

# Attending to Language, Engaging in Practice: Scaffolding English Language Learners' Apprenticeship Into the Common Core English Language Arts Standards

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## **The Common Core State Standards and Specific Demands for ELLs**

Successfully engaging in the practices called for by the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts (National Governors Association Center for Best Practices [NGA] & Council of Chief State School Officers [CCSSO], 2010a; hereafter referred to as “CCSS”) implies challenges and opportunities for *all* students, but these are particularly salient—and consequential—for students in the process of developing English as an additional language. In this chapter, we argue that supporting ELLs in meeting the CCSS's demands requires considering the role of language in academic practices—not to “teach” language forms and structures as isolated targets of instruction before students engage in academic practices, but rather to create well-scaffolded learning activities that develop language and literacy as ELLs are apprenticed into rigorous and meaningful standards-based instruction. We describe a seventh-grade English language arts (ELA) unit, developed for ELLs at the intermediate level or above (and, depending on the school's instructional arrangement, their mainstream classmates) that calls on students to analyze and produce the kinds of complex texts focused on by the CCSS. We highlight an array of pedagogical activities designed to support ELLs both in beginning to engage in rigorous and meaningful standards-based ELA instruction and in developing the language and literacy resources to do so more independently in the future.

We begin by examining what the CCSS themselves call upon students to do, the particular challenges inherent for ELLs, and some insights from research and theory on how ELLs might

be supported in meeting those challenges.<sup>1</sup> Using the practices called for by the CCSS to anchor discussions of the challenges and opportunities facing ELLs—as well as to guide pedagogical responses—is useful in a number of ways. Practices are the “activities in which students and teachers engage to construct knowledge, concepts, and skills in particular subject areas” (CCSSO, 2012, p. 1). Using the notion of practices as a foundation for grounding discussions of the language demands facing ELLs in the CCSS and envisioning necessary supports is a reminder that language is used to *do* things in the world (Austin, 1975). With the appropriate support, ELLs may indeed be able to engage in practices associated with school disciplines in meaningful ways, while using language that is still in the process of development. A focus on practices also serves as a reminder of the importance of access and equity to the curriculum. In approaching the education of an entire generation of ELLs, we cannot wait for students to sound like “native” speakers of “standard” English before they engage in the practices at the heart of the disciplines. And, as we will discuss when addressing pedagogical approaches to fostering students’ language, literacy, and academic development, it is in the “doing” that the development of conceptual understandings, academic skills, and the language required to enact them develop simultaneously.

### **Reading: Engaging With Complex Texts to Build Knowledge Across the Curriculum**

The CCSS call upon students to read and comprehend texts that are more complex than those typically assigned currently, with a renewed focus on “informational” texts. In addition to features of complexity that can be measured using available quantitative instruments, such as a text’s grammatical and lexical characteristics, text complexity involves ways in which multiple levels of meaning are embedded in the text, the explicitness with which an author states his or her purpose, the representation of conventions of genre, and how much figurative language is used (NGA & CCSSO, 2010b). How difficult students’ jobs are in dealing with features of text also depends heavily on what students are asked to *do* with the text. All of this complexity, along with the fact that readers will likely encounter new ideas in these texts, represent challenges for many students, including home speakers of the language of instruction, who have had limited access to such texts in the past.

For ELLs approaching texts written in a language they are still in the process of acquiring, the challenges are particularly significant. In order to meet the CCSS, as well as to foster their development of academic practices (language, literacy, and academic development intertwined), ELLs need opportunities and support to engage with authentic texts that represent various elements of complexity rather than only having access to simple or simplified texts (Bunch, Walqui, & Pearson, 2014). In order for such texts to be accessible for ELLs, they need to be amplified through processes of scaffolding, which can be embedded in the text or offered in the context of the instructional context of an activity or lesson (Walqui & van Lier, 2010). It is also important to keep in mind that second language readers use the resources at their disposal to be successful: a developing knowledge of the language in which they are reading (in many cases, English), comprehension strategies developed from their past experience reading in their first or second languages, prior knowledge related to topics and themes of the target reading, and their interest and motivation as

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<sup>1</sup>For a more extensive discussion of these demands and implications for ELLs, see Bunch, Kibler, & Pimentel (2012); Bunch, Walqui, & Pearson (2014); Council of Chief State School Officers (2012); Valdés, Kibler, & Walqui (2014); van Lier & Walqui (2012); and Walqui & Heritage (2012).

readers (Bernhardt, 2011). As we will argue throughout this chapter, all of these factors operate in the social context of the classroom.

### Writing: Using Evidence to Analyze, Inform, and Argue

The CCSS require students to write a variety of text types, address different audiences and purposes, provide information designed to inform readers about new content or ideas, and mount arguments that use logic to defend interpretations and judgments. Students are asked to cite evidence in defense of claims, discuss the strength of the evidence used by others, and use writing in various ways as part of the research process. To meet the CCSS, ELLs must use their developing English to do all of the above, while also navigating likely-unfamiliar conventions of textual ownership and citations expected in U.S. school settings (Flowerdew & Li, 2007). Developing writing in a second language, as in a first language, entails a gradual and sometimes slow process of apprenticeship, with significant individual learner variation through different stages (Fu, 2009; Valdés, 2001). Some ELLs, depending on their age and background, will have already learned how to write in their home language(s), which can serve as a valuable resource for learning to write in English (Harklau, 2002). Others may be exposed to writing for the first time in English-medium classes, sometimes without a strong oral foundation in the language in which they are writing. For all students, writing will involve using existing resources (their own and those available in the classroom), a process that can be facilitated by pedagogical scaffolds that support students in the tasks at hand while fostering increasing autonomy over time (Kibler, 2011; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2013).

### Speaking and Listening: Working Collaboratively, Understanding Multiple Perspectives, and Presenting Ideas

The CCSS call for students to use oral language to express their ideas, understandings, and arguments and to evaluate and build upon their classmates' contributions, through both informal, collaborative group interactions, and formal presentations to their teacher and classmates. Students are also expected to use oral language to interpret information; explain how it contributes to target topics, texts, and issues; and "present claims and findings by sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes" (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a, p. 49). Comprehending oral language is a complex skill, requiring listeners to simultaneously process what they have just heard while attending to ongoing speech, which varies in terms of pronunciation and other linguistic features from region to region and from speaker to speaker. Like reading, listening requires not only linguistic knowledge but also pragmatic and metacognitive expertise, as well as various forms of background knowledge relevant to the topic and task. Listening is unique, however, in that language must be processed at a rate determined by the speaker (not the listener), and word boundaries are far more difficult to determine than those encountered in written form (Vandergrift, 2011). Effective listeners use strategies such as focusing on relevant parts of a message, making predictions, and monitoring their own comprehension (Vandergrift & Goh, 2012).

As with the reading and writing demands presented by the CCSS, students engage in speaking and listening in the social contexts of the classroom. To meet the expectations called for by the speaking and listening standards, students must have opportunities to develop *interactional competence* for participating in the classroom: negotiating, constructing, and sometimes even resisting the

norms governing various typical classroom participation structures (Cazden, 1986, 2001; CCSSO, 2012; Mehan, 1979; Philips, 1972, 1983). In classroom presentations, for example, students must manage the floor while simultaneously being expected to respond to unpredictable questions and requests from the teacher and their peers (Bunch, 2009). For whole-class discussions or group work, students must engage in different, but equally complicated, norms for engagement with different kinds of audiences for different purposes. ELLs will have various levels of familiarity with these norms, which vary culturally and geographically, and they will be in the process of developing the linguistic and interactional resources necessary in order to negotiate them effectively.

## Language: Using and Developing Linguistic Resources to Do All of the Above

The CCSS expect students to develop a “firm control over the conventions of standard English,” an appreciation “that language is at least as much a matter of craft as of rules,” and the ability to “choose words, syntax, and punctuation to express themselves *to achieve particular functions and rhetorical effects* [emphasis added]” (NGA & CCSSO, 2010a, p. 51). ELLs, with support, can use their developing English as they productively engage in these functions and achieve these effects. In fact, there is little evidence that “teaching” linguistic features of second languages in isolation leads to learners’ ability to employ those features apart from responses to discrete evaluations that target their use (see Valdés, Capitelli, & Alvarez, 2011). Rather, it is precisely the settings that allow and support ELLs’ participation in the language and literacy practices described in the other standards (reading, writing, listening/speaking) that promise ripe conditions for ELLs to further develop both language and literacy.

## Rationale

In the context of the demands described above, attending to students’ developing and evolving language must be done thoughtfully and deliberately, in the midst of engagement with substantive and generative ELA learning activities designed to foster language, literacy, and academic development. We argue that the essential pedagogical practice for this endeavor is *scaffolding*, which can simultaneously provide fine-tuned instructional support for ELLs’ engagement with the kinds of practices discussed above, thereby fostering their autonomy through participation in ELA practices as well as their continuing development of English as an additional language. After defining scaffolding and providing a rationale for its place as *the* guiding principle needed for creating conditions fertile for ELLs to meet the CCSS, we illustrate the design and enactment of scaffolding in a seventh-grade ELA unit designed for ELLs at the intermediate level or above and their mainstream classmates (Figure 1). The unit engages students in exploring persuasive language in advertisements and historical and contemporary speeches and invites students to write their own persuasive essays. As will become clear when we describe the unit, the instructional approach provides multiple opportunities for students to focus on language. Rather than preteaching language, however, the unit provides opportunities for students to explore how language achieves its rhetorical objectives through purposeful and patterned use, thus creating the meaningful and engaging practices called for by the CCSS.

Our argument is based on moving away from a conceptualization of language acquisition as an entirely individual process, instead understanding it to be a process of apprenticeship that takes place in social contexts (Block, 2003; Walqui & van Lier, 2010). In this view, apprenticeship

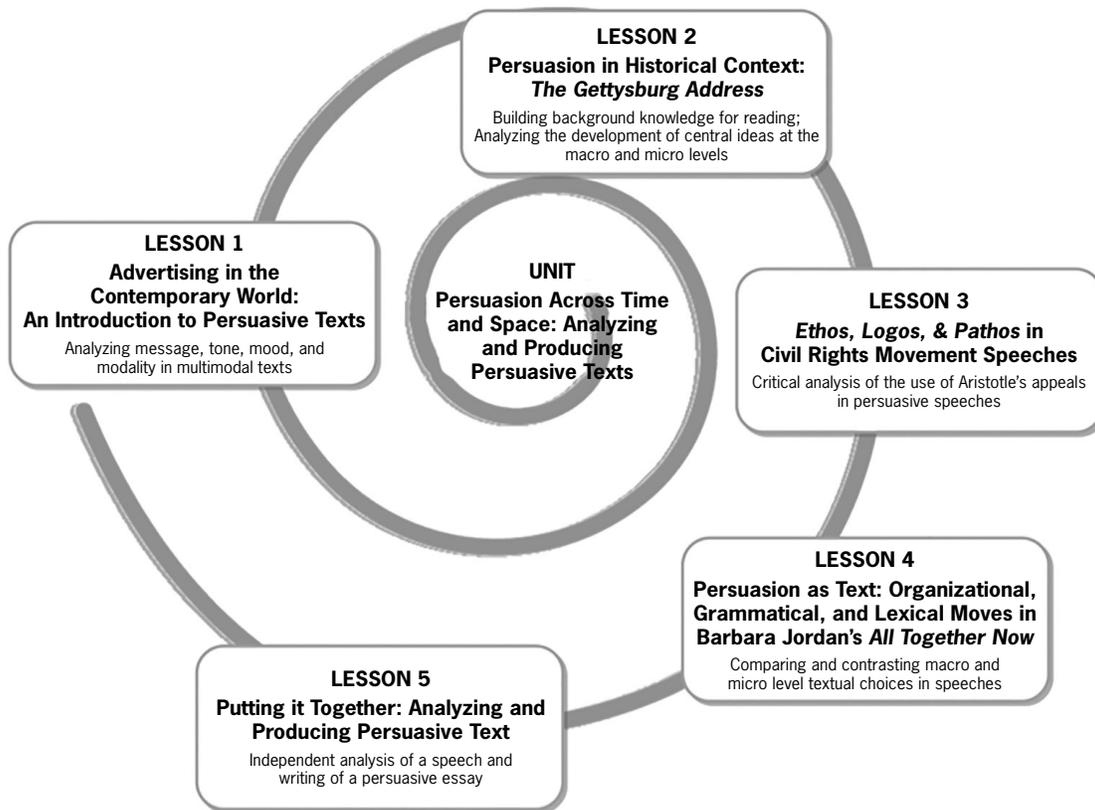


Figure 1. Spiraled Unit Design

From *Persuasion Across Time and Space: Analyzing and Producing Complex Texts* (p. 5), by A. Walqui, N. Koelsch, & M. Schmida, 2012. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Understanding Language. Reprinted with permission.

promotes the kind of interaction that leads to students' language development. The teacher's responsibility is, therefore, not to attempt to "teach" all of the components of language but rather to plan robust and flexible opportunities for students to explore language in action to derive understandings about language and communication that will be transferable over time. In this process of apprenticeship, learners engage with others in tasks that have multiple entry points and are provided with different pathways to develop both language and the literacy and academic practices called for by the CCSS (Walqui & van Lier, 2010). For example, carefully constructed opportunities for students to work in groups of two, three, or four can foster simultaneous social engagement by all students in a class, thus promoting their development of conceptual, academic, and pragmatic competence, while providing the kinds of affordances necessary for developing the language required to perform these academic practices (van Lier, 2004).

We conceive of scaffolding not merely as "help" provided to students to assist them in completing a momentary task but rather as supports specifically designed to induce students' development and increase autonomy. Based on Vygotsky's (1962, 1978) notion of activity in the "zone of proximal development" (p. 78), Bruner and Sherwood (1976) offered scaffolding as a metaphor for the "just right" kind of support that teachers design to facilitate students' movement beyond their

current state of development. The goal with this kind of support is to make students' knowledge *generative*, so that they can use it in the future to support new learning.

Scaffolding is therefore always responsive to what can be observed about students' current development and to the assistance required to realize their potential. Pedagogical scaffolds, just like the physical scaffolds used in the construction of buildings, "should be constantly changed, dismantled, extended, and adapted in accordance with the needs of the workers" (Walqui & van Lier, 2010, p. 24). Neither kind of scaffolding has intrinsic value in and of itself. Scaffolding begins where the student currently is, and it builds on and accelerates development:

[Scaffolding] is not just any assistance which helps a learner accomplish a task. It is help which will enable a learner to accomplish a task which they would not have been quite able to manage on their own, and it is help which is intended to bring the learner closer to a state of competence which will enable them to complete such a task on their own. (Maybin, Mercer, & Stierer, 1992, p. 188)

Scaffolding, then, is *proleptic*, or forward looking. Its job is not only to help the student be successful at a task, but to develop future skills—to make the future happen as soon as possible. In the words of Leont'iev (as cited in Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the goal is to help learners become who they are not yet.

Scaffolding comprises two key elements: structure and process. The structure, just like in a building, is there to provide security to workers and to make construction possible. In buildings, the structure makes the process possible; it supports construction work that would otherwise be impossible or too dangerous. Similarly, in a classroom, scaffolding presents students with participation structures and other supports that enable their safe participation in academic activity.

What educators are after, however, is not predictable performance. As students participate with the support provided by routines, their unique contributions are made possible. Novelty in this sense is an essential aspect of scaffolding as process. The interaction among structure, process, and novelty can be seen in the Clarifying Bookmark (Walqui, 2003), a scaffolding structure used in the unit described below for pairs of students to engage in when reading complex texts. As demonstrated in Figure 2, the Clarifying Bookmark presents students with six strategies they may use when they encounter text that is beyond their reach as they are reading ("I am going to summarize my understanding so far," "I am going to apply related concepts and/or readings," "I am going to ask questions about ideas and phrases I don't understand," etc.). Furthermore, it offers students three formulaic expressions (Ellis, 2005) for each strategy to help them articulate their speculations about the text (e.g. "The main points of this section are," "We learned about this idea/concept when we studied . . .," "I understand this part, but I have a question about . . ."). Which strategy students will choose as appropriate to clarify their understanding will be their own decision. As students enact the strategy, there is choice, and thus novelty, in the passage they select to problematize, in how they go about doing it, in how they connect it to queries or ideas, or in how they struggle to make sense of the problematic passage in the text. The structure makes an individual, creative process possible. After several practices, both structure and process are owned by the learner who can then transfer this metacognitive strategy across texts and domains, as well as the routine expressions related to this kind of speculation. From the perspective of the teacher,

## Handout #5: Clarifying Bookmark

### Clarifying Bookmark 1

What I can do	What I can say
I am going to think about what the selected text may mean.	<i>I'm not sure what this is about, but I think it may mean...</i>
	<i>This part is tricky, but I think it means...</i>
	<i>After rereading this part, I think it may mean...</i>
I am going to summarize my understanding so far.	<i>What I understand about this reading so far is...</i>
	<i>I can summarize this part by saying...</i>
	<i>The main points of this section are...</i>

### Clarifying Bookmark 2

What I can do	What I can say
I am going to use my prior knowledge to help me understand.	<i>I know something about this from...</i>
	<i>I have read or heard about this when...</i>
	<i>I don't understand the section, but I do recognize...</i>
I am going to apply related concepts and/or readings.	<i>One reading/idea I have encountered before that relates to this is...</i>
	<i>We learned about this idea/concept when we studied...</i>
	<i>This concept/idea is related to...</i>

### Clarifying Bookmark 3

What I can do	What I can say
I am going to ask questions about ideas and phrases I don't understand.	<i>Two questions I have about this section are...</i>
	<i>I understand this part, but I have a question about...</i>
	<i>I have a question about...</i>
I am going to use related text, pictures, tables, and graphs to help me understand unclear ideas.	<i>If we look at this graphic, it shows...</i>
	<i>The table gives me more information about...</i>
	<i>When I scanned the earlier part of the chapter, I found...</i>

Figure 2. Clarifying Bookmark

From *Persuasion Across Time and Space: Analyzing and Producing Complex Texts* (p. 19), by A. Walqui, N. Koelsch, & M. Schmida, 2012. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Understanding Language. Reprinted with permission.

the scaffolding process is always contingent: As they observe students in action, teachers make in-the-moment determinations for less, more, or different support, based on formative assessment of student performance (Heritage, Walqui, & Linqanti, 2013).

## **Pedagogical Practice: Attending to Language Through Scaffolding in an Integrated Unit**

To suggest what instruction meeting the new demands of the CCSS might look like in practice, we discuss a middle school ELA unit, *Persuasion Across Time and Space: Reading and Producing Complex Texts* (Walqui, Koelsch, & Schmida, 2012). The unit, developed by a team at WestEd in collaboration with the Understanding Language initiative, was created to demonstrate teaching practices realizing the academic potential of ELLs in Common Core Standards–based classrooms. It provides a model for either mainstream ELA classrooms—which increasingly include heterogeneous groups of students classified as ELLs and students who are either native English speakers or classified as English-proficient—or for “sheltered” ELA classrooms. It may also be appropriate for English language development or English for speakers of other languages classes at the intermediate level or above. As a point of clarification, the unit was not designed with beginning-level/newcomer ELLs in mind, nor do we argue that mainstream ELA classrooms are appropriate for this particular population. Moreover, while the unit was created principally for English-medium classrooms, we encourage teachers to tap into their students’ first languages in a range of ways appropriate to their classroom context to activate students’ background knowledge, scaffold their comprehension processes, and effectively communicate with them.

The unit, which features five multiple-day lessons (see Figure 1), was created to encompass 50-minute daily periods over approximately a 5- to 6-week time frame. In the sections that follow, we discuss the unit in terms of three pedagogical levels of scaffolding.

### **Macro Scaffolding**

At the macro level, the overall design of the unit supports students by linking lesson to lesson in articulated ways, deepening and enriching understandings of central ideas, processes, and the language required to express those ideas. This concept is consonant with the CCSS themselves, which highlight the need for this iteration by including core concepts and skills meant to progressively develop throughout the grades, continuously deepening and increasing student knowledge and autonomy. The lesson sequence follows a “spiraled” curriculum (Figure 1), meaning that as students engage with persuasive rhetoric, they move from more familiar forms of persuasion to more complex and historically situated forms, thus deepening their knowledge of the topic.

### **Lesson 1**

As an introduction, students explore the use of persuasion in advertising. Engaging with a variety of media, students examine advertisements’ use of emotional appeal to interest readers and persuade them to take action. Through multimodal text analysis of modality, word meaning, and nuance, students evaluate the point of view, purpose, and intended audience effect of each advertisement. Finally, students determine central ideas of advertisement texts and cite specific evidence to support their textual analysis.

## **Lesson 2**

Through a close reading of the Gettysburg Address (Abraham Lincoln Online, 2014), students deepen their understanding and analysis of persuasive techniques. After first reading background texts about Lincoln's famous speech to build schema about the time, place, and political context of the event, students then have multiple opportunities to examine and interact with the text. From this reading, students gain a broader understanding of key ideas in Lincoln's message, as well as examine micro-level elements, such as ties that create cohesiveness and coherence. To synthesize their overall understanding of Lincoln's message, students conclude the lesson by translating the address into "modern" English.

## **Lesson 3**

Using Aristotle's Three Appeals (trans. 1991), students analyze how the rhetorical devices used in the text persuade a reader or audience to take a particular action or identify with a specific cause. Using their learning from this exercise, they critically analyze three speeches: Martin Luther King's 1963 "I Have a Dream" (University of Gronigen, 2012), Robert F. Kennedy's 1968 "On the Assassination of Martin Luther King" (The History Place, n.d.), and George C. Wallace's 1964 "The Civil Rights Movement: Fraud, Sham, and Hoax" (Welling, 2012).

## **Lesson 4**

Students collaboratively analyze the structural, organizational, grammatical, and lexical choices made in Barbara Jordan's "All Together Now" (1994) to examine authors' construction of persuasive texts at both macro and micro levels. To prepare to write their own speeches at the conclusion of the unit, students discuss these micro- and macroelements with their peers.

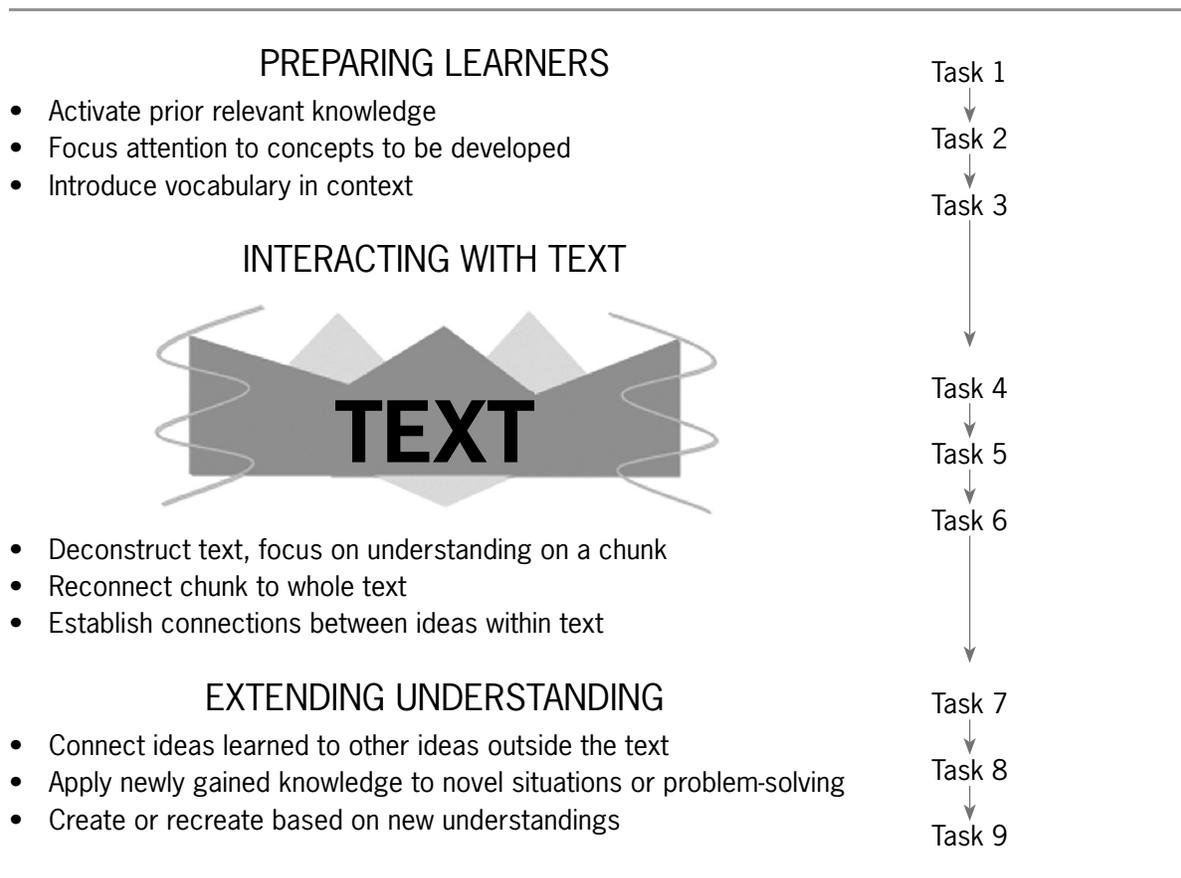
## **Lesson 5**

To demonstrate their appropriation of the knowledge and skills learned from the past several weeks of study, students independently analyze a persuasive speech and write their own persuasive texts. Assuming the role of one of the authors studied in the unit and analyzing his or her text, students first consolidate their knowledge of the deliberate use of persuasive devices. Next, students analyze a persuasive speech authored by someone close to their age. The unit culminates with students drawing on the techniques learned in the unit to construct their own persuasive texts.

The lessons referenced above provide multiple opportunities to activate and build upon students' background knowledge of popular persuasive appeals. Each lesson develops and refines students' understanding of the principles of persuasion, spiraling from familiar forms of discourse to progressively less familiar and more difficult texts and tasks. Because each lesson is subsumed into the next, lessons form a coherent, connected whole rather than "stand alone" sets of activities.

## **Meso Scaffolding**

Scaffolding designed at the meso level provides the architecture necessary to support students through each lesson. In this case, considerations of flow are indispensable: The supports need to be commensurate with the challenges presented students, and they must induce work beyond students' current abilities. It is only in this way that development will take place. A tripartite lesson



*Figure 3. Three-Part Lesson Architecture*

Source: Walqui, 2007. See also Walqui & van Lier, 2010, for an in-depth discussion of using Walqui’s model for lesson planning.

architecture (Figure 3) enables students to (a) be prepared to encounter a text or texts (“Preparing Learners”); (b) interact with, question, and make sense of those texts as reading proceeds (“Interacting with Text”); and (c) situate texts in the larger world of ideas explored in a class, connect them to students’ lives, transfer newly gained knowledge to other situations, and create additional texts using newly developed understandings (“Extending Understanding”).

At the meso level of scaffolding, tasks are interconnected fluidly and supportively to lead students from learning new ideas to applying them in warranted and creative ways. Preparatory activities help activate and build background knowledge without preempting the need to engage with the target texts themselves. For example, in Lesson 2, students interpret and discuss photos and short background writings about Abraham Lincoln, the Civil War, and the Gettysburg Address (Lincoln, 1863). Because they do not address the content of the speech, none of these materials foreclose opportunities for students to engage deeply with the text itself. They do, however, provide students some hope of being able to begin to make sense of the dense and challenging address. Subsequent activities allow for multiple interactions with the full and unabridged text. They will have (through structures designed to support students in interacting with each other) listened to the full text read aloud; engaged in close reading of the text with the assistance of guided, text-dependent questions; and completed a group read-aloud of the text in which each student is

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A graphic consisting of a large number '2' inside a pair of curly braces. Below the number '2' is the word 'Lesson'.

Unit: Persuasion Across Time and Space:  
Analyzing and Producing Complex Texts  
Lesson: Persuasion in Historical Context: *The Gettysburg Address*

## Handout #10: The Gettysburg Address in Four Voices

Directions: Each student chooses one of four fonts (regular font, bold font, underlined font, or italics); when it is your turn to read aloud, you will read your font only.

Four score and seven years ago **our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.**

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, **testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure.** *We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.*

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate—we cannot consecrate—we cannot hallow—this ground. The brave men, **living and dead**, who struggled here, have consecrated it, *far above our poor power to add or detract.* The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, **rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.** *It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.*

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Figure 4. Reading in Four Voices

From *Persuasion Across Time and Space: Analyzing and Producing Complex Texts* (p. 26), by A. Walqui, N. Koelsch, & M. Schmida, 2012. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Understanding Language. Reprinted with permission.

assigned a different set of meaningful chunks of the text to recite (Figure 4). They will also have completed activities designed to focus on literary devices employed in the speech; reflected on Lincoln’s word choices; and rewritten the text into modern colloquial English, considering what is gained and lost through such a translation.

## Micro Scaffolding

Microlevel scaffolds support the development of students’ capacity to engage in a specific procedure with specific content and language. The skills, understandings, and language will then be transferable to other contexts and situations. For example, students are invited to engage in a deliberate metacognitive activity, the Clarifying Bookmark (Figure 2), as they read through background information designed to prepare them to read the Gettysburg Address, a speech that is beyond their current independent level to tackle. The Clarifying Bookmark provides ELLs with strategies to explore the background materials (which are less challenging than the Gettysburg Address itself but still undoubtedly beyond the independent reading level of some ELLs), to recognize their current needs, and to engage in meeting these needs directly. While at the moment of application, the task helps students read passages of the speech, these critical skills will over time be appropriated by students and become generative—capable of being used for other texts in other disciplines in the future. While the teacher carefully plans tasks which will develop her students’ potential over time, the most important part of scaffolding occurs in the moment, as the teacher observes how students work, what skills are maturing, which ones need further support to ripen, and what may be misunderstood. Then, teachers contingently offer the appropriate support to redirect, deepen, or accelerate specific students’ development.

It is through micro scaffolding deeply embedded in the overall structure of the unit that students are supported in attending directly to discrete elements of language such as vocabulary and grammatical structures. Activities vary in the degree to which implicitness or explicitness is required. Sometimes a lesson may start with a more implicit focus, which may then shift to becoming more explicit, and vice versa. In this way, students develop their ability to use language and develop their awareness of language at the same time—in ways that are useful not just this one time but rather transferable to future contexts as learners progressively develop more and more autonomy.

For example, during Lesson 1, when students are first invited to gauge the persuasiveness of advertisements, they are asked to review several commercials to make an educated guess as to whether they present a soft or a hard sell, and to state the reasons they chose their response. Having made their best guesses, students are then invited to collaboratively write advertisements for a product. They have to write three different versions of the advertisements, giving the product a hard, a medium, and a soft sell. To scaffold their production, teachers give students an explanatory chart indicating the language that is typically associated with each of these sells. Such an activity allows students to focus on how different grammatical structures are used for different rhetorical purposes. In an example of a focus on vocabulary, before reading the Gettysburg Address in Lesson 2, students examine a “Worldle” depiction of all the words in the text (Figure 5). In contrast with many vocabulary “frontloading” activities, the point is not for the teacher to give students the key words to be encountered in the text, but rather for students to share what images or ideas come to mind when they see a particular word. Students then revisit the Worldle after having completed



scaffolding at three different levels (macro, meso, and micro) throughout the design and enactment of instruction. Our hope, of course, is that teachers and others responsible for creating curriculum and guiding instruction will see ways that the underlying principles can be applied to their own contexts across the grade levels and addressing a wide range of ELA standards through a range of different themes and topics. The Appendix provides guidelines for ELA instructional materials development that we developed while creating this unit in order to support educators in doing similar work in different contexts.

It is possible that the approach we advocate for in this chapter will strike some educators as a radical departure from ways in which they have been encouraged to focus “explicitly” on language for ELLs—that is, through “curricularizing” language (Valdés, Capitelli, & Alvarez, 2011) so that the focus of instruction is on the systematic mastery of prescribed and ordered grammatical features, vocabulary, or “functions” of language. There is a long and pervasive tradition in language teaching of working with “bits and pieces” of language. In many classes, sentences are focused on in isolation of each other; in other classes texts are worked on holistically but in ways that are disconnected from other texts or central curricular themes.

Indeed, a persistent question in second language learning is whether students should be explicitly taught how language functions formally, or if they should learn the language system inductively. The *Persuasion Across Time and Space* (Walqui, Koelsch, & Schmida, 2012) exemplar is built on the assumption that this question presents a false dichotomy. Students’ perceptions, actions and interpretations, as well as their identity and agency, can be engaged directly for the purpose of raising their awareness of how language works to perform specific functions without relegating language instruction to an endeavor sealed off from the academic practices at the core of an ELA curriculum in general or the CCSS in particular.

We argue that attention to the language necessary for engagement with the CCSS is appropriate, and that such a focus is most productively achieved through scaffolding that provides evolving opportunities for ELLs to use and develop language in apprenticeships in communities of practice that ultimately lead toward more autonomy. The kinds of scaffolds necessary for fostering both awareness and developing use of English will vary depending on many features of the context and of students’ backgrounds. In all cases, students’ initial engagements will be peripheral, imperfect, and pale versions of the kinds of interactions they will eventually be able to negotiate. However, if ELLs’ early participation is accompanied by modeling of accomplished practice, and by the scaffolds that will support students’ movement from novice to expert, then accomplished, autonomous performance will be achieved. Of course, what matures today also leaves room for practices that are on the verge of ripening as well as those that are more incipient and in need of deliberate and expert nurturing. In this sense, scaffolding entails the handing over of responsibility by teachers or peers while, simultaneously, new supports are provided to develop other aspects of development. All of this happens in the learner’s “construction zone,” the term Newman, Griffin, and Cole (1989) use to refer to Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1962, 1978), where all instruction must take place and where development will be constructed next.

Throughout this process, deep knowledge construction is predicated on spiraling and increasing encounters with linked ideas and texts, each new encounter enhancing understandings, skills,

and the language required to engage in those practices. This is true for everybody, but for students learning sophisticated content via the medium of a language that is in the process of development, these links are essential. They provide moments of recognition and solidity that enable learners to tolerate ambiguity and develop their skills to be willing and accurate guessers (Rubin, 1975). This is why the unit on persuasion revisits key genres and themes repeatedly, each time at a higher level of complexity, each time enabling students to see how much they have developed and how much more autonomous they have become.

## Reflection Questions and Action Plans

### Reflection Questions

1. What aspects of planning and instruction introduced in this chapter for supporting ELLs in meeting the CCSS do you recognize in your own practice, or in practice that you are observing? What aspects would represent changes in current practice for ELLs?
2. Read the Guidelines for ELA Instructional Materials Development presented in the Appendix. Which of the guidelines are already being implemented in the setting(s) you work in? Which could be targeted for adoption first in your setting? Which would take the most work, and how might you go about incorporating them into your practice?
3. Review a unit you have recently taught or observed. To what extent do activities invite students to engage in interaction to support learning? To what extent do they include both planned and contingent scaffolding, and how do they personalize tasks for students' needs? Do they include opportunities for students to engage with complex texts, and how are those texts scaffolded for ELLs? How might you change your unit now, after reading this chapter?

### Action Plans

1. Plan! Look back at the unit you reflected on in Reflection Question 3 above and choose one of the three areas (interaction, scaffolding, and texts) you most want to develop.
2. Interact! Modify one of the unit activities to include peer interaction that allows students to build knowledge collectively before displaying it individually.
3. Scaffold! Make a list of the macro-, meso-, and microscaffolding provided in the unit. For two or three ELLs in your class, keep a weekly record of the scaffolding students have required (or no longer need).
4. Build your text bank! Talk with your colleagues and school librarian or access online sources to find recommendations for grade-level, thematically related texts relevant to your unit's goals and objectives that can be amplified through instruction so that they are accessible to ELLs. Make a list of the activities you will use to amplify the text for your students.

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## Appendix: Guidelines for ELA Instructional Materials Development for English Language Learners<sup>2</sup>

1. **Begin with a potent set of standards.** Rather than creating of a “laundry list” of standards that appear to have relevance to the unit, carefully select a small number of key standards across the various domains (reading, writing, listening/speaking, and language) that anchor instruction that is compelling for both students and teachers.
2. **Envision lessons and activities that allow students to engage with the standards in integrated, recursive, and generative ways throughout an instructional unit.** Although it is appropriate to highlight particular standards in particular activities, the goal is to move away from activities that are broken up into microlevel, discrete skills, and toward instructional lessons and units that provide multiple, recursive, and integrated opportunities for students to address the standards.
3. **For students with different academic and linguistic backgrounds, create various instructional pathways that promote high levels of access to, engagement with, and achievement of the CCSS.** Students with different levels of English language proficiency and different literacy backgrounds may require different supportive structures within the same lesson or unit, but the goals should be similar for all students. Students at all levels should engage in communities of practice that foster opportunities for apprenticeship that lead, over time, to students’ full and independent participation in CCSS-based practices.
4. **Select informational and literary texts that provide students with opportunities to encounter and engage with various kinds of text complexity.** Texts might, for example, feature multiple levels of meaning and purpose; different kinds of conventional and nonconventional structures; figurative, ironic, or ambiguous language; various levels of semantic and syntactic complexity; and different levels of relevant background knowledge (see Appendix A in the CCSS; NGA & CCSSO, 2010b).

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<sup>2</sup>Adapted from guidelines prepared by the Understanding Language Initiative’s English Language Arts Workgroup: George C. Bunch (Chair), Martha Inez Castellón, Susan Pimentel, Lydia Stack, and Aída Walqui. (Available at [ell.stanford.edu](http://ell.stanford.edu).)

- 5. Prioritize which aspects of text complexity to focus on at various points during instruction, and provide support for students to engage with those aspects.** Not *all* texts need to represent *all* types of complexity, nor can all types of complexity in a single text be focused on simultaneously. Different texts might be chosen to emphasize different aspects of text complexity, or a single text might be engaged with in different ways throughout a lesson, focusing on different aspects of text complexity at different times.
- 6. Provide opportunities to activate and build on students' background knowledge—in ways that do not foreclose opportunities for them to engage with complex text.** ELLs, by definition, are still in the process of developing English language proficiency, and they also may be less familiar with the topics and content of assigned texts than their non-ELL classmates. Therefore, preparing learners for engagement with complex text is essential. Leveraging students' existing knowledge and building new knowledge can be accomplished in a number of ways before and during a lesson or unit of study—without preempting the text, translating its contents for students, telling students what they will learn in advance of reading a particular text, or simplifying the text itself.
- 7. Engage students in opportunities to write in meaningful ways for different audiences and purposes.** Provide students with authentic models of the types of texts they are asked to produce and with guidance on the linguistic and rhetorical features of those text types.
- 8. Utilize different participation structures.** ELLs need opportunities to engage in different kinds of instructional arrangements, from informal and collaborative group interactions to formal presentations. They can be supported in using their existing linguistic resources in order to meet the standards, which call for them to collaborate with others to articulate ideas, interpret information, and present and defend claims.
- 9. Focus on language as a resource for meaning making and as a “craft” for communicating with different audiences for different purposes.** Activities calling students' attention to features of language (e.g., conventions of written and oral language, grammatical structures, and vocabulary) are important. Such a focus should be integrated with—rather than isolated from—meaningful and purposeful engagement with the texts and ideas at the heart of ELA instruction.
- 10. Create instructional opportunities that recognize that all students, including ELLs, have linguistic resources that can be used to engage in activities designed to meet the CCSS.** ELLs are unlikely to sound or write exactly like monolingual English speakers, and they may not have yet developed a command of standard features of English. Yet they do bring a range of linguistic resources (home and community language practices, developing proficiency in English, emergent literacy skills) that can be used to engage deeply with the kinds of instruction called for in Guidelines 1–9 presented in this appendix. Effective instruction for ELLs capitalizes on students' resources in order to facilitate access to the standards, which in turn promotes the continued expansion of ELLs' linguistic repertoires in English.