Reading to Learn for ELs

Motivation Practices and Comprehension Strategies

for Informational Texts

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Figure 2–1: Gradual Release of Responsibility Model from "Essential Elements of Fostering and Teaching Reading Comprehension" by Nell K. Duke, P. David Pearson, Stephanie L. Strachan, and Alison K. Billman in *What Research Has to Say About Reading Instruction*, Fourth Edition, edited by S. Jay Samuels and Alan E. Farstrup. Copyright © 2011 by the International Reading Association, Inc. Reprinted with permission from the International Reading Association, Inc., conveyed through the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc.

How to Support ELs' Vocabulary Development: A Model of Instruction (with Figures 4–3 and 4–8) adapted from "The Effectiveness and Ease of Implementation of an Academic Vocabulary Intervention for Linguistically Diverse Students in Urban Middle Schools" by N.K. Lesaux, M.J. Kieffer, S.E. Faller, and J.G. Kelley originally appeared in *Reading Research Quarterly*, Volume 45, Issue 2 (2010). Reprinted with permission from Wiley.

Figure 6–8: Instructional Model of the FIST Strategy from "The Impact of Self-Questioning Strategy Use on the Text-Reader Assisted Comprehension of Students with Reading Disabilities" by G. Manset-Williamson, M. Dunn, R. Hinshaw, and J.M. Nelson originally appeared in the *International Journal of Special Education*, Volume 23, Issue 1 (2008). Adapted with permission from the *International Journal of Special Education.*

Figure 7–2: "QRAC-the-Code: A Comprehension Monitoring Strategy for Middle School Social Studies Textbooks" by Sheri Berkeley and Paul J. Riccomini originally appeared in the *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, Volume 46, Issue 2 (2013). Published by Sage Publications. Reprinted with permission from the publisher conveyed through the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc.

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Figure 2–4: Hispanic girl writting at desk in classroom. © Creatas/Getty Images; (platform) Platform of the Leicester Square underground station in London. © Eric Nathan/Alamy; (waiting area) Photodisc/Getty Images; (urban) Interior of Grand Central Station, New York City. © Keith Levit/Alamy; (rural) Morning commuters catching GO train in the Guildwood station in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. © Bill Brooks/Alamy; (airport) © Comstock Images/Getty Images; (bus station) Seattle Bus Station. © S. Meltzer/PhotoLink/Photodisc/Getty Images

Figure 2–5: Elementary student (6-7 years old) taking notes in laboratory. © Hero Images/Getty Images

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Message from Nell K. Duke

I know how to cook, at least the basics. I have a repertoire of strategies—marinating, mincing, and seasoning—for preparing food. I even know how to coordinate these strategies, such as mincing garlic for the marinade. But I don't *use* these strategies. In fact, I avoid cooking at all costs. When it comes to reading comprehension strategies in the classroom, many U.S. students are a lot like me in the kitchen. They know reading comprehension strategies. They can describe strategies, such as activating background knowledge, inferring, and self-questioning. They can even explain the importance of coordinating these strategies. But they don't actually *use* these strategies; in fact, they avoid reading at all costs.

Someone I know—who shall remain nameless—has a nearly opposite profile. He knows few traditional cooking techniques, let alone how to coordinate them, but is highly motivated to cook. The resulting concoctions, as you might imagine, are often not successful.

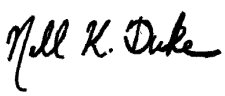
Ana Taboada Barber helps us take a major step forward in meeting the needs of both such profiles. She helps us recognize that motivational practices must go hand-in-hand with comprehension strategy instruction. It is not enough to teach students comprehension strategies; we must also use a variety of practices to motivate them to actually *use* the strategies. Yet it is not enough to motivate students; we must also teach them specific strategies that will help them channel their motivation into successful reading experiences.

Ana draws on the work of many researchers in education and psychology, as well as her own program of research, to articulate specific motivation practices

to enact and comprehension strategies to teach. And she provides rich examples of the use of these practices in the classroom, with a particular focus on English Learners. If you are reading this letter, I don't need to tell you of the pressing need for all of us to learn more about how to better address the educational needs of English Learners. We are so fortunate to have Ana as our tutor in this work.

This book is a great fit for the *Research-Informed Classroom* series—bringing rigorous classroom-based research to bear on persistent challenges of classroom practice. The series aims to bridge the gap between research and practice by focusing on the most practical, classroom-relevant research and by communicating practices based on that research in a way that makes them accessible, appealing, and actionable. The series is founded on the belief that students and teachers are researchers' clients, and that serving them should be the highest priority.

Thank you, Ana, for providing this book, and thank you to everyone who reads it in their quest to help all ELs read to learn.



Professor (and Frequent Take-Out Orderer)

Introduction

Understanding the Comprehension Gap for ELs

It is true that English is a second language for me and that I experience less certainty communicating in English than I do in my native language, Spanish. However, the label of an English Learner (EL) would not be entirely accurate. I didn't begin learning English because I was an immigrant in an English-speaking country. Learning English was the result of my parents' choice. My mother spoke English fluently and believed in its value as a lingua franca—a *bridge language,* a language spoken worldwide that makes communication possible among people who do not share their first language. For me, learning English was an enrichment activity, a way to broaden my horizons

Although I still continue to develop my English-speaking skills, I also do so with my Spanish. I am bilingual. I speak, read, think, write, and even dream in two languages. Experience in two languages and cultures has given me a much wider range of possibilities and understandings. But for many students the benefits of bilingualism and biculturalism are invisible in schools, and they are instead uncomfortably aware of the large gap between their comprehension and that of their English-speaking peers. Because reading is at the basis of most learning, the inability to read and comprehend well affects our ability to learn new content, speak the "language of school," access certain jobs, communicate efficiently in the workplace, and, ultimately, compete in modern society. ELs' struggles with reading permeate all of their school lives. Without adequate explicit instruction

and support from teachers, the distance between English Learner and bilingual/bicultural can feel like an impossible chasm to cross.

Labels can promote the lie of tidy understandings, especially when used to describe people. We're all so much more than what can be captured by one word or phrase. In education, diagnostic labels hold the danger of becoming fixed and limiting—struggling reader, English Learner, and so forth. A child is more than a struggling reader or an English Learner, and if we as educators do our jobs well, the label is time sensitive—true for only a brief period of time, as we support children in outgrowing the usefulness of that descriptor.

These labels *are* useful, of course, in identifying the support students require of us. Learning is an act with emotional and cognitive components. Learning a new language involves excitement for many, but also disorientation, struggle, and a lack of certainty: Did I communicate what I intended? Did I accurately understand what was communicated? What important information did I miss? When every school experience is marked by this uncertainty, not by success, ELs quickly become disengaged and their label dominates their potential for learning. What are ways to turn this around? How can we, as teachers, create classroom contexts that are guided by opportunities to read avidly and lead ELs to gain knowledge from text in engaging ways that lead to further learning? I wrote this book to help teachers find answers to these questions. I chose to specifically focus on the use of informational texts in ways that engage ELs because this work is essential in helping them succeed.

What Do We Know About the EL Student Population?

As I write this book, 4.4 million U.S. public school students are ELs (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES] 2014). And that number shows all signs of growing: by 2050, population projections predict 34% of children will be immigrants or children of immigrants, compared to 23% in 2005 (Passel and Cohn 2008). More and more teachers know what it means to have struggling EL students in their classrooms, but the knowledge on effective literacy instruction for ELs has not reached enough teachers, schools, and teacher education programs.

This gap for both EL students and their teachers is seen in our nationwide test data. On the 2013 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), 69% of fourth graders and 70% of eighth graders identified as ELs scored below the basic level in reading. In contrast, among non-EL students, 28% of fourth graders and 20% of eighth graders were below the basic level in reading (U.S. Department of

Education 2013). Inability to perform at the NAEP basic level implies challenges with locating relevant text information, making inferences, identifying main idea, theme, or author's purpose, and using understanding of text to identify details that support a given conclusion (National Assessment Governing Board 2010). But what do these statistics mean for the children who are ELs in your class right now, and what does it mean for you, their teacher? It means that we need to think about and design instruction that enables students to both meet and go beyond national standards.

Standardized tests, like the NAEP, and learning standards, like the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), help us identify specific learning goals and gaps for students across the country, including ELs. These standards require complex reading skills, such as close reading of a variety of complex texts and multiple inferential skills. Reading complex texts using these skills without appropriate help is too hard for ELs. Reading texts that are too hard and applying high-level cognitive skills without appropriate scaffolding can turn into a struggle that leads to destructive frustration, or a "collapse of motivation" (e.g., Snow 2013). However, although the CCSS call for high-level reading skills, they do not provide guidance on how to inspire students to pursue these complex tasks or purposes for learning. Without supports for engaged and motivated reading, achieving the standards will be especially challenging for ELs. Yet without the CCSS we have no way of holding ourselves accountable for equally challenging literacy standards for all students, English-native speakers and ELs alike. While the CCSS provide benchmarks for close, attentive reading of both literary and informational texts in language arts, social studies, and science, they leave room for teachers to decide how to achieve those goals (NGACBP and CCSSO 2010; Pearson 2013). This prerogative is invigorating but leaves many teachers at a loss, particularly regarding practices to support reading engagement. It is also beyond the scope of the CCSS to define the range of supports appropriate for ELs or for struggling readers (NGACBP and CCSSO 2010).

How This Book Can Help

I would guess you are reading this book because you are like many teachers I have met: You believe you might be able to do more for your ELs, and you may also believe the key to that work is to focus on comprehension of informational texts. Good, you're in the right place. Comprehension of informational texts becomes a steep challenge as ELs have to master language skills and content knowledge. However, success with informational texts is essential for students

to meet content area standards. Language arts curricula include content-area literacy standards as early as kindergarten (Jeong, Gaffney, and Choi 2010), and about 50% of fourth-grade and 73% of eighth-grade texts on standardized tests are informational (Moss 2005). Also, informational texts are increasingly dominant in the digital world. With the omnipresence of the Internet, searches for all sorts of information take place continuously in every office and possibly many households all over the world. We know that ability to access, sift, summarize, and assess an increasing abundance of information, both in print and digitally, is needed to succeed in the workplace (Schmar-Dobler 2003) and to become conscientious, participating citizens in thriving democracies.

This kind of ease with informational texts is a high-leverage activity for ELs when it is supported within a thoughtful instructional framework. This book will provide you with that framework, but it will not do so in the form of a script or lesson templates. And it will not mean more work than you can handle. What you will see is that your work with students is more effective, that you and your students will see improvement in their comprehension of informational texts. In the first part of this book (Chapters 1 and 2) I explain the research on ELs' comprehension, the demands of content-area literacy, and how pairing motivation practices with comprehension strategies has been proven to improve ELs' comprehension. In the second part of the book (Chapters 3 through 8) I explain how to translate researched practices in comprehension and motivation with ELs into classroom practice. Each of these latter chapters pairs a reading comprehension strategy, such as activating background knowledge or asking text-based questions, with a motivation or engagement practice, such as providing meaningful academic choices or supporting students' self-efficacy. These pairings are offered to include a possible way to combine a comprehension strategy and a motivation practice, with a rationale for each based on research, and ways to weave them together and apply them to your teaching. However, these pairings are not prescriptive. Rather, as you become comfortable with motivation practices and comprehension strategies you are more likely to come up with pairings of these that work for you and your students. The important thing is not to obviate the fusion of motivation with cognitive tools! That is what fosters reading engagement.

This framework is based on the reading engagement model developed by John Guthrie and his colleagues (Guthrie et al. 1996) at the University of Maryland, and my own research in applying the engagement model to elementary and middle school ELs in the domains of science and social studies (Taboada et al. 2009; Taboada Barber et al. 2015). By the time you finish reading this book, my hope

is that you will have the tools and knowledge to teach and show all students—especially your ELs in the late elementary to early middle grades—how to comprehend informational texts in effective ways and, more importantly, lead them onto becoming engaged readers of informational texts. Without this crucial skill, EL students can experience a learning gap that can increase over time.

The comprehension difficulties faced by ELs are closely intertwined with their challenges to become motivated to read and learn. Adolescents are particularly good at articulating this disengagement. Maria, a sixth-grade struggling reader EL, shared with me her struggles with reading when I asked her how she perceived herself as a reader: "I am not a very good reader. I know I could read more, and read better. But I do not like social studies. . . . I do not like all the information we have to learn. . . . My grandpa tells me I have to read history as a story, so I can remember more. . . . But how can I read it as a story when the sentences are so long and there are so many time lines that the teacher wants us to memorize? I get tired before starting to read!" Before she even begins reading a text, Maria already knows she's not interested. One reason might be that the tasks Maria is expected to do get in the way of her reading, specifically, memorizing a time line. Granted, the purpose of education is not only to deepen our existing strengths but to help us develop new skills, too. However, there are ways that we as teachers can be more thoughtful about designing reading tasks that engage our students and deepen their comprehension. If students do not experience success in reading, they are less likely to read. As all students, not just ELs, transition to middle school, the decline in academic motivation and performance increases (Anderman, Maehr, and Midgley 1999; Jacobs, Lanza, Osgood, Eccles, and Wigfield 2002; Wigfield, Eccles, Schiefele, Roeser, and Davis-Kean 2006). So, if we focus on nurturing the motivation to read, we can buffer students from trends of disengagement while deepening their comprehension of the texts they are reading in and out of school.

The Demands of Academic Literacy for ELs

When I was an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, I first noticed a trend starting in grade 3 among ELs of most backgrounds, but especially Spanish-speaking ELs (who make up between 73% and 80% of the total EL population in the US; NCES 2011). These students were capable word decoders but could not demonstrate deep comprehension of informational texts. In one-on-one conferences with these students I observed word automaticity, but I also observed monotone reading and student difficulty paraphrasing what they read. I carried

this observation with me as I moved from teaching to research, and I ruminated upon it. For example, I asked Marcos, a fourth grader, to read the following paragraph to me from the book *Life Cycles of a Monarch Butterfly,* by Cooper, J. (2003).

> *Monarch migration is one of nature's most amazing stories. That's partly because monarchs are fragile and light. It would take about 800 monarchs to weigh a pound (.45 kilogram).* (Cooper 2003, p. 7)

Marcos struggled to describe what he had just read in his own words. He had no problem restating that butterflies were fragile and light. However, when asked why a monarch's weight might be important, Marcos could not link that detail to the concept of migration.

Marcos is not alone in this challenge. Identifying main ideas and connecting ideas within a short paragraph is a common difficulty among EL struggling readers. These challenges are in part related to vocabulary, but they are not limited to knowledge of word meanings. To make sense of a paragraph of several sentences, readers need to not only understand key word meanings but also get the meaning of each sentence, integrate information across successive sentences, and incorporate background knowledge to build coherent text representations (Cain and Oakhill 2009; Johnson-Laird 1983).

Most ELs tend to do quite well in the early grades on skills such as word decoding and phonological awareness. It is in later grades that difficulties with reading surface, particularly in the domains of vocabulary and comprehension (August, Shanahan, and Shanahan 2006). Starting in third grade, EL reading comprehension performance begins to decrease relative to national norms while their word reading skills tend to remain the same (Mancilla-Martinez and Lesaux 2010; Nakamoto et al. 2007; Proctor et al. 2005). By the time Spanish-speaking ELs reach grade 5, their text comprehension on average is at the second- or third-grade level. By age eleven, their vocabulary skills plateau at the level of an eight- to nine-year-old monolingual speaker (Mancilla-Martinez and Lesaux 2010). And this delay in comprehension skills tends to pervade most content areas. The problem becomes one of *academic literacy* (Torgesen et al. 2007), the kind of reading proficiency needed to construct meaning from content-area texts and that is assessed on state-level accountability measures. Comprehension skills within academic literacy include the ability to

- make inferences from text,
- summarize,
- identify relevant information,

- learn and apply new vocabulary from text, and
- read with a stance that pertains to a particular discipline (i.e., disciplinary literacy).

Although this is unquestionably a worrisome picture, it is in no way beyond teachers' ability to help students through appropriate instruction. Because struggles with reading for ELs often do not surface until the late elementary or middle grades, I focus on grades 3 through 8 in this book. That said, there is much teachers can do from preschool to grade 2 to lay the groundwork for text comprehension so that ELs do not have to play catch-up in grades 3 and beyond.

Why is reading comprehension strategy instruction for informational texts so necessary? In a way, comprehension of informational texts is the gateway to building the knowledge foundation for most disciplines. Without it children are severely limited in the knowledge they can acquire in science, social studies, and even math! Comprehension of informational texts improves students' understanding and retention of domain-specific information (Alvermann 2001; Biancarosa and Snow 2006; Kamil 2003; Heller and Greenleaf 2007; Torgesen et al. 2007). But there is evidence that shows that some teachers assume that learning English must precede content-area instruction (e.g., Collier 1989; Cummins 1981), an approach that inevitably causes ELs to fall behind their English-speaking peers (August and Hakuta 1997; García 1999). The variety of text structures used in informational texts (for example, compare and contrast, cause and effect, time lines), text features (for example, headings, captions, graphs/charts, diagrams), and content-specific vocabulary often make comprehension more difficult for students than narrative texts, whose structure and features are fewer and more familiar. Because the majority of the ESL teachers are unprepared to integrate English language and literacy with content-area instruction (Baker and Saul 1994; Stoddart et al. 2002), we need to provide clear models of integrated practice. For example, informational texts can be successfully used as read-alouds (Duke and Kays 1998), in guided and independent reading (Duke 2004), and in a variety of other authentic literacy practices, including communicating information to others and writing for specific purposes (Purcell-Gates, Duke, and Martineau 2007). Let's, again, take the case of Marcos, our fourth grader struggling with main idea identification. Marcos had achieved a relatively advanced level of English proficiency by fourth grade. He was able to communicate quite fluently, and his oral comprehension was almost at the level of an English native speaker. However, Marcos had not received consistent comprehension strategy instruction, and this showed in many of the

challenges he encountered when reading informational texts, such as prioritizing information, determining a purpose for reading, and sharing information learned from texts in effective ways.

There is also growing research documenting the efficacy of integrating language arts with science (e.g., Cervetti et al. 2012; Guthrie et al. 2004; Pearson, Moje, and Greenleaf 2010) and literacy skills with social studies (e.g., De La Paz and Felton 2010; Halvorsen et al. 2012; Taboada et al. 2015). However, this integration is not well embedded in K–12 instruction (Pearson et al. 2013) where informational texts either have tended to be marginalized (Duke 2000) or are not part of common practice, especially with ELs (e.g., Taboada 2009). The purpose of this book is to provide a clear, actionable model for instruction.

ELs Need Compelling Reasons to Read Informational Texts

At any grade, teachers can play a critical role in supporting students' motivation for reading. Every teacher knows that students need to be motivated to learn. Opening a book, looking at its illustrations and connecting them to the text, striving to understand its content, and using or applying what one learns from it all require motivation—the effort, the persistence, the concentration, and the eagerness to learn. Going back to Marcos, I remember the pivotal moment when his teacher had him think about the relevance of learning about open and closed electric circuits. He understood that these circuits are key to how a light switch, a TV, a vacuum cleaner, and his computer worked, but he also understood that this knowledge was essential to avoiding an electrical hazard. Making this connection explicit to Marcos was crucial in motivating him to read further about electric circuits. Many teachers often believe that motivation comes from students' homes, which is sometimes true (Guthrie 2013). But for many students, including ELs who are struggling with language and literacy, the *intention to learn* may come from home but the supports for learning may be scarce. Teachers often underestimate the power they can play in fostering motivation in their own classrooms. Many research studies have shown that classroom contexts can be strong motivators (Guthrie, Wigfield, and Klauda 2012) and that with a bit of work and understanding of motivation principles and practices teachers can go a long way in encouraging motivated and engaged reading and learning.

Furthermore, researchers on motivation strongly believe that teachers ". . . can expand on how they enhance their students' motivation and learning. Even when they have not done so before, teachers can learn to give students a few meaningful choices—*choice within boundaries* is the idea. Teachers can promote

partnership activities instead of constantly expecting solo work. Teachers can link a story or a science book to student backgrounds and personal interests to show relevance. Choice, collaboration, and relevance are all motivators—and there are dozens more (Guthrie and McPeake 2013). In this book, I share research-based principles on how to support ELs' engaged reading of informational texts.

Understanding the principles of motivation helps make our comprehension strategy instruction more targeted and successful. In Chapter 2 you'll learn essential principles of motivation, as well as an overview of some effective practices. For example, as an ESL teacher I was unaware that student choice—a widely used motivation practice—could motivate my students to become more involved in their reading and to read more deeply, so the choices my students were offered were arbitrary, and at times superficial. With time, I learned that choice works because it gives students a sense of control in their learning and that the choices offered had to be meaningful ones—not "Which color pen do you want to use for marking the text as you read?" but rather "How would you like to share with others what you learned from this book?" Meaningful choices involved upfront instruction so that students understood the purpose and reasons for choosing. Understanding the motivation principle helped define the parameters of my instruction.

ELs Need Explicit Strategy *and* Content Instruction

Comprehension strategies should not be separated from the teaching of content. Effective strategy instruction in the elementary and middle grades has shown that students benefit when key concepts within a topic are identified and comprehension strategy instruction becomes the vehicle for learning those key ideas within a topic or a domain (e.g., Taboada and Guthrie 2004). I write this book drawing from my experience in developing instructional materials that bridge literacy and science through my work on the development of Concept Oriented Reading Instruction (CORI), which was highly successful in increasing third, fourth, and fifth graders' reading comprehension and reading engagement in science (Guthrie, McRae, and Klauda 2007). One of the motivation-enhancing practices in CORI was *emphasizing knowledge content goals*. Third-, fourth-, and fifth-grade teachers taught students about ecological principles and key concepts in the domain of ecology as part of the core knowledge in life science. Students learned about predation, reproduction, competition, symbiosis, adaptation, and defense (Guthrie et al. 2004). Teaching about key

concepts as content goals provides motivation for students because they have a purpose for using comprehension strategies with informational texts. By having content goals, students are compelled to use the strategies with greater effort, attention, and persistence as they are putting these at the service of learning content rather than using them in a context devoid of deep, conceptual themes (e.g., Wigfield et al. 2014).

Building on CORI, my colleagues and I developed United States History for Engaged Reading (USHER; Taboada Barber et al. 2015), an instructional framework that fused motivation supports such as autonomy support, relevance, small group collaboration, and self-efficacy with comprehension strategies such as questioning, activating background knowledge, and main idea identification to support reading comprehension in history for middle school English native speakers and ELs. In USHER we selected key history concepts from the state history curriculum and organized lessons to be driven by unit-specific concepts (e.g., *slavery, secession, economic growth/conflict, growth of monopolies*, etc.) so that comprehension strategies became tools for learning content related to these key concepts.

I draw from my experience with both instructional frameworks in this book, as they both have the common root in the reading engagement model (Guthrie and Wigfield 2000). Chapters 3 through 8 start with the assumption that we first plan what content we want to teach and then select the types of strategies that can help students learn that content (e.g., Gillis 2014; Herber 1970). You'll see how to provide ELs with explicit instruction of comprehension strategies and how to support their reading motivation to facilitate access to a variety of texts.

English Language Proficiency Informs Comprehension Strategy Instruction

As my work with students showed me, we do not need to wait for ELs to be fully proficient in English in order to teach them comprehension strategies to help with their understanding of informational texts (e.g., Taboada 2009; Taboada Barber et al. 2015). This idea agrees with empirical evidence indicating that when proficiency is developed in the first language, those skills can transfer to the second language (e.g., Cummins 1981; Lanauze and Snow 1989). In fact, there has been evidence that successful reader ELs transfer reading strategies across languages (Jimenez 1997). The importance of teaching comprehension strategies to ELs early on in their literacy development goes hand in hand with debunking the "learning to read/reading to learn" divide, given that students are always reading to learn.

In my experience, the teaching of ESL practices sometimes collides with the teaching of reading comprehension for ELs. This is not because ESL teachers do not see the importance of reading comprehension strategy instruction, but rather because they tend to put more of an emphasis on oral language proficiency instruction than on interaction with texts. This book is aimed for all teachers of ELs, including ESL teachers who have an interest in deepening their teaching of reading comprehension. Research on the oral language development and instruction of ELs offers several important principles that have an impact on successful comprehension strategy instruction. Among these, I highlight two that have direct bearing on the instructional ideas in this book.

First, it has been argued that excessive use of visuals such as graphic organizers, pictures, realia, and so forth can be misconstrued as "comprehensible instruction" (because of the nonverbal support provided) at the cost of getting around the language demands in academic texts (Harper and de Jong 2004). That is, although these accommodations can increase ELs' understanding of texts and simplify the complexity of academic language, teachers need to be aware that we should use them but recognize that they're insufficient. Why? Visual tools may sometimes fall short of meeting ELs' language needs. Depending on how they are used, nonverbal tools are limiting opportunities for language learning in content classes. Therefore, exposing ELs to multiple texts of varied reading levels is an important way of fostering their reading comprehension and language development. Furthermore, how to use those texts is even more important. We delve into appropriate uses of information texts later in the book.

Second, differing levels of biliteracy impact comprehension strategy instruction. ELs are individual students with their own patterns of language development who vary in their levels of biliteracy; this variation is often rooted in their academic experiences. For instance, ELs who are already literate and have a strong academic foundation in their L1 are likely to develop academic language skills earlier than social language skills in English. This challenges the belief that social language generally precedes academic language. Yet, although there is truth to this point, and ELs' biliteracy development is closely related to how much formal literacy instruction they have received in their first language, it is also true that EL's language proficiency in L1 and second language runs along a continuum (Gottlieb 2006). As such, there are predictable patterns within the continuum. The WIDA (Wisconsin-Delaware and Arkansas) Performance Definitions for Listening and Reading and for Speaking and Writing provide a good framework to think of language proficiency development as multidimensional (i.e., speaking,

listening, reading, and writing) and running along a continuum (see Figures I–1 and I–2) within which certain milestones can be expected and should be fostered. Planning for ELs' literacy instruction should take into account their English proficiency as a continuum of skills as well as their literacy development in their first language. However, instruction should also take into account that students will tend to vary in their levels of proficiency in English and first language, with some dimensions such as oral language being more developed than others, such as reading, for example. Whenever possible, content area teachers should work closely with ESL teachers so they become aware of ELs' varying levels of proficiency along the biliteracy and language proficiency continua (see Figures I–1 and I–2). In other words, as with other dimensions of learning, we need to approach ELs' literacy development as a multifaceted endeavor for which students have formal and informal opportunities to learn and develop oral language. Writing and reading in each of their languages vary broadly based on the circumstances that have surrounded their academic and personal lives.

Figure I–1. WIDA Performance Definitions: Listening and Reading, Grades K–12

At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will process . . .

	Discourse Level	**Sentence Level**	**Word/Phrase Level**
	Linguistic Complexity	*Language Forms and Conventions*	*Vocabulary Usage*
Level 6: *Reaching language that meets all criteria through Level 5 Bridging*			
Level 5 Bridging	▪ Rich descriptive discourse with complex sentences ▪ Cohesive and organized related ideas	▪ Compound, complex grammatical constructions (e.g., multiple phrases and clauses) ▪ A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	▪ Technical and abstract content-area language ▪ Words and expressions with shades of meaning in each content area
Level 4 Expanding	▪ Connected discourse with a variety of sentences ▪ Expanded related ideas	▪ A variety of complex grammatical constructions ▪ Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	▪ Specific, and some technical, content-area language ▪ Words and expressions with multiple meanings of collocations and idioms for each content area
Level 3 Developing	▪ Discourse with a series of extended sentences ▪ Related ideas	▪ Compound and some complex (e.g., noun phrase, verb phrase, prepositional phrase) grammatical constructions ▪ Sentence patterns across content areas	▪ Specific content words and expressions ▪ Words or expressions related to content area with common collocations and idioms across content areas
Level 2 Emerging	▪ Multiple related simple sentences ▪ An idea with details	▪ Compound grammatical constructions ▪ Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas	▪ General, and some specific, content words and expressions (including cognates) ▪ Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas
Level 1 Entering	▪ Single statements or questions ▪ An idea within words, phrases, or chunks of language	▪ Simple grammatical constructions (e.g., commands, *Wh-* questions, declaratives) ▪ Common social and instructional forms and patterns	▪ General content-related words ▪ Everyday social and instructional words and expressions

. . . within sociocultural contexts for language use.

Note: Retrieved from https://www.wida.us/standards/

Figure I–2. WIDA Performance Definitions: Speaking and Writing, Grades K–12

At each grade, toward the end of a given level of English language proficiency, and with instructional support, English language learners will process . . .

	Discourse Level	Sentence Level	Word/Phrase Level
	Linguistic Complexity	*Language Forms and Conventions*	*Vocabulary Usage*
Level 6: *Reaching language that meets all criteria through Level 5 Bridging*			
Level 5 Bridging	▪ Multiple, complex sentences ▪ Organized, cohesive, and coherent expression of ideas	▪ A variety of grammatical structures matched to purpose and nearly consistent use of conventions, including for effect ▪ A broad range of sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	▪ Technical and abstract content-area language ▪ Words and expressions with precise meaning related to content area topics
Level 4 Expanding	▪ Short, expanded, and some complex sentences ▪ Organized expression of ideas with emerging cohesion	▪ A variety of grammatical structures and generally consistent use of conventions ▪ Sentence patterns characteristic of particular content areas	▪ Specific and some technical content-area language ▪ Words and expressions with multiple meanings or common collocations and idioms across content areas
Level 3 Developing	▪ Short and some expanded sentences with emerging complexity ▪ Expanded expression of one idea or emerging expression of multiple related ideas	▪ Repetitive grammatical structures with occasional variation and emerging use of conventions ▪ Sentence patterns across content areas	▪ Specific content words and expressions (including content-specific cognates) ▪ Words or expressions related to content areas
Level 2 Emerging	▪ Phrases or short sentences ▪ Emerging expression of ideas	▪ Formulaic grammatical structures and variable use of conventions ▪ Repetitive phrasal and sentence patterns across content areas	▪ General content words and expressions (including common cognates) ▪ Social and instructional words and expressions across content areas
Level 1 Entering	▪ Words, phrases, or chunks of language ▪ Single words used to represent ideas	▪ Simple grammatical constructions (e.g., commands, *Wh*-questions, declaratives) ▪ Phrasal patterns associated with common social and instructional situations	▪ General content-related words ▪ Everyday social and instructional words and familiar expressions

. . . within sociocultural contexts for language use.

Note: Retrieved from https://www.wida.us/standards/

An Invitation

This book is for those teachers who are passionate about the teaching of reading and language—teachers who see reading as a door to endless opportunities for ELs' language and knowledge development; teachers who want and believe in engaging their students through and with reading; teachers who see reading as an infinite ocean of learning for their students. Comprehension strategy instruction and motivation practices are the ship that carries them on that journey.

As such, it is my hope that teachers reading this book see language proficiency development as multidimensional, as the WIDA standards conceive it, for which reading is an important dimension that feeds into the others—writing, listening, and speaking. Because they see it as a continuum, English proficiency levels are seen as fluid, providing indicators to guide their reading instruction (e.g., what text levels to choose).

In addition, this book is for teachers with varying backgrounds: reading teachers, content teachers, and ESL teachers. My experience has been with content-area literacy instruction, social studies, language arts, science, and even math! Teachers can be successful at teaching comprehension strategy instruction to their EL struggling readers. The common denominator among them is that they cared deeply about their students' reading and learning. Although I encourage content teachers to collaborate with ESL teachers to enhance ELs' overall language and literacy development, I am aware that curricula, time, and even building constraints not always make this possible. You can use the ideas and practices in this book whether you have a collaborative team or you are trying them on your own.

Lastly, this book tries to alleviate the anxiety that comes from trying to implement and deal with literacy and content standards simultaneously. We, and our students, can feel overwhelmed as we try to break down standards, objectives, and benchmarks into manageable daily steps. This book aims to help teachers who see the ambitious standards articulated by the CCSS and the large deficits reported on ELs as surmountable, because it will offer them specific, research-based steps to do so. We can create a joyful, successful place for all learners when we invite them to be curious, critical thinkers by showing them specific strategies and motivational practices that encourage them to become engaged readers.

PART 1

Research on What ELs Need for Success

1

Motivation Practices

Why the Desire to Know Matters

When we talk about student disengagement, we often view it in a narrow way by describing a student who isn't putting enough effort or focus into his schoolwork. We use vague language that keeps that student's actions distinct from our responsibility as teachers; it is behavior that is specific to the student, not to our instruction. But in that ambiguity lies our own dread: an awareness that our instruction might be failing our students. Most of us know that students are curious and want to discover new ideas. "It's wanting to know that makes us matter," Tom Stoppard wrote in his play *Arcadia.* When our students appear like they do not want to know, what they are really communicating is that we haven't invited them in; we haven't yet shown them that they matter. Take the case of Marina, a struggling fourth-grade reader who was part of my ESL class of fifteen students. Marina's father was a doctor and her mom was a biologist. At home, family discussions about health, live organisms, and environment preservation were abundant. Marina's curiosity about her natural environment was vast. She would often come to class with observations about a new plant in her home garden, the pollination of the daisies she had observed that morning, and how the birth of the puppies next door had been an eye-opening experience. However, as her teacher, I did not know how to cater to her interests. I would allow her to share these observations early in the day, but I did not follow up on them with texts that delved into those topics, or at least related to them. I felt committed to the ESL curriculum and the readings established in it. Marina was

clearly indifferent toward reading isolated sentences to drill English grammar structures, the supermarket dialogue in the book that taught food item names, or the exchange between Johnny and his mom in the zoo that taught animal names. Although the ESL topics covered vocabulary needed for the ESL curriculum, none of these topics touched on Marina's interests. At that point I was insecure about walking away from the prescribed content and didn't think that having a few science books would be enticing to Marina in ways that the ESL curriculum was not—while still helping her with her English vocabulary! I couldn't figure out how to engage her with reading, how to cater to her thirst for learning.

The Challenges of Engagement and Motivation

The number of disengaged readers, especially in late elementary, middle, and high school, is not trivial. The 2011 Nation's Report Card reported that 46 percent of fourth graders said they read for fun almost every day, whereas only 8 percent of eighth graders did. Furthermore, the students in both grades who read for fun almost every day scored highest (proficient and advanced) on the NAEP reading tests; those who reported never or hardly ever reading for fun scored lowest (basic) (U.S. Department of Education 2011). This should not surprise us: engaged readers tend to be successful readers.

What skills do engaged readers tend to have and disengaged readers tend not to have? On the grade 4 NAEP, a "basic" score means that the student can make simple inferences and identify a main purpose/idea, whereas a "proficient" score describes a reader who can make complex inferences, compare ideas across texts, and draw conclusions. In grade 8, a "basic" score describes a student who can identify relevant text facts, whereas a "proficient" reader can interpret causal relations and recognize rhetorical devices. This listing of skills might seem abstract, but consider what happens when a student begins to accumulate a list of skills that he *cannot* do. The feeling of not achieving, not performing, or *cannot do* is highly demotivating. ELs often find themselves feeling that way: The challenges to make sense of text, often, seem insurmountable. For instance, note how the complexity of the standards for grades 4 and 5 increases—for both CCSS and NAEP (Figure 1–1)—from identification of main idea and supporting details to integrating information across texts to finally drawing simple and complex inferences from text. Both sets of standards, CCSS and NAEP, communicate the expectation that each grade level will require achievement of new and complex skills. It is easy to infer how academic difficulty becomes academic disengagement as the gap between what the EL knows and can do and what is expected of him widens without support.

Figure 1–1. CCSS and NAEP Informational Text Standards

NAEP Grade 4	CCSS Grades 4–5
Fourth-grade students performing at the **basic** level should be able to: ▪ Identify the main purpose and an explicitly stated main idea. » Gather information from various parts of a text to provide supporting information. Fourth-grade students performing at the **proficient** level should be able to: ▪ Locate relevant information. ▪ Integrate information across texts. ▪ Compare ideas across two texts. ▪ Evaluate the way an author presents information. ▪ Demonstrate an understanding of the purpose for text features. ▪ Integrate information from headings, text boxes, and graphics and their captions. Fourth-grade students performing at the **advanced** level should be able to: ▪ Make complex inferences about main ideas and supporting ideas. ▪ Express a judgment about the text and about text features and support the judgment with evidence. ▪ Identify the most likely cause given an effect. ▪ Explain an author's point of view.	By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, in the grades 4–5 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range: ▪ Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text. ▪ Describe the overall structure (e.g., chronology, comparison, cause/effect, problem/solution) of events, ideas, concepts, or information in a text or part of a text. ▪ Integrate information from two texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably. ▪ Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently. ▪ Interpret information presented visually, orally, or quantitatively (e.g., in charts, graphs, diagrams, time lines, animations, or interactive elements on web pages) and explain how the information contributes to an understanding of the text in which it appears. ▪ Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text. ▪ Use text features and search tools (e.g., key words, sidebars, hyperlinks) to locate information relevant to a given topic efficiently. ▪ Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text. ▪ Explain how an author uses reasons and evidence to support particular points in a text.

Figure 1–1. CCSS and NAEP Informational Text Standards *(continued)*

NAEP Grade 8	CCSS Grades 6–8
Eighth-grade students performing at the **basic** level should be able to: ▪ Recognize inferences based on main ideas and supporting details. ▪ Locate and provide relevant facts to construct general statements about information from the text. ▪ Provide some support for judgments about the way information is presented. Eighth-grade students performing at the **proficient** level should be able to: ▪ Locate and provide facts and relevant information that support a main idea or purpose. ▪ Interpret causal relations. ▪ Provide and support a judgment about the author's argument or stance. ▪ Make connections within and across texts to explain causal relations. ▪ Evaluate and justify the strength of supporting evidence and the quality of an author's presentation. ▪ State and justify judgments about text features and choice of content to convey meaning. ▪ Justify the author's use of evidence and rhetorical devices.	By the end of year, read and comprehend informational texts, including history/social studies, science, and technical texts, at the high end of the Grades 6–8 text complexity band independently and proficiently: ▪ Cite textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text. ▪ Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes). ▪ Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments. ▪ Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text. ▪ Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text. ▪ Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video, or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each medium's portrayal of the subject (e.g., how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words). ▪ Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints. ▪ Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept. ▪ Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.

Source: From the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2011 Reading Framework. Test specifications and methodology developed by the National Assessment Governing Board, appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Education.

As we discussed in the Introduction, making progress on these skills requires persistence in reading complex texts, reading closely, and using reading strategies that increase comprehension. These new benchmarks hold ELs to higher standards, which is good, but without the appropriate scaffolding ELs are only aware of expectations they cannot meet. It is always important to remember that the standards are not only for measuring what students know and can do, but also for measuring what and how we teach them. Here's an example of how those high standards without support may also affect the way students perceive themselves as readers. When asked whether he saw himself as a good reader, fourth-grader Juan said:

> Nahh. I only read when I am asked to do it in school. I understand reading is important for school and work, but reading the science textbooks can be really hard. And social studies, I just don't like. [The book] is long and there are new words to me, and I get confused if I am asked too many things to do.

The more challenging the materials and skills to master, the more struggling readers will tend to disengage because they don't know how to re-engage or persist through text difficulty—and often because they don't have sufficient reason to do so. We know that students will persist through difficult texts if they are more motivated to do so. For example, researchers have shown us that children's reading motivation relates to their performance in reading (Baker and Wigfield 1999; Wigfield and Guthrie 1997) and that when students are motivated to read they achieve more (Campbell, Voelkl, and Donahue 1997). Furthermore, children who are motivated to read for intrinsic reasons (e.g., wanting to learn more about a topic) will tend to persist through challenging texts using higher-order reading strategies (Guthrie, Van Meter, McCann, et al. 1996). However, as students move toward the upper grades, their motivation for school in general, and for reading in particular, tends to drop (Gottfried 1985; Gottfried et al. 2007). In a districtwide survey of seventh graders, 80 percent indicated that informational texts in science, social studies, and math were "boring." What does it mean when students, particularly low-performing students, say they are bored? The seventh graders surveyed elaborated on their boredom by explaining that they exerted little effort and avoided reading whenever possible (Guthrie, Wigfield, and Klauda 2012). Boredom also comes from the nature of the tasks and the texts students are asked to perform in relation to informational texts. For instance, many of the informational texts used in the later elementary grades and beyond are just not interesting to students. Nearly 80 percent of high-achieving and 70 percent of

lower-achieving students report that they are not interested in the information books that they read in school (Guthrie, Klauda, and Morrison 2012). Tasks such as responding to teacher questions to show text understanding or complete a book report are also uninteresting to many students. The combination of disinterest in what they read and the perception that school texts are difficult is not conducive to engaged or motivated reading (Wigfield et al. 2014). The only way to overcome the detachment of boredom is the attachment of motivation. We can't just expect our students to "toughen up and grit their way through it" because that implies motivation. In other words, the essential scaffold for all learning is motivation. Our struggling EL readers require school and teacher support to increase their motivation to read, as much if not more than anyone.

In fact, the CCSS require challenging and rigorous tasks intended to evaluate the products of close reading, but many curricular units designed to meet the standards are clearly lacking attention to student interest or precursor activities (e.g., discussion of popular culture or personal experience events) that can, at least, elicit interest and motivate close reading (e.g., Snow 2013). Some researchers have argued that literacy engagement is the missing link in implementing the standards: "Because complex texts are so challenging students have to [. . .] want to unlock deeper meanings of complex literary and informational texts in order to succeed at career readiness as it is proposed by the CCSS" (Guthrie and McPeake 2013, 162). If the challenging tasks required by the CCSS are not guided or started by practices such as engaging questions, appealing topics, and important issues (e.g., Guthrie, Klauda, and Ho 2013; Snow 2013), many students are likely to lose interest and engage in shallow, superficial reading. In fact, when instruction includes such engagement practices in combination with consistent multiple strategy instruction (e.g., inferencing, summarizing, and graphic organizing of key concepts) such as in CORI, middle school students have been found to increase their information text comprehension through increasing self-efficacy and decreasing perceived difficulty. That is, instruction that is designed to fuse motivation and cognitive practices increases students' confidence in their capacity to succeed and decreases students' perceptions of texts being too challenging to comprehend (Guthrie, Klauda, and Ho 2013). All in all, a motivated *reader* is a motivated *learner*. Reading comprehension is essential for success, not just in reading class but also in all other subjects in school (Wigfield et al. 2014). Children who struggle with reading are very likely to struggle with many other dimensions of learning. That struggle leads to indifference and disengagement. In fact, the academic struggles of ELs are mostly due to struggles with reading comprehension (e.g., Lesaux et al. 2010; Mancilla-Martinez and Lesaux 2011). When

Juan struggles to understand the causes of the civil war, he is struggling with vocabulary, abstract concepts, syntactic structures, and dense text. Faced with so many areas of challenge, Juan feels like giving up easily; persevering with text is not something he would initiate or truly consider. The roads to not understanding are too many. He needs help to become hooked into reading.

When Juan's teacher works to help Juan become *motivated to read* about the Civil War, she is ultimately creating the classroom context for Juan to be immersed in the act of learning, of building key concepts about the causes, development, and consequences of the Civil War—for which reading is a crucial tool. Juan, in turn, becomes motivated to read informational text when he feels compelled to discuss his learning from the text with others and connects his reading to previous learning. Engaged reading is purposeful learning, driven by the reader's desire to know.

How Can We Support ELs' Motivation to Read?

I use the word *immersed* to describe engagement because it communicates stepping into something beyond oneself. A reader who becomes immersed in the act of reading is confident enough to step into a text. He knows that he may be confused by concepts or language and that he may be challenged by new ideas. Yet he is confident enough in himself, and in the belief of what he may gain, that he is willing to dip into the uncertainty of a new text. That willingness, that desire, comes from within; it is intrinsic, or self-initiated, motivation. When a child reads for extrinsic reasons—such as pizza points, avoiding punishment, or earning a grade—she disengages when the task is done and the reward is offered or the threat of punishment removed. When a child's motivation to read is appropriately fostered in classroom contexts, her reading is likely to spring within the classroom and continue beyond the boundaries of school-assigned tasks. However, without the motivation to hone advanced cognitive skills and learn from complex texts, reading becomes a cold, cognitive exercise for struggling ELs and their challenges go unsupported. That is, if students are not motivated to read and not supported by their teachers to do so, they are deprived of the willingness to dig into text and learn more. They read less for their own sake or to pursue their own interests, and their reading becomes subject to teacher or test requirements. They are constrained by performing the task at hand and are less inclined to transfer skills and knowledge to new situations and contexts.

The good news is that abundant research with English native speakers (e.g., Guthrie et al. 2004, Guthrie, McRae, and Klauda 2007) and more recently with

ELs (Taboada and Rutherford 2011; Taboada Barber et al. 2015) shows that teachers can support motivation and engagement in many ways in the classroom and beyond, helping students to not only develop the cognitive skills they need to meet the CCSS but, more importantly, sustain and deepen these skills over time and be inclined to use them. For example, motivation can be supported through the use of meaningful text choices, explanations for the value of learning-specific content and comprehension strategies, or setting knowledge goals by providing opportunities to learn about the same topics in depth and over time. In sum, supports for motivated and engaged reading work in tandem with the enhancement of cognitive skills for reading. Motivated and engaged reading helps students (a) learn cognitive skills, such as when self-efficacy or feeling competent helps with effortful, challenging reading via use of higher-order strategies; (b) deepen the development of cognitive skills over time, such as when student interests and open-ended questions are conducive to challenging tasks like close reading; and (3) be inclined to employ cognitive skills that may otherwise become inert or not used (Hall and Sabey 2007), such as when students who are intrinsically motivated to read are inclined to use comprehension strategies (e.g., Guthrie et al. 1996).

Some Important Distinctions

Motivation and engagement are often superficially described as "fun." This confusion arises because there are many learning activities that are cute, involving making things or movement, but without a strong connection to the longer-term purposes of learning. The words *motivation* and *engagement* are often used interchangeably, but they are not synonymous. *Motivation* is the desire or predisposition that energizes and directs student behavior and usually refers to their beliefs, values, and goals related to various activities (Eccles and Wigfield 2002; Wigfield et al. 2006). When a student believes that effort is directly related to his learning instead of, say, just his aptitude or intelligence, he displays a motivational belief about his learning. He believes that learning is related to the effort and persistence one puts into it. *Engagement* is more encompassing than motivation; it is an umbrella term that includes dimensions of students' behavior, cognition, and their affect or emotions (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, and Paris 2004). While motivation refers to the willingness, the desire, to invest time and effort in learning, engagement refers to the student's actual participation or involvement in learning or reading (Gettinger and Walter 2012).

Reading engagement is the degree to which students process text deeply using cognitive strategies and prior knowledge in strategic and motivated ways (Guthrie and Wigfield 2000). Engaged readers are motivated to read, approach text strategically, know how to construct meaning from what they read, and talk about what they've read with their friends and family (Guthrie et al. 1996; Guthrie and Wigfield 2000). In this book I'll revisit aspects of motivation and engagement as they pertain to reading, specifically to reading of informational text (see Figure 1–2). What follows is a fuller explanation of five motivation practices that we can use to enhance the literacy instruction of ELs. These motivation practices include self-efficacy, relevance, knowledge goals, autonomy, and student collaboration. We'll revisit these motivation practices within specific instructional ideas in Chapters 3 through 8.

Self-Efficacy: Developing ELs' Competence for Specific Tasks

To support students' self-efficacy, we must know our students well so that we can assess their skills to tailor our instruction to their needs. Albert Bandura (1997), the originator of the concept, defines self-efficacy as an individual's belief in his or her capability to execute the actions needed to succeed in specific tasks or situations. Students' belief in their ability to succeed in specific academic situations or tasks is related to their choices, their persistence, how they feel about a specific task or activity, and ultimately how well they perform it. When we hear a sixth-grade student like Tomás state, "I want to read more about monarch butterflies' migration because I am still not clear on how such little things can survive such a long trip! Can I read a book with more information on this?" we know Tomás is choosing a topic that takes his learning further and is aligned with an interest he has clearly identified after some initial reading. Tomás' choice to deepen his knowledge denotes engagement with the topic of monarch butterflies

Figure 1–2. Motivation Practices that Foster Engaged Reading in ELs

Self-efficacy	How can I develop competence through specific tasks?
Relevance	How does his learning matter for the ELs in my classroom?
Knowledge goals	How can I promote a mindset for growth through mastery goals?
Autonomy	How can I provide meaningful academic choices to scaffold independent reading?
Collaboration	How can I structure collaboration so that ELs feel supported to reach beyond themselves for meaning?

but, more specifically, it demonstrates a strong sense of efficacy and competence about what he can and cannot do. He is confident about his reading in science. He has enough background knowledge—and curiosity—about the monarchs that leads to his choice. He is pretty sure he can understand the topic well, or is willing to try to do so. Tomas' choosing and wanting to read further springs from his beliefs about what he can do as a reader. He is confident he can take his learning a bit further. His choices of topics or texts are influenced by his self-efficacy, his beliefs of what he can accomplish as a reader. Just like self-efficacy affects the choices our students make, it also has an impact on whether they persist on a task or not, and how well they do it. Think of an activity or a task that you really feel good at doing. Are you likely to persist on it or give it up easily in the face of adversity? Now think of an activity you really do not feel confident in doing—how likely are you to persist on it? How would your performance compare on the one you feel competent at versus the latter? Self-efficacy is a big factor in determining our persistence, determination, and ultimate performance on a task.

To help students develop their self-efficacy for various academic tasks we must provide many opportunities for students to broaden their sense of competence, to develop their skills, and to build their knowledge of skills and their capabilities over time.

Students who have a great deal of confidence in their capability to do a specific activity usually perform it well. If their confidence is low, their effort, perseverance, and engagement are usually low. Reading self-efficacy is related to students' choice of reading material (length, difficulty), how diligently they try to understand the text, their comprehension of the material, and ultimately what they learn from reading. Struggling readers often do not fully grasp what it takes to succeed. ELs may believe they just aren't good at it; they may see it as something that better readers do. When we help students set goals that are challenging but realistic, we show them incremental ways they can improve—we create a map.

Because self-efficacy beliefs are context specific, we have to pay close attention to our students. A student may feel confident about browsing a text and identifying text features, but he may not be confident in his ability to identify the main idea in a paragraph or summarizing a page. Then, too, students' self-efficacy beliefs may not reflect their actual skill. Some students, especially ELs, do not recognize that they possess the skills to be successful. Others believe they can do a task when they cannot. We need to lead students to recognize the skills and abilities they have, as well as those needing further development.

Tomás, the sixth grader you met earlier, feels confident about his reading of science texts. He has plenty of background knowledge about certain topics, such as insect survival, which serves to deepen his interests and take his learning on this topic further. However, he feels weaker about social studies; in particular, he has difficulty remembering details when discussing time lines and sequenced events. Ms. Martin, his social studies and language arts teacher, is aware of this, so she works closely with Tomás to strengthen this skill by helping him see his step-by-step improvements on sequencing information.

Although most of the research on reading engagement has been conducted with English-speaking populations (e.g., Guthrie et al. 2004; Morgan and Fuchs 2007), the sixth and seventh graders my colleagues and I worked with in our USHER project included a large number of ELs, mostly Spanish-speaking. When we break strategies into steps and follow the gradual release of responsibility (GRR) model—clear modeling, guided practice, frequent independent use—even students who think of themselves as poor readers can be explicitly taught to refine the skills required for specific tasks. They can also be encouraged to develop their abilities to succeed. We've found that cognitive strategy instruction coupled with supports for self-efficacy increases the literacy engagement and reading comprehension of all students, especially ELs who read below grade level (Taboada Barber et al. 2015). Supports for self-efficacy for sixth and seventh graders involved step-by-step comprehension strategy instruction with specific feedback for individual students along the way. It also fostered a deeper understanding of what tasks comprise the ability to read effectively—for example, reading fluently versus reading in a choppy manner.

Because self-efficacy consists of our beliefs about how well we can do a task, understanding the steps or components of the task is essential to self-efficacy. In addition, in USHER we provided contingent feedback on their reading so that students could monitor their progress over time while also understanding which components of their reading needed more work than others (e.g., fluency development versus summarization). Furthermore, we found that sixth- and seventh-grade English monolinguals and ELs who struggled with reading increased in their reading self-efficacy as a result of teachers' support for this practice during the three months that the USHER program was in place. The increase in students' confidence in their reading capabilities was more striking than it was for students who did not receive teachers' supports for efficacy beliefs in a comparison group. Not surprisingly, English native speakers as a group had higher reading efficacy beliefs than ELs, yet all students' self-efficacy, irrespective of their language status, improved as a result of teacher supports for reading efficacy, such as use of

specific praise and feedback on components of various reading tasks (Taboada Barber et al. 2015). The majority of these teachers were able to grasp the idea that self-efficacy is not so much about learning *how* to succeed as it is about learning *how to persevere when one does not succeed* at a given task. "Self-efficacy cannot provide the skills required to succeed (these still need to be taught!), but it can provide the effort and persistence required to obtain those skills and use them effectively" (Pajares and Urdan 2006, 345). In Chapter 3 I provide the case of Melissa, a fifth-grade EL who struggles with self-efficacy for reading, so you can have a sense of how low self-efficacy affects learning and reading. I also describe Vanessa Shann's instruction supporting Melissa's and other ELs' self-efficacy for reading in relation to a specific comprehension strategy: activating background knowledge. Figure 1–3 provides some guidelines on promoting self-efficacy for learning in general and for reading in particular.

Figure 1–3. Instruction That Promotes Self-Efficacy in Reading

Make students aware that new learning can be confusing and that making mistakes is part of the learning process. Share self-efficacy stories. Let students know how you have struggled to learn or do something, but how your belief in yourself helped you overcome a failure or obstacle.

Teach comprehension strategies. Teach specific comprehension strategies in explicit and cumulative ways. Name the strategy and explicitly state how it helps comprehension. ("Activating background knowledge helps me read more closely as I make connections between what I know and what I read.") Model the strategy so students see the process. Making the strategy more visible helps the student understand what she or he can do while reading.

Model "coping." Struggle while reading a passage, thinking through the challenges out loud and showing how you use a particular strategy to solve them. This encourages students to rethink their own work.

Provide supportive, specific language to help students find a way through struggle. Don't say, "Saying it that way makes you sound dumb" or "Do it like I showed you." Say, "You may want to say it this way; it's easier for others to understand" or "What ways do you think may work?"

Let students solve problems or complete challenging activities in their own way, as much as possible. Allot time based on the difficulty of the task and the degree of student involvement.

Use informational rather than controlling language. Provide reasons for specific requests or actions. Instead of commanding, "One, two, three, eyes on me," provide a reason: "You need to pay attention now because this is important for your learning." Don't always direct focus to you as the teacher. Instead of saying, "Because I say so," offer reasons for your requests: "It's the most time-efficient way." "It's the best way for you to learn this concept."

Provide task-specific, informational feedback. Explain why a response is correct or incorrect; for example, "That is incorrect, because you did not include . . . ."

Be judicious about praise. Offer praise only when it is deserved; undeserved praise is not effective. Praising a student who links her background knowledge to an idea in text supports her self-efficacy for activating background knowledge.

(continues)

Figure 1–3. Instruction That Promotes Self-Efficacy in Reading *(continued)*

Compare students with their own progress over time (e.g., last week/month versus this one) rather than with one another. Encourage students to attribute their performance to internal, controllable factors (e.g., effort, strategy use) rather than uncontrollable factors (e.g., ability). Be sure that students link their effort to the outcome.

Help students recognize when their comprehension skills need improvement. For example, if a student misidentifies the main idea of a passage, shape his thinking by pointing out what the process is, where he went wrong, and how to correct the mistake. Asking him to explain his reasoning may help you identify the problem. Provide feedback that is specific enough that students can improve their skills and understand what they are doing right or wrong. Rather than say, "Mark, I really like your reading," say, "Mark, I really like the types of questions you are asking. They make me think about complex explanations."

Provide explicit instruction and opportunities to practice. If taught well and used consistently, the gradual release of responsibility model can be a great model to foster self-efficacy for reading.

Have clear procedures on "what to do" for different activities. Make the *what* and *how* of your literacy instruction clear. Clarity about procedures helps break up tasks into steps and build self-efficacy for different components of a task.

Relevance: Connecting Learning to ELs' Lives and Discussing "Why"

We connect students to new learning from two directions: by knowing who our students are and by getting our students to believe in the value of the content they are learning. That thread of connection is established by communicating relevance. Students need to see learning as important to their interests, goals, and values: "Teachers may explain the contribution of the learning task to students' personal goals and attempt to understand students' feelings and thoughts concerning the learning task" (Assor, Kaplan, and Roth 2002, 264). Relevance is key in teaching all subjects, but some require it more than others.

As part of our research, my colleagues and I explored sixth and seventh graders' view of history. Many disliked it: "It's something from the past. I don't know how it helps me today." Rita reflects on the lecture model as one that leaves her "bored" and disengaged: "The way my teacher teaches history is through a lot of talking, so I get bored; it's not something that interests me." Similarly, Miguel finds the absence of interesting texts and extensive teacher talk or lecturing as tiring: "I don't know what we're really learning. I can't concentrate when the teacher talks for so long, and the book is so boring." We can anticipate and prevent these kinds of statements by making relevance a theme of our instruction (see Figure 1–4). Helping students see the relevance of academic activities doesn't consist only of providing interesting activities; students need to understand the

Figure 1–4. Instruction That Communicates Relevance

Present tasks and content enthusiastically. If you don't treat the task or content as important and meaningful, neither will your students.

Ask students to think about how specific events, topics, and artifacts relate to their own experiences or lives.

Ask students to explain the reason for using specific reading strategies. ("Why do we need to ask questions before or during reading? Why do we care about finding the main idea in a paragraph or page?")

Ask how and why questions to help students voice their own thinking and establish connections over time.

Explain or discuss the value of learning about a topic and its relation to students' lives today. How does history relate to current events and topics? ("How do the Articles of the Confederation relate to life today? Why do we need to know about the European explorers that came to North America?") How is a science experiment relevant to health or the environment?

Encourage discussion focused on understanding, elaborating on and applying what students have learned.

Ask students to think through the relevance of a topic and, as a group, determine three reasons the topic is important.

reasons for these tasks or topics. Explanations of why it's important to use specific reading strategies or learn about American Indian tribes or the Articles of the Confederation give these activities meaning, and give students a sense of control over their learning. When we do this we infuse our instruction with a reason to know.

The relevance of history topics being learned powerfully connects students to their identities as citizens (Beck, Taboada Barber, and Buehl 2013). When Miguel was asked whether and why it's important to learn about American history, he said: "Because if you go to like a different country or something and they ask you some questions you don't want to say, 'Oh, I don't know anything about my country' and stuff like that." Miguel's answer implies the broader purpose of understanding the history of his country so he can have an intelligent discussion with people from other countries. Sixth-grader Diana was excited to learn about American Indians because of her heritage: "And then also I'm one-sixteenth Native American. So I'm really interested in learning about that 'cause then I can learn about my own tribe and stuff." She had a direct connection to early American history and wanted to learn about it. Sixth-grader Luis found history important as a way to learn from past mistakes: "If we don't learn history, we will make the same mistakes in the future that we made in the past. History helps us not to repeat them. If we see why we went [to war] before, maybe we

cannot go again." Marisa discovered that learning history develops a sense of citizenship: "If I know my country's history well, I can better help my country when I have to vote for president or understand why people fight for laws in the government." We can switch students' perceptions of social studies from dry history to a powerful catalyst that helps students reflect on their identities.

Establishing relevance for learning can go beyond content and expand to reasons for using specific reading tools, such as reading strategies. These are especially helpful to struggling readers. Having a reason for using a reading strategy makes the activity meaningful—it lets students see why they are doing it. Why is the "why" of the activity important? The messages we communicate, whether intentional or unintentional, affect students' engagement and their learning goals and outcomes (Graham and Golan 1991) as well as shape their interests and intrinsic motivation (Reeve and Jang 2006). For example, think of autonomy-supportive versus controlling behaviors and the language that accompanies them. It is very different if we use controlling language that, for instance, utters solutions or answers such as "We activate background knowledge this way, like this . . ." than if we use language that provides students with information or rationales such as "How about we try activating what we know about this topic because it is going to help us with better understanding of . . . ." Students feel much more compelled to listen to you if you provide a reason for why they should, even if this is simple and related to their academics. In Chapter 5 I describe some ways in which teachers can foster relevance both for content and for comprehension strategies. I do it in the context of social studies, a subject area that many students, and many ELs in particular, see as disconnected from their lives and interests. In the same chapter I also provide some guidelines on how to weave together, the comprehension strategy of identifying main ideas and relevance as a motivation practice.

Knowledge Goals: Promoting ELs' Mindset for Growth

Students' learning goals affect their effort, engagement, self-efficacy, interest, and anxiety, even how they respond to mistakes (Alderman 2008). Students who focus on mastering a task and growing in knowledge, not on how well they perform the task compared with others, are more motivated and engaged, better adjusted to school life (Pintrich 2000).

Here's how three seventh graders approach reading aloud in front of their classmates:

Maria: *I've always felt insecure about reading in front of other students, so practicing oral reading in this class will help me prepare to present a reading at our end-of-year celebration. It will also help me to learn more.*

Andrea: *After I read aloud two or three times, everyone will see that I am the best reader in this class.*

Pedro: *I just hope I don't make a fool of myself and my oral reading is not the worst in the class and the teacher gives me a passing grade.*

Maria wants to master her ability to read; she also sees reading as a tool for learning, for building knowledge. Andrea wants to appear competent and smart. Pedro doesn't want to look incompetent or dumb. Maria will achieve the most positive outcome because she sees an intrinsic value in the activity.

Motivational researchers use terms such as *learning*, *task*, *task-involved*, *mastery and knowledge goals* to refer to goals that orient the student to focus on the task in terms of mastering or learning how to do the task (Pintrich 2000), to develop and grow in knowledge about a task or content. These terms stand in contrast to labels such as *performance*, *relative ability*, and *ego-involved goals*, which have been used to refer to goals that orient the individual to focus on the self, ability, or performance relative to others (Pintrich 2000). In this book, I use the term *knowledge goals* to refer to students focusing on the task at hand and on the knowledge they can acquire from reading, rather than their abilities or performance. The terms *mastery* and *knowledge goals* are highly related, but they are not the same. Knowledge goals are readily related to reading informational texts, whereby the goal is to have readers delve into reading and build knowledge, or learn from text. Mastery goals are more comprehensive, describing a student orientation as more focused on learning for the sake of learning than on grades or outcomes, and on enjoying the challenge of the tasks engaged in. Most students have a combined orientation toward mastery and performance. Maria is motivated to improve her oral reading (mastery), and to learn more through reading (knowledge building) while also wanting to perform well at the end-of-year celebration (performance). But if a student's concern for performance is consistently stronger than her concern for mastery, it's a good bet it will lessen her motivation and engagement (Alderman 2008; Pintrich 2000). If Maria was mostly driven to outperform her classmates on reading and there was no inner drive for learning, her engagement with learning from reading would likely wither over time.

Two main factors affect goal orientation: how the student views intelligence (Dweck and Leggett 1988; Molden and Dweck 2000) and contextual influences such as classroom structure. One theory about intelligence is that it is an entity, something we have. Children with this view need to demonstrate that they are smart, and protect their ability. If they fail at an academic task, they can attribute the failure to not being smart enough rather than to having tried and failed. They give up. Many struggling readers see the ability to read in this light—"I am not a good reader"—and resign themselves to it. A second theory about intelligence is that it is malleable or susceptible to change. Children with this view see effort as crucial to their academic endeavors and are more likely to focus on developing their abilities in specific areas (Dweck and Legget 1988; Molden and Dweck 2000). They believe that effort leads to increased ability.

Children's beliefs about intelligence not only influence their goal orientation but also facilitate or limit success in all academic subjects (Stipek and Gralinski 1996). Think of your own learning. In what areas do you see your ability or competence increasing with effort? Math? Chemistry? Gardening? Sports? All of them? In what areas do you attribute success or failure to your own capacity or ability—and see effort and perseverance as pointless? Now think of your goal orientation in these areas. Do you see learning as an end in itself, your goal being to improve and learn more (knowledge), or are you concerned about how you look in front of others (performance)?

Classroom context is the other crucial factor in students' goal orientation. The way we structure our classroom and the messages we send are a big influence on whether students adopt a knowledge or a performance goal (Ames 1992; Meece 1991; Pintrich 2000). What we say about the purpose of learning and the meaning of achievement, what we reward in a class, the kind of feedback we give, the way we group students, and the autonomy we give them all shape students' goals (Alderman 2008). When we encourage self-direction in our students rather than specify directions and anticipated results, convey the intrinsic value of learning and reading, and value effort, we are more likely to foster a knowledge or learning goal orientation. Figure 1–5 describes instructional behavior that fosters knowledge goals rather than performance ones. Also, in Chapter 5 I describe ways to approach vocabulary instruction with ELs that are guided by the knowledge goals. Examples of how to infuse vocabulary instruction with knowledge goals are discussed within the framework of CORI and USHER in middle school.

Figure 1–5. Instruction That Encourages Knowledge Goals*

Instructional Behavior	What This Looks Like
Provide opportunities for self-directed learning	▪ The teacher helps students evaluate their own work; once skills and strategies are developed, students have more opportunities for self-direction and evaluation. ▪ The teacher helps students use feedback on first drafts to revise and improve them. ▪ The teacher provides a way to track student improvement in tangible ways.
Emphasize the intrinsic value of learning	▪ The teacher helps students do extra work to improve their learning, detaching it from the grade. ▪ The teacher emphasizes that failure does not mean "dumb"; it is a gauge of how to improve. ▪ The teacher helps students see that the label *smart* is not associated with higher grades; it means seeking learning opportunities and benefiting from them. Applications of what is being learned are consistently held.
Provide opportunities for student collaboration	▪ The teacher assigns tasks and projects that require students to work effectively together and help one another. ▪ Tasks are structured with clear individual as well as group goals.
Emphasize incremental, malleable intelligence	▪ The teacher emphasizes effort and persistence as critical for improved ability. ▪ The teacher frequently discusses student progress in relation to effort.
Provide opportunities for students to develop knowledge and learn specific strategies	▪ Ability increases are attributed to knowledge and skills rather than "being smart." ▪ The teacher offers opportunities to develop depth of knowledge over time in all content areas.
Emphasize comparisons with students' own previous performance rather than comparisons with others' performance	▪ The teacher encourages students to compare their most recent grades to previous ones to see if they have improved. ▪ There is a clear link between grades and one's own accomplishments. ▪ Rewards are provided for individual accomplishments rather than in competitions with classmates.
Emphasize tracking students' own learning rather than comparing grades	▪ The teacher ensures that students are clear on the learning objectives and ways to achieve them. ▪ Grade comparisons are deemphasized.
Provide opportunities for students to improve their work over time; recognize improvement in assessments	▪ The teacher helps students become knowledgeable about learning strategies (e.g., comprehension strategies) and how these can help with their learning. ▪ Teacher feedback indicates skill development and strategy use.
Provide thematic units organized around core concepts or principles in a content domain	▪ The teacher helps students have a broad, organizational structure for their learning that includes key core concepts within a domain or discipline. In this way, the focus is on key ideas that can be learned over time and from different angles (e.g., specific animals' adaptation through various examples over time; immigration patterns, reasons, and trends). The emphasis in on learning in depth over time.

*Adapted from *Motivation for Achievement: Possibilities for Teaching and Learning*, 3rd ed., by M. K. Alderman (New York: Routledge, 2008).

Autonomy: Scaffolding Independent Decision-Making

Supporting students' autonomy by offering them the opportunity to make choices increases their intrinsic motivation to read (Gambrell et al. 1996; Sweet, Guthrie, and Ng 1998). This has direct implications for teacher-student relations and classroom practices. Choice doesn't foster student engagement in and of itself. Allowing students to choose books, tasks, peers to work with, and topics to read about is becoming common practice. However, many of us are not fully aware *why* offering student choices enhances their engagement and motivation. Student choice is rooted within the broader practice of fostering autonomous learning. The combination of autonomy support (acknowledging the importance of students' opinions and feelings, providing choice in relation to students' interests, explaining the relevance of class activities) and classroom structure (clear expectations, consistent and predictable responses, strategy adjustments) encourages children's motivation and academic engagement (Skinner and Belmont 1993).

My colleagues and I were delighted by Spanish-speaking ELs' perceptive response to autonomy-supporting literacy instruction as part of a life-science unit on animals' adaptations to their environment (Taboada, Kidd, and Tonks 2009). These struggling readers eloquently articulated how important choice was in their learning. Juan said that being able to choose what animal to read about as part of a life science unit "helped me learn more deeply." He also said he liked having a say about the order of the topics he read about. Prompted to think of a time when he had no opportunity for choice, he responded, "Social studies test! You had to read the paragraph [everyone was] reading." He felt "kind of bad" about this: "I want to learn about this paragraph, not that paragraph." He found the test boring because he couldn't choose what to read.

Struggling readers need choices as much as, or perhaps more, than stronger readers: "Lower achievers needed more choices in reading and writing situations to initiate and sustain their effort and attention. Lower achievers also needed more relevant activities connected to reading and writing, which enabled students to see the usefulness of literacy, to gain confidence in their abilities, and enhance their self-perceived competence" (Sweet, Guthrie, and Ng 1998, 219).

Perhaps you're thinking, "Choice sounds good, but how do I know what choices are better than others? How do I *choose* choices?" There can be so many options to choose from, and not every choice is meaningful for our students' learning. Although most of us think of choice in reading as letting students select their own books (a good thing), there are plenty of other choices we can offer that foster students' intrinsic motivation and reading engagement (see Figures 1–6 and 1–7).

Figure 1–6. A Menu of Choices for a Fourth-Grade Language Arts/Life Science Unit

CHOICE OF THE DAY	
4/28	My word for the word *log*
4/29	My question
4/30	My chart to show what I learned
5/1	My example about behavioral adaptations
5/2	My headings
5/7	My question word: Who, what, where, when, why, how
5/8	My partner/My reading buddy
5/12	My behavioral adaptations example
5/13	My level 3 question
5/14	My reading buddy/Level 3 question
5/15	My reading buddy
5/22	My info source: Glossary, dictionary, thesaurus, online, etc.

Figure 1–7. What Kinds of Choices?

Choice That Reflects Students' Interests and Goals

Choices should align with students' interests and personal goals and therefore nurture their sense of autonomous learning. In some cases, if choices align with students' cultural background they can foster a sense of relatedness to the school environment and to their peers.

Choice Scaffolded for Student Ability

Choice should develop students' sense of competence. Children are drawn to activities and books that engender a sense of competence—those at a comfortable level of difficulty or challenge (Sweet et al. 1998) or that they see as important to their learning (Cordova and Lepper 1996). For example, every third grader realizes that choosing what color pencil to use to complete today's homework assignment is less important than choosing what American colony to research for a final project.

Choice That Is Academically Relevant to Students' Learning and Achievement

For example:

- What type of graphic organizer to use to represent the ideas in a text
- What section of a book to read
- How to share new knowledge with one's peers (e.g., what type of culminating project)
- What text-based questions to ask (see Chapter 5)
- What partner to work with on partner reading
- What heading to give to a specific team project

Organizational choices (regarding classroom management, for example) and procedural choices (how they will demonstrate their knowledge) help students feel comfortable in the classroom, but their impact may be short-lived and fail to create deeper engagement in learning. Cognitive choices (tasks aligned with interests) foster more enduring student investment in deep-level thinking and academic engagement (Stefanou et al. 2004). In Chapter 5 I describe meaningful academic choices within the broader framework of autonomy-supportive learning. I do so keeping in mind the importance that this motivation practice has for struggling EL readers, and in relation to student text-based questioning, a comprehension strategy that lends itself well to provide students with a sense of control over their own learning and reading.

Collaboration: Reaching Beyond Ourselves for Meaning

Students need opportunities to work collaboratively in pairs or small groups on literacy activities that focus on building knowledge through reading (e.g., "read this material, answer the essential questions of the day, and discuss your answers"; "read this material and create a museum exhibit on westward expansion"). My definition of collaborative literacy activities is based on theories of cooperative learning: students work together in groups small enough that everybody can participate in the task (Cohen 1994). The task is clearly presented, and students work without my direct supervision (but with my guidance as necessary). Four criteria guide collaboration in small groups:

1. Students have to talk to one another to accomplish the task; they need to hear how others approach the task and exchange ideas.
2. The task must provide a question or problem that stimulates students to cooperate as they formulate, share, and compare ideas.
3. The task must be broad enough to ensure both individual and group accountability (Vaca, Lapp, and Fisher 2011).
4. Students may play various roles in completing the task (e.g., when creating a museum exhibit on western expansion, one student is the illustrator, another is the narrator, another is the tech expert, etc.).

Small-group collaboration on a reading activity has two purposes: students must learn something by reading a text *and* discuss what they've learned with one another. This social interaction around content helps students deepen their knowledge about a topic, develop expertise, and as a result become more interested and motivated. Think of something you're really interested in—cooking?

yoga? mountain climbing? You share and discuss this interest with others, ask their opinions about it, refine your ideas, seek more information, get excited. Discussing, comparing, contrasting, summarizing, and searching for information are more enjoyable in pairs or small groups than alone.

Sharing what one learns is motivating in and of itself. However, we need to establish a clear group objective, assign tasks clearly, and help students set specific individual goals within the group. Structure and accountability are essential for effective collaboration. Productive work in small groups involves conceptual learning and higher-order thinking (Cohen 1994). Conceptual learning is directly related to content; students need an interesting topic they can investigate in deep, conceptual ways. The meaningful discussions that arise contribute to the development of higher-order thinking (Noddings 1989). Figure 1–8 lists ways we can encourage students to collaborate effectively.

Figure 1–8. How to Help Students Collaborate

1. Create the conditions for effective collaboration.
   - Establish clear group rules and objectives, preferably with student input.
     - » Allow every student to participate.
     - » Establish what groups should do if a question comes up while you are working with another group.
     - » Model appropriate group interactions (see Figure 7–9). You can also model ineffective group participation (e.g., students not taking turns to talk and listen to each other) so that students can see the contrast between effective and ineffective collaboration.
     - » Encourage detailed or elaborate explanations, for you and within the group. This helps ELs become familiar with academic language.
     - » Praise students for appropriate group interactions.
     - » Assign specific roles within the group as appropriate.
   - Identify a task that requires collaboration.
     - » Create or choose a task students cannot reasonably complete independently. Some researchers recommend presenting tasks in a way that requires discussion.
     - » Include opportunities for students to revise or comment on one another's work.
   - Form groups that can successfully complete the task. (Consider the goal of the activity as well as students' strengths and weaknesses.)
     - » Vary how groups are formed. Sometimes it's better to group students with similar skills or abilities. Other times, each group should have a mix of student skills and abilities.
     - » Don't change groups during the activity unless absolutely necessary (e.g., behavior issues, a prolonged absence).
2. Provide students the materials and systems needed for successful collaboration.
   - A written copy of the rules or steps involved (e.g., directions for partner reading).
   - Clearly stated goals that allow students to contribute to one another's knowledge rather than duplicate their efforts.

(continues)

Figure 1–8. How to Help Students Collaborate *(continued)*

- A system for distributing and collecting materials.
- If appropriate, a written copy of the various roles.
- Rewards if they encourage individual accountability (e.g., team scores [Cohen 1994]).

3. Monitor groups as they are working. (Don't micromanage [Cohen 1994]).
   - When not working directly with one group:
     - » Circulate through the room.
     - » Listen to what students are saying.
     - » Ask each group one or two quick questions to judge their progress or understanding.
     - » Ask a question to redirect behavior or make them think about the material in a new way.
   - When working with a group:
     - » Be aware of how long you spend.
     - » Give specific feedback.
4. Support ELs' language development.
   - When feasible, present culturally relevant texts through a guided discussion connecting the content to students' lives. (See prompts for discussion in Chapter 6.)
   - Encourage ELs with higher English oral proficiency to vocalize softly as they read the text (Avalos et al. 2007). This helps with fluency and pronunciation.
   - Reinforce word recognition through morphological awareness* (Avalos et al. 2007). This develops word recognition and vocabulary skills.
   - Use vocabulary journals or logs that link key content vocabulary to group activities (Avalos et al. 2007).

*Morphological awareness refers to understanding and using word parts that carry significance, such as root words, prefixes, and grammatical inflections (e.g., -s or -es for plurals; -ing, -tion endings). These word parts are morphemes—they can add to or change a word's meaning.

The amount of interaction within a small group depends on the nature of the task (Cohen 1994). Tasks that can be carried out by individual students or completed by specific responses do not promote true collaboration. True collaboration takes place when the tasks are open-ended (more than one response is feasible) and support a true mutual exchange of ideas among *all* students (above-, on-, and below-grade-level readers) in the group.

I use two forms of small-group work to foster collaboration: small group reading activities and unit final projects. In both, students read books that are either (1) different topics on different or similar reading levels (e.g., a different American Colony for each group member) or (2) at different reading levels on the same topic (e.g., reasons for the Civil War). The choice depends on the nature of the task. The goal of small-group reading activities is to hone students' reading and content knowledge on a topic that has been addressed in whole-class instruction. The goal of a unit final project is for students to apply already-learned or read material in creating a group product. Both require student collaboration, but

each has a different way of guiding students to collaborate (reading more deeply on a topic for small group reading; applying newly learned knowledge for culminating projects). Detailed examples of small-group collaboration are provided in Chapter 7. As with other chapters, suggested ways to weave the motivation practice with a comprehension strategy are suggested. In this chapter I included comprehension monitoring, a versatile strategy that lends itself well to student collaboration in relation to literacy tasks. Student grouping recommendations are listed in Figure 1–9. The type of grouping depends on the type of task, your goals, and the type of interaction generated within the group.

Five motivation practices—self-efficacy, meaningful academic choice, relevance, mastery goals, and student collaboration—are shown to make a substantial improvement on student performance, specifically, supporting students engagement with literacy. These practices improve the performance of not just struggling readers but all readers (e.g., Guthrie, McRae, and Klauda 2007) including ELs (e.g., Taboada Barber et al. 2015). Of course, there is no one plan for how these practices should be implemented; you adapt based on your literacy materials and your students (and you'll see what that looks like in Chapters 3–8). In fact, differentiation is part of what makes these practices motivating: they are

Figure 1–9. Effective Grouping for Successful Collaboration on Literacy Tasks

- Keep groups flexible and regroup based on ongoing observation (Ash 2002).
- Allow students to work with students of all reading levels with similar interests *or* similar reading levels with different interests (Ash 2002).
- Use needs-based grouping some of the time: Keep groups to a maximum of six students (four is optimal) with similar strengths and instructional needs (Avalos et al. 2007).
- Use alternative grouping some of the time: Pair students with varying instructional needs. For example, pair a couple of students who struggle with word recognition but have high background knowledge on a topic with a couple of students with the inverse reading profile.
- Mixed Ability grouping: Remember that lower achievers benefit from working in cooperative groups with higher achievers, even when the tasks demand high-level thinking (Tudge 1990).
- Groups should meet three to five times a week for twenty or thirty minutes each time.
- Determine beforehand if ELs need to be paired/grouped with native speakers whom they can ask for reassurance or clarification.
- Be aware of status problems: recognize the importance of the various abilities students can contribute to the group (Hoffman 1973; Rosenholtz 1985).
- Suggest roles for each student that contribute to the group goal. If appropriate, make each student responsible for a different resource to contribute to the end product (Cohen 1994).
- Whenever possible, encourage students to specify goals for the group precisely, plan procedures, select alternatives, and modify their plans to achieve their goal (Chang and Wells 1987; Cohen 1994).

not inherent traits of every student, impervious to teacher influence. We must always remind ourselves that anything that is not inherent in every student requires our instruction. This is true not just for motivation, but also for behavior and content; for any expected outcome that is not uniformly met, there must be instruction. When we just focus on the cognitive dimensions of reading comprehension and do not offer ELs opportunities to thrive in each of these dimensions of motivation, we exclude them from essential components of engaged learning. Children will not all learn at the same pace and in the same way, but they can all learn. Without a clear understanding of what reading skills, content, and motivation practices will lead to learning from informational texts, we demotivate and deprive our ELs of opportunities to grow academically. However, if we purposefully teach motivation practices, we encourage ELs to build their belief in their own success as well as the skills they need to realize it.