their language learners. I draw on the material I use to teach future teachers and that I present to teachers in workshops. I have changed the names and details in the examples I use to illustrate practice, and many of my education colleagues may think an example is based on them; this is likely, but just as likely a specific example is based on a combination of several of the amazing educators I have had the opportunity to know. I have diligently attempted to give credit to the originators of ideas and quotes; however, I suspect I've missed some. I apologize in advance and ask that you let me know if I haven't acknowledged you or have given credit to the wrong educator. The creative and original work of educators deserves recognition.

I shared the first chapter with a newly certified teacher as she was working with seventh-grade classrooms comprising more than 50 percent English language learners, students at various levels of English acquisition. This teacher had both a K–8 and an ELL endorsement. After reading the chapter, she responded:

> I read the chapter and it is great! I find it very user friendly and it seems a tantalizing introduction to something I can't wait to read. I think it really synthesizes a lot

of great research and practices and puts them into a framework that is authentic and doable. I just need more experience in order to create mini-lessons I feel confident with.

That is what the remainder of the book will do for her and for you: provide support as you begin to develop or refine a workshop format with explicit instruction in reading, writing, and language *for all* the students in your classroom, language learners and native English speakers alike.

Chapter 1 provides a fundamental understanding of the rationale behind the literacy workshop format. Having this shared understanding is critical as we move into the chapters that follow. Chapter 1 includes a research-based framework for instruction as well as a framework for organizing the classroom. For many mainstream teachers, this is likely to be a refresher. For preservice teachers and novices to the workshop, it provides essential background information that will allow us to continue the journey through this book with a similar foundation of knowledge. The chapter ends with ideas for the teacher-reader to try, as well as recommendations for further reading from some of my favorite resources.

Chapter 2 explains why workshop approaches match what we know about effective research-based instructional structures for language learners. The chapter begins by presenting fundamental understandings with a focus on how cognitive demands and contextual support impact language learners (Cummins, 1994). I then describe alignments between components of the explicit literacy workshop format and the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2008). Although this alignment is one of the unique aspects of the book, *English Language Learners in Literacy Workshops* is not designed to teach SIOP; it is designed to help mainstream teachers use literacy workshops to meet the differentiated needs of the language learners in their classrooms. Many excellent books cover the SIOP protocol, and the list at the end of Chapter 2 provides titles of just a few of the resources that focus exclusively on SIOP. My purpose for this chapter is to help teachers not familiar with valid theoretical work related to language learners, including SIOP, or for those unfamiliar with workshop formats, to understand how this research supports the literacy workshop as an effective instructional format for language learners.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 focus on teacher instruction for each component of a literacy workshop, with an emphasis on the language learners in the classroom. Each chapter starts with a scenario from a classroom, followed by an explanation that includes instructional tips for a particular aspect of the literacy workshop. Each chapter ends with an immediate takeaway idea for the teacher-reader to try and suggestions for further reading.

In Chapter 6, I've collected and addressed common questions asked by practicing and future teachers. When appropriate, I have included suggestions for additional

resources. I haven't listed every good question I've received, and I welcome your correspondence regarding additional questions related to language learners you may have as you read this book and other resources and as you implement or revise your literacy workshops. You can reach me at Marsha.RiddleBuly@wwu.edu.

My experience and my own reading preferences suggest that short, practical books have the most success with teachers and future teachers. This book does not answer all questions; it provides practical applications and answers for teachers, with recommendations for additional readings on different topics. I hope that what you read sparks your interest in further reading and study. Each chapter is designed to stand alone so that you can use the book in the way that best suits your instructional needs. That might mean starting with common questions or it might mean starting at the beginning and reading through. My hope is that you leave the book knowing more than you did when you started and with the hunger to continue the learning journey into the most effective literacy instruction for our diverse language learners.

1

Fundamentals of the Literacy Workshop

If we want students to learn, we must show them how.

—Stephanie Harvey, *Nonfiction Matters*

The literacy workshop is similar to *any* workshop. The word *workshop* itself suggests a group of people actively engaged in purposeful tasks. In this chapter, I explain my understanding of the fundamentals that provide the foundation of a workshop format. Like most terms used in education, *workshop* has been interpreted differently depending on the experience, theoretical base, and beliefs of the teacher (Robinson & Riddle Buly, 2007). To make sense of this book, we need to start with a shared beginning. For some of you, the following pages will be new information, which is why I provide an overview as well as suggest additional resources at the end of the chapter to further your understanding. For others, this chapter will provide both a review and a chance for me to clarify how I am interpreting the literacy workshop in the mainstream classroom. For still others, this chapter might offer the opportunity to view the literacy workshop from a perspective that differs from what you have experienced or considered in the past.

The foundational format of an effective, research-based workshop is basically the same regardless of the makeup of the students or of the subject taught. This first chapter focuses on the format of a workshop approach so that as you read further, you and I are on the same page when I discuss workshops and explicit mini-lessons. Subsequent chapters expand on this base to focus on language learners in the literacy workshop.

Students learn by "doing" in a workshop, with the guidance of a knowledgeable other. For the purposes of this book, this knowledgeable other is a teacher, although a knowledgeable other can be many things, among them a parent, an instructional assistant, another student, or a friend. A knowledgeable other is one who knows a bit more about a particular topic, skill, or idea and can support the learner because of that extra knowledge (Vygotsky, 1978). My high school experience as a pottery

student illustrates this concept. I had the good fortune of a wonderful pottery teacher. When the pottery class began each day, Mr. Collins would gather all twenty-five of us around him, sophomores, juniors, and seniors, all with varying degrees of artistic skill or talent, and we would strain to see what he was doing. We all wanted to be in the front row watching this more knowledgeable other at work. Mr. Collins would model a skill, strategy, or technique that he was using with his clay and talk to us about it as he molded the clay. Once we had seen the technique, he often gave each of us a bit of clay so that we could try what he had just showed us, and we worked with the clay right there in front of him. Mr. Collins watched as we experimented, and if we needed more instruction, he would model again using his own clay or give us a specific suggestion based on what he saw us doing. Then he invited us to move to our own workspaces to continue working on our own creations. He suggested that we try for ourselves the techniques he had modeled if doing so made sense for the work we were doing that day.

When we started to work independently, Mr. Collins roved the room offering specific insights or instruction as we worked on our own pieces of clay. Some of us were more advanced than others, yet he found a way to move each of us forward with his suggestions and modeling. He also found a way to make sure that we all tried his suggestions. Some of us were working on pieces that could benefit from the technique he had modeled that day. Others of us couldn't incorporate the technique right away, but we knew it was something we would want to try in future projects. At the end of each class, Mr. Collins called us back together and we shared what we had tried or discovered related to the modeling he had done that day or on an earlier day.

The workshop format relies on this understanding of a gradual release of responsibility combined with very short, focused, and explicit instruction based on ongoing formative assessment of student strengths and needs. Some teachers find the format so effective that they use the same framework for social studies, science, and math. The framework is the same regardless of the area of instruction or the makeup of the students. Powerful workshops require a gradual supported release of responsibility from teacher to student, an instructional focus on the specific needs of a particular group of students, and an authentic reason for the instruction.

Gradual Release of Responsibility: The Apprenticeship

The instructional components that frame the idea of gradual release are shared in design, yet distinctly labeled, by educational experts in special education, English language development, and general education. There are many iterations of the same basic idea. The first illustration and language probably originated with Pearson and Gallagher's (1983) work at the Center for the Study of Reading, but it has been

adapted and revised by many, including Lucy Calkins (1994; Calkins et al., 2003, 2006; Calkins, Tolan, Ehrenworth, Khan, & Mooney, 2010), Margaret Mooney (1990), Irene Fountas and Gay Su Pinnell (1996, 2001), and more recently by Douglas Fisher and his colleagues (Fisher, Rothenberg, & Frey, 2007). Figure 1.1 is a variation on one of the common illustrations of gradual release of responsibility.

The reading, writing, or language workshop works in the same way. The teacher provides a brief and explicit lesson about a skill, strategy, or technique related to reading, writing, or language. The teacher explains what it is, why it's important, and when it's useful. Then the teacher shows the students how the teacher, as a more knowledgeable other, employs the strategy, skill, or technique. Together with the teacher, the students then try what has been taught. The teacher carefully observes and provides further examples or explanations if needed. Students then have an opportunity to independently try what has been taught while the teacher guides or instructs individuals or small groups of students. At the end of the workshop, students gather together with the teacher to share what they have learned or tried related to the teacher's mini-lesson.

This doesn't mean that all students will use what was taught that day, or even in the near future, in their independent work. It means that most have demonstrated a basic understanding of what was taught and that they will feel encouraged to try or use the skill or strategy when it is appropriate in their independent work. The strategy or skill introduced is one that the teacher believes many students are ready for in their current work, so many—but not all—will immediately apply the teaching point in their independent work. Some teachers of K–2 students do always expect

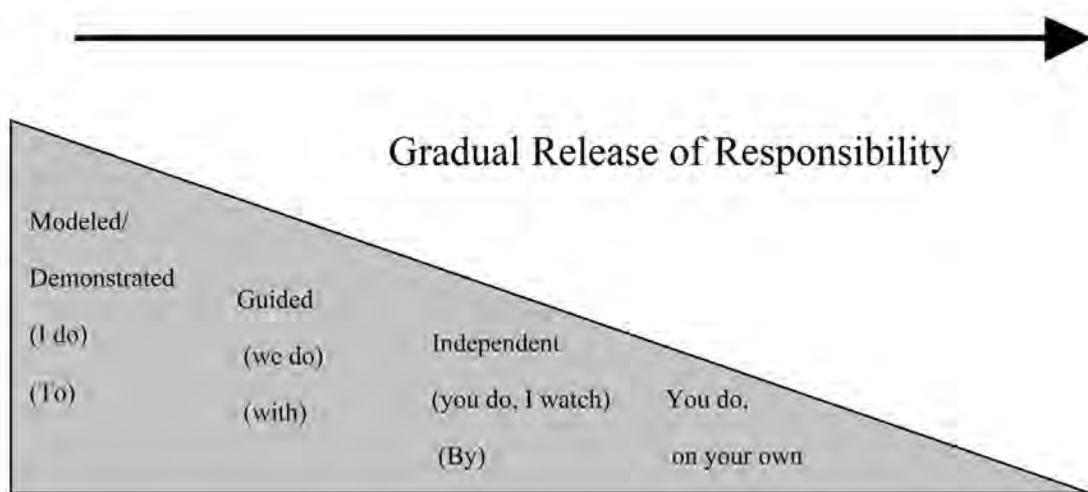


FIGURE 1.1: The gradual release of responsibility model.

the students to try what is modeled right away, finding that the students struggle to remember it later if they don't apply it immediately. Teachers of older students can also expect all students to briefly try what was modeled before they return to their work of the day, as we did in my high school pottery class.

When students are working independently, the teacher continues to monitor, support, guide, and reinforce the teaching point in small groups or one-on-one with individual students. If he or she sees a common need across many students, the teacher takes a step back to provide additional whole-group instruction. If only a few students demonstrate a need, the teacher may reteach and provide additional demonstration, modeling, and explanation to just one person or to a small group. The ultimate goal is for our students to use what was taught in other situations, completely on their own.

An easy way to remember how this gradual release of responsibility apprenticeship frames instruction in the workshop is to break the learning into components. From the teacher's perspective, there are four components: I do, we do, you do, and you do *over time*. "I do" constitutes teacher modeling, "we do" is guided or shared practice, "you do" is independent practice with teacher watching, and "you do over time" is students independently choosing and accurately using the strategy, skill, technique, or procedure. Following are more detailed descriptions of each of these critical areas of instruction in the literacy workshop.

The first step is demonstration or modeling in the form of an explicit lesson, when students watch and listen (Margaret Mooney calls this "read to"; it's part of the "connect" and "teach" components described by Lucy Calkins; and others call it "I do").

Guided practice is when students try the strategies, skills, or procedures with the guidance of the teacher (Margaret Mooney calls this "read with"; it's part of the "engage" component described by Lucy Calkins; and others call it "we do").

Independent practice occurs when students have time to practice the strategies and skills they are learning and those they already know (Margaret Mooney calls this "read by"; it's what is suggested in the "link" described by Lucy Calkins; and others call it "you do").

And "you do on your own" is the final outcome of instruction, when the learner owns the strategy, skill, procedure, or technique and is using it accurately in other situations.

When gradual release of responsibility is used to frame explicit teaching points in a literacy workshop, the result is powerful instruction and learning.

Knowing What to Teach

On the first day of teaching my first class of eager kindergarten students, I learned one of my most important lessons as a teacher, a lesson affirmed with every subsequent

group of students from any grade level I have ever taught: just because students are in the same grade does not mean they are ready for the same instruction, and just because they speak a common home language doesn't mean they have the same level of literacy in their home language or in the language of school. I quickly found that trying to follow a set curriculum for all students did not work. The curriculum was appropriate for some, too easy for others, too difficult for several, and not the best teaching approach for many. This was further affirmed during teacher–parent conferences when parents would tell me that the grade-level instruction was too easy (or too hard) for their son or daughter, followed by the dreaded question of how I planned to meet the specific needs of their son or daughter. Any parent who has tried to rush a toddler to stand, walk, talk, or move away from diapers knows that children vary in what, when, and how they learn to do things. Some require different methods to get going. In my experience, what works with child one rarely works with child two or three the same way in the same home. The students who come to our PreK–12 classrooms vary in what they can and will do and what they are ready to learn from the day they are born (and even earlier as they are developing). We need high expectations for all students, the same standards we have for the most proficient students in the class. But how and when students meet our goals will differ. They will walk at different times, talk at different times, learn a language or languages differently, grasp reading, writing, and language at different times and in different ways. They will need instruction and opportunities based on their individual assessed needs, and those assessments must consider the language understandings of each student.

For the general classroom teacher with twenty to thirty-five students, this means that the individual strengths and needs of each student in any group must drive instructional decisions. The dilemma comes in trying to find a manageable classroom format that allows teachers to meet and work with individuals, small groups, and the whole class based on those varying instructional strengths and needs. The format of the workshop provides just such a structure for classroom teachers. Within this structure are opportunities for teachers to spend quality time with students through explicit, focused, and short lessons matched to the needs of a large group, small groups, or individuals. State standards and district expectations may provide a teacher's overarching goals, but the needs of the students determine where in the standards or materials that teacher will focus, with the expectation that all students meet standards as soon as they are able.

Michelle Hornof, a fifth-grade teacher, plans for the year before she even meets her students. She uses her experience, state standards, and district expectations as guides as she develops her curricular plans. However, Michelle's plans are not rigid. She adjusts as needed as the year goes by. Curriculum planning is similar to planning a trip. Before you start, you know your destination. You also know key places you might visit along the way. But your route might vary from your original plan as you

move toward the destination; you might stay longer at one attraction than you had anticipated, or you might experience car problems that require attention before you move on. For example, Michelle knows she will be teaching a unit on writing poetry in the spring. She also knows she will teach strategies for reading nonfiction in January. The specifics of what she will teach and how she will teach these units will be based on the needs of her students as the time draws near. But she knows the destination. Michelle learned this way of thinking about instruction from Lucy Calkins's (1994) *The Art of Teaching Writing*.

Likewise, when Marta, a new bilingual learner in my third-grade class, arrives with vocabulary needs that the other students don't have, I can focus specific one-on-one or small-group lessons during independent reading at her instructional level. At the same time, I can structure appropriate one-on-one or small-group teaching points for Samuel, who is reading materials usually read by fifth graders. By focusing on the needs of the students, I purposefully differentiate instruction and meet each student at his or her "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky, 1978) or instructional level (Clay, 1993). Stephen Krashen (1981, 1982, 1994), well-known for his theories on language acquisition, suggests that we consider "comprehensible input + 1" when thinking about the bilingual learners in our classrooms, a concept that fits with how we need to think about *all* learners. *Comprehensible input + 1* is very similar to *instructional level*, often referred to by reading teachers and other educators, as well as the *zone of proximal development* (ZPD) attributed to Lev Vygotsky (1978), terms likely to be familiar to most mainstream classroom teachers. "Comprehensible input" means that material is presented in a way we can understand independently. For example, books that are at our independent reading level are comprehensible. When we add the "+ 1," we have moved to the *instructional level*, the level at which we are ready to understand with assistance from a knowledgeable other.

The concept behind comprehensible input + 1 is analogous to the situation of the protagonist in "Goldilocks and the Three Bears." Goldilocks tries the bears' porridge and finds that one bowl is too hot, one too cold, and one just right. She also tries the chairs and the beds—one is too hard, one is too soft, and one is just right. The same occurs in our instruction. We might teach a lesson that is too hard, or frustrating, for a

student, because the student is not yet ready for the instruction. We can teach a lesson that is too easy, or at an independent level, which does little to move the student forward in his or her learning. Or we can teach a student a lesson that is "just right," or at the instructional level (comprehensible input + 1), of that student for the particular strategy, skill, or content being taught. This should be our goal as teachers, to teach all learners at their individual instructional levels in a manner that makes the material comprehensible for each learner.

Purposeful Learning: Knowing the "Why"

The well-known author of the Harry Potter series, J. K. Rowling, seems to understand children and the too-frequent disconnect between what happens within the walls of our schools and what happens in the "real world." A wonderful example of this is demonstrated when Professor Umbridge says to Harry Potter, "This is school, Mr. Potter, not the real world" (Rowling, 2003, p. 244). This statement articulates what many students feel about their experiences in our classrooms; there doesn't seem to be a clear connection between academic content and their real worlds, now or in the future. Students need a purpose that makes sense to them, provides a link to something meaningful, or is authentic. Nell Duke and her colleagues explain authentic literacy activities as those that replicate or are closely related to the same types of literacy activities that occur in people's day-to-day lives (Duke, Purcell-Gates, Hall, & Tower, 2006). We do not learn to read or write simply to read or write; we learn to read or write to effectively navigate the world, to learn new information, to share information and ideas. Clearly, when students see a purpose that goes beyond the walls of the classroom, there is a greater chance of engagement, learning, and application.

Tracy Coskie (2009) identifies three purposes for writing, which she labels real-world writing, real audiences, and real connections, to illustrate how adults use literacy for authentic purposes. An example of real-world writing is a sign that helps her to be careful in a bird habitat, because caring for the environment is so important in her life. As an example of real audiences, she listed the exhibit guides her husband was asked to write for a local museum's historical motorcycle exhibition. And for an example of real connections, Coskie shared her friend's recently discovered passion for blogging with other fantasy football players. Our students need the same types of authentic purposes for what they are learning in school. They need to see how what we are teaching relates to life outside the four walls of the classroom.

This doesn't mean that an authentic audience can't be found within the walls of the school. In her bilingual fourth-grade classroom, Mrs. Rosen wanted to set a purpose for researching biospheres by providing her students with an authentic

audience. Coincidentally, the second-grade students had just finished reading *The A, B, C of the Biosphere* (Imagine a Biosphere Series) by Max Finch and Mary Beath (1993). The students were really interested in the topic. As the second- and fourth-grade teachers talked, an authentic audience and purpose materialized that would encourage the fourth graders to dig deeper into the subject of biospheres. The diverse-language fourth-grade students would research and present what they learned about a topic of interest to their equally diverse second-grade language-learning buddies.

Mrs. Rosen started by bringing in numerous picture books about biospheres that both the second- and fourth-grade students read and discussed. As a result, they identified specific questions of interest to students in both grade levels. Small groups of fourth graders selected a question to research. The expectation was that the student groups would research a question and then share what they found in an interesting manner with their second-grade buddies. The students did not have choice in topic; everyone was researching biospheres. They did have a choice of genre in which to prepare and share their findings. By providing the students with a purpose and choice, Mrs. Rosen motivated the students to locate, dig into, and read from different sources. They were engaged in planning and writing about what they had learned, and they were excited about sharing what they learned with others. While they were researching, Mrs. Rosen taught specific, explicit lessons on reading, writing, and language immediately applicable to the authentic reading, writing, and language in which the fourth graders were engaged. She also taught small groups specific lessons related to the genre or presentation each group had chosen to share their findings. The students derived meaning from this study because they had an authentic audience of younger students who they cared about and who were interested in the information they would be sharing. To effectively share that information, they happily worked on their reading, writing, and language skills. Some groups chose to write plays, some created experiments and shared the results, some wrote picture books, while others created brochures. All engaged in the process of learning and writing about science.

In Michelle Hornof's fifth-grade language arts classroom, the students were looking forward to the annual overnight trip to study the environment at Mountain School. As so often in schools, the trip would not take place unless the students raised funds. The students worked on writing persuasive letters to an audience of their choice, combining a real-world audience with a real-world purpose. All were asking for a donation to attend Mountain School, an end-of-the-year activity. The fifth graders were expected to use a letter format, write a persuasive letter, and address an envelope. However, students could choose to whom they would write the letter (audience), as long as the recipient was authentic. The students sent the letters at the end of the unit. (The process of this letter writing unit is described in detail in Chapter 4.)

I invite you to take a moment to think back to your own years as a student, in any grade, and the times you were told to do something or try something simply

because the teacher requested that you do so. My response, as a child and as an adult, is "Why should I do this? Who cares?" That is the same response our students often have in our classrooms—often internally, sometimes aloud. In addition to needing to know the steps involved in how to do something, it's human nature to want to know *why* we are being asked to do something, and why or how it connects to the rest of our lives. These connections are what make certain activities worth doing. When we understand the reason for doing something, we are much more likely to be interested in learning and to internalize the learning.

Scott Paris and his colleagues (Paris, Wixson, & Palincsar, 1986) suggest that part of a teacher's job is to clearly explain strategies so that students can see the purpose and sense behind them. In this book, I use the term *strategies* to represent those things we have taught students that we hope they will internalize, practice, and use on their own in new situations. Having strategies is the mark of a skilled reader or writer. Take driving a car. If I am a skilled driver, I drive almost automatically, without having to think too much about what I'm doing. But if I encounter a problem while I'm driving, like a big patch of ice, I become very conscious of the situation and need to rely on the defensive driving strategies I've learned to help me navigate the danger. If I'm lucky, I have a big tool box of strategies that I've been taught and perhaps practiced for just such a time: encountering ice in real life. I have internalized these strategies so that they come to me almost automatically when I encounter ice. I might swerve around the ice, I might tap my brakes, or I might drive through the ice with no brakes. The strategy I use will depend on the situation, on how dangerous I perceive the ice to be, whether there are cars close to me, whether there is room to swerve, and whether I have time to consider options. But I have several strategies I can access to assist me in this situation. If one doesn't work, I might have time to try a different one. This is how I use the term *strategy* throughout this book—as teachers, we want our students to have options that will help them successfully navigate both familiar and new situations. Although Paris and his colleagues wrote specifically about reading strategies, their ideas hold true for any strategy or procedure we or our students are learning. When we know why we are doing something, how it will help us, and when to use it, we are likely to be more receptive to learning how to do it, as well as more likely to apply and continue to use what we have been taught in new situations.

Understanding why something is being taught is important for all of us, but probably even more important for bilingual learners. In their book *"Reading Don't Fix No Chevys": Literacy in the Lives of Young Men,* Michael Smith and Jeffrey Wilhelm (2002), both former high school teachers, share their learning about how boys in secondary classrooms often disengage with school literacy. They found that although many students read materials outside of the classroom that feel relevant to their lives *that day*, those same students see little relevance to the reading they're asked to do within the four walls of the classroom. Although these students understand that school is

a stepping stone to success, that reason isn't immediately relevant enough to ensure their active participation in academic reading. They need relevance to the present. Elizabeth Moje has also written extensively about the critical role of engagement in literacy, especially for adolescents. For example, Moje (2006) describes a student identified academically as a struggling reader who worked very hard outside of the classroom to make sense of directions for a video game. Much to the teacher's amazement, when this student had an immediate and personal purpose for reading, he worked hard at it. The lesson for teachers is that our students need an out-of-classroom reason for doing what we ask them to do, or at the very least, a purpose that is meaningful to them. For small children, doing something "for the teacher" might be enough motivation to get them started, but imagine how much more we've added to their learning if students have an authentic reason that goes beyond the classroom. And if we can't think of an authentic reason or purpose for what we're teaching, perhaps we should be teaching something else.

The Workshop

The individual components of the workshop are similar regardless of the students in your classroom, the content of instruction, or the length of time of the workshop. The differences or changes will be in your teaching points. Lucy Calkins and her colleagues have expanded the components of the workshop to include seven distinct elements that many find helpful in planning for instruction. A clear description can be found in the Units of Study materials that Calkins and her colleagues (2003, 2006; Calkins, Tolan, Ehrenworth, Khan, & Mooney, 2010) have published in recent years. Table 1.1 draws from this work.

We know that the most successful teachers spend the majority of their time providing instruction rather than giving directions (Taylor, Pressley, & Pearson, 2000). Yet Dolores Durkin's (1978–1979) seminal work illustrated how much time teachers spent—and many still spend—giving instructions rather than actually instructing (or teaching). The lesson format in well-run literacy workshops allows for direct and explicit instruction, the kind of instruction that has been shown to improve reading comprehension for low-achieving readers (Dole, 2000). *Explicitness* means being clear about a teaching point—not assuming that students already know what we are teaching, not leaving them to guess, but also not teaching them something they already know. The explicit lesson focus usually occurs within the first ten minutes of the workshop and is the key to success.

In the following description of a mini-lesson, I provide an *ideal* time frame for each section. When I participated in the training for Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD), we were taught a strategy the trainers called "10 and 2" (Brechtal,

Component	Teacher is . . .	Students are . . .
1. Connect/Purpose (What, Why, When) (1–2 minutes)	Providing a purpose for the teaching point with a link to previous learning	Listening and connecting
2. Model/Provide Information (How) (3–5 minutes)	Demonstrating or showing students *how* to use the strategy, skill, technique, or procedure	Listening and learning
3. Guided Practice (2–3 minutes)	Observing and guiding	Trying the skill, strategy, or procedure in front of the teacher
4. Link to Independent Work (1–2 minutes)	Connecting what was taught to students' work and setting	Considering how they will use what they have been taught
5. Independent Work (30–60 minutes)	Conferring, teaching, monitoring, observing, assessing, identifying students to share	Engaged in their work
6. Sharing (2–4 minutes)	Directing, facilitating	Sharing what they've done related to the day's lesson
7. Close (1–2 minutes)	Restating, linking to future work	Listening, connecting

TABLE 1.1: Components of the Literacy Workshop

2001). The basic idea is that most people can focus for no more than ten minutes at a time, so for every ten minutes of input learners need two minutes for reflection or processing of the information. And for kindergarten or younger students, the time is probably more like 5-and-1. In my experience with students of many ages, including adults, 10-and-2 is a guide that works most of the time. When I'm modeling, demonstrating, or talking, I try to check the clock when I start and ensure that I pause at around ten minutes for two minutes (or more) of processing before I provide more information or instructions. If I don't observe this time frame, I see my students' attention drifting away. At times, your explicit lessons might, and probably will, take longer for different parts of the lesson, but aiming for the ideal and observing the 10-and-2 rule will help the lesson be explicit, focused, and thus more likely keep your students' attention.

Connect/Purpose (What, Why, When) (I do)

(1–2 minutes)

The connect/purpose piece of the workshop is a time for you to explicitly and concisely provide a purpose for the teaching point with a link to previous

learning. But the purpose needs to go beyond this link to a previous lesson. Including a real-life purpose that extends past the classroom walls is powerful for engaging learning. The connect portion is short, only one to two minutes. Within this brief time, you must *explicitly tell* students WHAT the strategy is, WHY it is important or useful, and WHEN the strategy, skill, or procedure is used. Gerald Duffy and his colleagues (Duffy, Roehler, Meloth, Vavrus, Book, Putnam, & Wesselman, 1986) call this declarative and conditional knowledge. Lucy Calkins would ask us to notice that the teacher does the telling at this point. To keep it quick and clear, we avoid asking students, "Remember when we . . . ? Why did we do that?" These are the kinds of questions that eat up time and don't necessarily end in the answers you seek. Rather than lose precious instructional attention time, remind students what was taught, what will be learned, why it is important, and when it is useful: "Yesterday we . . . Today we are going to . . . because . . ."

Model/Provide Information (How) (I do)

(3–5 minutes)

Modeling or providing information during a mini-lesson is when you demonstrate to students *how* they can use the strategy, skill, technique, or procedure. Gerald Duffy and colleagues (1986) refer to this as procedural knowledge. The goal of this part of the lesson is for the students to understand the steps—the procedural knowledge—of what is being taught. Janice Almasi (2003) wrote about strategic instruction, finding that among declarative, conditional, and procedural knowledge, it is procedural knowledge that more teachers skip. Rather than instruct through modeling, demonstration, or think-aloud, the teachers she observed explained an activity or gave instructions, similar to what Durkin (1978–1979) found. Explaining an activity or giving instruction is not the same as teaching or showing students how to do something.

To demonstrate, you can use think-alouds or talk-throughs. Both allow you to make your thinking public, thinking aloud about what you are teaching as you demonstrate. For example, if the teaching point is inferring, you might show the students how you infer by explaining what is happening in your head. Rather than simply saying something like, "I just made an inference" and continuing to read, you can think aloud about how you made the inference, explicitly sharing and describing your thoughts, what connections you're making, and what information your inference is based on. So, for example, if you're reading *Clementine* (Pennypacker,

2006), you might say something like, ***As I read this paragraph, and I think about what has happened so far, what I know from my own life, and what we already know about Clementine, I am inferring. My thinking is leading me to infer that Clementine is going to get in big trouble for cutting Margaret's hair***. Then you continue to read until the next point that allows you to explicitly model an inference, again thinking aloud or talking through how you came to that conclusion.

Guided Practice (we do)

(2–3 minutes)

The purpose of guided practice is to give students an opportunity to try out the skill, strategy, or procedure you've demonstrated while still under your observant eye. Guided practice with partners or small groups is especially powerful for language learners because it gives them the chance to talk together, which helps them clarify understandings. This is also the time to informally assess their progress and decide whether students are ready to move on to independent practice or whether to take a step back, provide more support, and reteach or expand on your teaching. If assessment suggests reteaching would be helpful, you might decide to stop for the day and return to the lesson another time. Or you might have additional examples or models ready and can provide those at this time. Often you will notice that many students seem to "get it" and that just a few need more support before moving on to independent work. In this case, you might meet with that small group while other students are engaged in independent practice.

Link to Independent Work/Engage

(1–2 minutes)

If most of the students seem ready to move on to independent work, spend a few moments to help them see how to use the skill or strategy independently and set expectations for them. It is critical that you convey to the students that if what you've taught fits their work today, they should go ahead and try it on their own. If it doesn't, you don't expect them to try the newly taught strategy or skill today, but instead to practice it on their own when doing so makes sense for their work. If you expect every student to need the strategy or skill eventually, you might set a date in the future, saying something like, ***Today is the 1st of February; by February 15 I think you will all have had an opportunity to use what I taught today. Please sign up for a conference when what I just taught makes sense to try in your work***. You can then track who has used this strategy and who might still need additional assistance. Your expectation might be that during independent work,

students will try the strategy and be ready to report out during share time, or that they might explain why a strategy introduced wasn't pertinent to their work for the day.

Independent Work Time (you do)
(30–60 minutes)
Independent work time allows you to differentiate instruction. You can confer with students, reinforce teaching points with individuals or small groups, or introduce new teaching points. I elaborate on independent work time in the following section.

Sharing (at the end of the workshop)
(2–4 minutes)
Near the end of the workshop, pull students back together for a time to share, focusing on the teaching point of the lesson. Often you will have asked a few students during conferencing to individually share what each noticed or tried related to the teaching point. These are usually students you have had a conference with, not just any student raising a hand. This is a time for students to share different ways they have used what was taught, including struggles as well as successes they may have had. As students share, engage them in metacognitive thinking about the strategies, helping all students recognize that their individual backgrounds will vary their learning experiences and that there can be more than one successful strategy for any particular situation.

Close
(1–2 minutes)
The workshop ends with you briefly but very clearly restating the teaching point in student-friendly language, including *what* it is, *why* it's important, and *when* it's useful. This is the time to get students enthusiastic about continuing the work they've done today or trying what others have shared. It's also a time for students to start making plans for the next workshop.

Figure 1.2 illustrates how many teachers divide up the time provided for literacy workshop, regardless of the length of the workshop (e.g., 45 or 60 or 90 minutes).

Back to Independent Work Time

Nestled within the components of the workshop is a large chunk of time for independent work. Having students independently engaged in meaningful reading, writing, or language work is what allows you to provide differentiated instruction and assessment.

How you structure this time will vary depending on the needs of the students and your comfort level with students working on their own, but it is the heart of the workshop. Having this time to engage in the work on their own is critical for students to develop as readers, writers, and language users. Having this time is also essential for you, allowing you to meet with individuals or flexible groups to reinforce, teach, and assess.

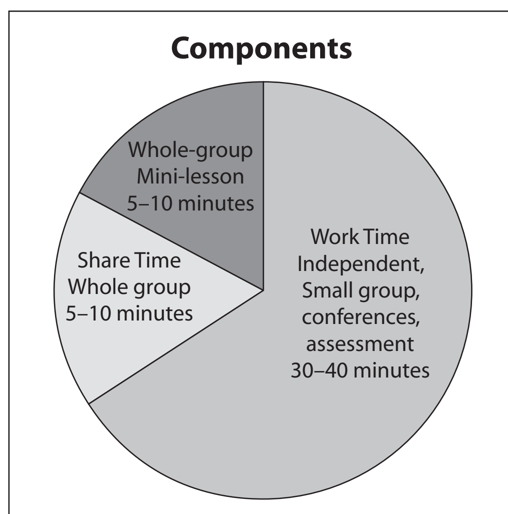


FIGURE 1.2: Components of the literacy workshop.

Key point 1: You will be even more active once independent work begins. You have multiple options to choose from for engaging students. You might, for example, teach individuals or small groups of students who need more support on the teaching point, roam the room and conference with individuals, assess student understanding, or teach small guided groups of students who have other specific needs or who are ready for a new teaching point.

Key point 2: Establish a system by which students can let you know if they need you. I like to keep a list on the whiteboard (modeled in a mini-lesson) where students write their names if they need me. I let the students know that I will check in with them between teaching moments, but they are not to interrupt another student's learning opportunity. Knowing how to get the teacher's attention is especially important for English language learners. If they are confused about anything, they can add their name to the whiteboard, drawing my attention. Quite often, by the time I move to students on the list, most will have figured out a way to solve whatever it was they needed.

Key point 3: Stay mobile. Rather than calling the students to you, move to the students yourself. This provides two critical outcomes: (1) students around those who are receiving instruction can listen in on an instructional conversation; again, this is particularly helpful for bilingual learners because it is often beneficial to hear something explained

20 minutes	***Individual conferences*** allow the teacher to meet with three to five individuals as the students settle into their work and to manage the classroom through quiet reminders or check-ins as the teacher walks from one student to another.
10 minutes	***Small-group work*** allows the teacher to work with one small group while other students are engaged in independent or partner work.
5 minutes	***Transition and check in*** with individuals as needed.
10 minutes	***Small-group work*** allows the teacher to work with a second small group while other students are engaged in independent or partner work.

TABLE 1.2: Example of a 45-Minute Independent Work Schedule

in more than one way, and (2) you have an opportunity to quickly check in with language learners so that if someone is confused, practice time isn't wasted.

Table 1.2 provides an example of how one third-grade teacher breaks up independent work time in her classroom. The length of independent work time will vary depending on the students' levels of independence and how long you have for the workshop as a whole. In a 60-minute workshop, the goal time would be 30–40 minutes for independent work. In a 90-minute reading block, the goal might be two 30-minute blocks of independent time, with a mini-lesson in the middle to refocus students.

Records of Learning

Throughout the school day, it is important to takes notes, for which you'll need to maintain an observational note-taking system, a way to keep notes about what you are learning about the students in relation to specific instruction. I call these Records of Learning. I keep a separate "Record of Learning" spiral notebook for each subject, and in each notebook I write each student's name on a separate page. I write my observational notes, list any teaching points that we discuss, list next steps, and include a date. Figure 1.3 is an example from my Reading Record of Learning for Luna, a third-grade language learner. The note system is my own; you will undoubtedly work out your own system as you experiment with different ways to keep notes that make sense for you. These Records of Learning become the primary tool I use when planning upcoming units of study and teaching points. If I have kept clear records, I need only consult my spiral notebooks as I plan for whole-group, small-group, and individual teaching. I also use these Records of Learning for teacher–parent conferences and as a data source for report cards or progress reports.

Luna

	Notes/Observations	Teaching Pts / Next Steps
9/16	Pickng books durng IR changng books frequently	How to pick a book - interests topics
9/12	ML - Pick a book	Stamina
pg 27	ORR - ✓✓ flé/su flipping	← Reinforce
9/20	ML - Pick a book series	Predictions
9/30	Series Book - Junie B. CLR Predicting/Text/Text + Text/me	Reinforce ML Predict/Infer
10/05	Tkng durng IR - Has finished Junie B - discuss/read a bit Weird School Days -	Pckng books/mvng on

FIGURE 1.3: A Reading Record of Learning for Luna, a third-grade language learner.

Summary

In this chapter, I have illustrated the following points. A workshop is:

1. *A framework for organizing instruction*. The workshop is not a curriculum, nor is it a set of specific materials. The workshop includes explicit instruction that is short, purposeful, and follows a familiar structure. Teachers strive to keep

concise lessons to about 10 minutes and focused on one teaching point at a time.

2. *An apprenticeship model*. A more knowledgeable other, usually the teacher but sometimes an instructional assistant, a parent, or even another student, models the strategy, skill, or procedure that others will learn. The students then try this strategy, skill, or procedure themselves in a nonthreatening environment, with guidance and a gradual release of responsibility from the more knowledgeable other.
3. *An instructional time when the needs of the students drive the teacher's lessons.* Curriculum, standards, materials, and scopes and sequences are resources in a workshop, and the teacher decides what needs to be taught. Those decisions are focused on the standards and based on students' needs, which determine necessary next steps in their learning while also providing the critical time for teachers to differentiate instruction through conferences or work with small groups of students.
4. *An instructional time when students understand the purpose of what they are doing, and that purpose goes beyond "for the teacher."* Whenever possible and applicable, students can identify a meaningful purpose for workshop activity that extends beyond the walls of the classroom.
5. *The critical time of the instructional day in which students need to independently engage in reading, writing, or language work.* An extended independent work time provides students the essential time to practice and grow as readers, writers, and language users.

A Time to Try . . .

1. Think about the time you currently devote to reading instruction. Which of the elements of the workshop are you already including in your instruction? Are there other elements you could add immediately?
2. Think of a specific skill or strategy your class is struggling with (e.g., lining up, getting a drink of water, sharpening a pencil). Try writing an explicit mini-lesson using the format that provides a purpose for this skill and allows for the gradual release of responsibility to your students. The more you plan your lessons this way, the easier they become!

Some Favorite Resources

Calkins, L., et al. (2003). *Units of study for primary writing: A yearlong curriculum.* Portsmouth, NH: FirstHand.

Calkins, L., et al. (2006). *Units of study for teaching writing: Grades 3–5.* Portsmouth, NH: FirstHand.

Calkins, L., Tolan, K., Ehrenworth, M., Khan, H. A., & Mooney, J. (2010). *Units of study for teaching reading, grades 3–5: A curriculum for the reading workshop.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Coskie, T. L. (2009). Building in authenticity. *School Talk, 14*(3), 1–2.

Ellis, L., & Marsh, J. (2007). *Getting started: The reading-writing workshop, grades 4–8.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Fletcher, R., & Portalupi, J. (2001). *Writing workshop: The essential guide.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Fountas, I. C., & Pinnell, G. S. (2001). *Guiding readers and writers grades 3–6: Teaching comprehension, genre, and content literacy.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Mooney, M. E. (1990). *Reading to, with, and by children.* Katonah, NY: Richard C. Owen.

English Language Learners in Literacy Workshops

Marsha Riddle Buly

Many mainstream classroom teachers haven't had the opportunity to develop strategies to effectively teach the growing number of language learners in our schools. And language specialists aren't always familiar with the instructional and management frameworks that work well for mainstream teachers. Marsha Riddle Buly, a mainstream classroom teacher who became a reading specialist and then a specialist in bilingual/ELL education, shows how reading, writing, and language workshops can be used to help language learners in mainstream K–8 classrooms.

Riddle Buly outlines literacy workshop formats and offers clear explanations of how workshops align with the research on effective instruction of language learners, including the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP).

English Language Learners in Literacy Workshops supports both K–8 mainstream classroom teachers and ELL specialists as they plan differentiated and powerful lessons to meet the needs of all students in a manageable, effective way.

NCTE National Council of Teachers of English

1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801-1096

800-369-6283 or 217-328-3870

www.ncte.org