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## Series Editor's Preface

As English language educators, we value research for its benefit in providing evidence-based knowledge in our understanding of how English as a second or foreign language is learned (or acquired) by our students. Research also provides insight on best practices for teaching. But such research is only useful insofar as it is practical for teachers in classroom settings. It is necessary to translate, and indeed, *transform* conceptual and empirical research into practical and applicable information so that it can be used to evoke positive change for teachers and learners. That is, engaging with research is critical for practicing teachers.

TESOL International Association's research agenda (2014) promotes one issue very relevant to engaging research. One of its six bullet points maintains that the agenda intends to "promote dialog between doers and users of research" (p. 1). Furthermore, the agenda maintains that "because research is sometimes viewed as activity that generates knowledge but which has little relevance to everyday practice, (it) calls for more attention on how practitioners can use research" (p. 2). It is this grounding on which the current series is rooted.

The main goal of this series is to create new spaces for practitioner knowledge and engagement with English language teaching (ELT) research. As a professional community, we are interested in highlighting how ELT practitioners direct their own learning through reading, questioning, interpreting, and adapting research findings to and in their own contexts. Understanding and accessing original research in the field is critically important for teachers of all levels, and busy ELT professionals may not always have the opportunity or inclination to spend time reading and digesting academic journals or theory-based texts. As such, this series serves ELT practitioners by providing nuggets of original research from TESOL publications in the form of rich and detailed synopses. Further, each chapter puts the original highlighted research into practice by providing a replicable lesson plan and a reflection on its implementation, so teachers will have an idea of how such a lesson plays out in certain contexts. The result is a very accessible and rich collection that adds to the profession's overall knowledge base, while also validating the critical role teachers play in TESOL's overall mission to improve learning and teaching. The series recasts a great amount of ELT material from *TESOL Journal*, *TESOL Quarterly*, *Essential Teacher*, and other TESOL Press publications, such as the English Language Teaching in Context series.

There are four books in the series, with each book following a similar format. Three of the books cover the elementary, middle school, and high school levels and have chapters dedicated to the content areas of mathematics, science, social studies, and English language arts. There is also a volume devoted to English as a foreign



language, and it is divided into three parts: primary, secondary, and higher education. The series is published in print, but resources, interactive links, and supplementary materials are available for download on a website dedicated to the series. In this way, teachers have ready access to multiple resources for their classrooms.

A benefit of the series stems from the diversity of classrooms and teachers represented in each volume. The individual chapters speak to the various educational profiles of students in diverse regions. As a result, the chapters highlight English learners (ELs) hailing from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds throughout the United States and beyond, as well as teachers with varying content and training backgrounds. Accordingly, academic and language standards for lesson plans correspond to the location and context in which each chapter is set. Among others, readers see Common Core State Standards for content, standards specific to particular states, and language standards, such as WIDA. This makes for a comprehensive and wide-ranging collection of classroom lessons.

The chapters follow a similar format for ease of use. To begin, each chapter provides a brief introduction that highlights the focal topic of the original research and the lesson plan, and background on the context, such as the school, student demographics, content area, and language and grade levels of students. Next follows a synopsis of the original research article or chapter, including the original citation. Then, authors include their rationale for choosing the research and creating a lesson based on it. Each chapter next highlights a clearly written lesson plan that allows readers to experience the context and follow the development of the lesson as it unfolds. To maintain continuity, ease of use, and readability, each lesson includes similar components to include the grade and subject area, content and language objectives, connections to appropriate standards, desired outcomes, students' proficiency levels, materials needed to carry out lesson, duration of the lesson, and highlighted strategies that can facilitate ELs' learning. Lessons in each chapter also follow a similar format and include procedures (the specific details regarding what the students will do during the lesson) and assessment and evaluation of the lesson. Finally, each chapter closes with a reflection that summarizes how the original TESOL research informs teachers' practice and raises valuable questions for further inquiry.

This series of books can be utilized by a wide range of participants in the TESOL community, including English language teachers, mainstream content-area teachers who work with ELs, program administrators, coaches, and trainers. Because of their teacher-friendly format and ancillary online resources, the books are appropriate for use as course readings for preservice and in-service teacher education programs and as professional development for teachers of ELs. Also, because the classroom contexts are set in schools throughout the United States, readers gain a breadth of understanding regarding standards, demographics, grade levels, and English as a second language programs.

In this volume, lessons are focused on the high school context, with student activities appropriate for ninth through twelfth grades. The chapters center on English language arts, social studies, science, and mathematics and address concepts such as guided visualization, argumentation, genre pedagogy, translanguaging, accountable talk, and use of graphic organizers and picture books. The research covered in this

volume is cutting edge, insightful, and applicable to a broad range of ELT contexts at high school levels.

The contributors to the middle school volume represent a mix of teacher educators/researchers, undergraduate and graduate students, and middle school teachers, and many chapters are written in collaboration with various constituents. In this way, the chapters truly put research into practice in a clear, hands-on, accessible, and digestible way. It is my hope that you will benefit from—and enjoy—this compilation as much as I do!

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## Introduction

Mandy Stewart and Holly Hansen-Thomas

This volume of the Engaging Research series highlights the important work of 23 teachers and researchers who are involved in high school classrooms with students in the dynamic process of English language acquisition. The classrooms must set the optimal learning environment for not only high school-level content learning, but also English language acquisition. The authors of these chapters illustrate how high school educators can apply up-to-date TESOL research to meet both of those criteria (content and language acquisition) while also affirming students' cultural knowledge, individual lived experiences, and full language abilities. Through the research they bring to life within their lessons, the authors show how high school English learners (ELs) can thrive in the academic classroom—despite many inherent challenges.

### **Challenges of Teaching High School ELs**

Teaching ELs at the high school level is a complex task because of the great variety of these students' lived experiences (Menken, 2013). There are many factors contributing to the diversity of this group, including the amount of their previous formal schooling and its environment, time in the English-speaking country, literacy skills in their first or home language(s), lived experiences, and cultural diversity (Faltis & Coulter, 2008). Age can even be a factor, because students from other countries are often assigned a birth year that does not represent their actual age, possibly as a result of having been given refugee status (Sonnert & Holton, 2010; Stewart, 2017). Moreover, many high school students are placed in ninth grade regardless of their ages because they need to acquire a certain number of credits to graduate high school, meaning there is a wide range of age and maturity level in these classes (Cloud, Lakin, Leininger, & Maxwell, 2010).

This volume unpacks two of the factors that we believe can greatly affect the challenges of teaching in the high school classroom: students' English proficiency level and their previous educational experiences. One important factor to consider is the students' language proficiency, or English language development (ELD) levels, in

all language domains: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Within the EL label, students' ELD levels vary widely and can run the gamut from entering (Level 1) to reaching (Level 6; WIDA, 2014). For example, many high school classrooms have students who are newcomers to the country who have little to no English language knowledge or proficiency. These students are sometimes referred to as late arrivals, suggesting the limited amount of time they have to learn language and content needed for high school graduation. However, there are also students in high school classrooms labeled long-term ELs (L-TELEs) who have received language support services for 7 or more years (Olsen, 2010). These students, some of whom have even been born in the United States, often possess native-like social language skills in English, yet still struggle with academic language. Although they use English in very advanced ways, illustrating their ruled-governed use of one or more languages, these L-TELEs have not met the required academic state standards (determined by high-stakes standardized tests) to exit them from English-as-a-second-language services. Of course, there are students with both oral and academic ELD levels that fall throughout this vast continuum. Thus, high school teachers have a herculean task: They must provide effective language support for students who have yet to produce a word in English; those who consider English their dominant language, yet still struggle academically; as well as the monolingual English speakers in their classes.

High school ELs' educational backgrounds play an important role in their success (or failure) in school. Many L-TELEs will have had all or at least most of their formal schooling in the United States or an English-dominant country. If they still struggle academically, it is quite possible they have experienced subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999), or a learning environment that continually devalued their language and cultural knowledge while also misunderstanding their linguistic identities (Brooks, 2017). Conversely, other students, particularly some newcomers, might have had years of excellent educational experiences in their home country where their language and culture were fully valued and they learned literacy and content knowledge to what the new country would consider age-appropriate levels. Yet other students are what are referred to as SIFES or SLIFES, students with interrupted formal education (Salva, 2017) or students with limited or interrupted formal education (Montero, Newmaster, & Ledger, 2014), respectively. These students have months, or even years, of gaps in their education because they could not attend a formal school due to circumstances such as war, migration, or extreme poverty. Conversely, some of these students might have consistently attended school, but they did not learn their first language or content knowledge to appropriate levels for reasons such as geographic, economic, wartime, or transnational/migratory conditions (Salva & Matis, 2017). Therefore, high school educators must understand the previous positive or negative educational experiences of their ELs as well as those critical lacunae students have experienced with regard to schooling. To best serve these learners, teachers need to know where their ELs attended school, what the conditions were, and how well developed their native language literacy is.

Additionally, there are external factors that greatly affect high school ELs' academic and social success. High school ELs in the United States are often children of immigrants, have at least one foreign-born parent, and have experienced triggers that

have prompted their migration (Suárez-Orozco, Suárez-Orozco, & Todorova, 2008). Some of these students will have experienced various levels of trauma prior to coming to the high school classroom. In addition, older ELs might even be working many hours a week to support themselves and/or family or taking on other adult responsibilities in their lives. It is critical to understand and acknowledge such factors.

## **Promise and Potential**

Whereas the challenges are often highlighted in the experience of immigrant students (Ruiz-de-Velasco, Fix, & Clewell, 2000), it is important to point out their promise and possibilities as well. Research shows that high school ELs will often possess transnational and multilingual skills that are very needed in our society, yet that are rare in monolingual nonimmigrant populations (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2008). High school ELs can contribute to their school, their communities, and our nation in unique and promising ways (Sadowski, 2013). In this volume, we acknowledge high school ELs' need to acquire high levels of both academic and social English skills while celebrating their culturally embedded knowledge, full linguistic repertoires, and unique perspectives. It is our desire that as you engage with research in the field of English language teaching, you will see how you can put that research into practice in your classroom to not only meet the challenges of teaching high school ELs, but to be able to see and build on their strengths.

## **Organization of the Book**

The chapters in this volume are organized by the four primary content areas in high school in which students must demonstrate proficiency to graduate: English language arts, social studies, science, and mathematics. However, we maintain that the ideas and strategies presented by the contributing authors can be used across all content areas—including fine arts and world languages classrooms.

### **English Language Arts**

In the first chapter, Misty Ferguson leverages the ever-present reality of high-stakes testing at the secondary level to illustrate an alternative approach to the skill of argumentation, which many teachers need to focus on for their students to achieve high school graduation and college entry. She illustrates how teachers can still deliver culturally relevant, creative, and engaging instruction to ELs while building a skill they need to master.

Next, Katie Walker takes into account her students' cultural knowledge when conducting her lesson on poetry. Focal learners are in a ninth-grade classroom, and many are Spanish-speaking ELs. In her classroom, Katie uses supports, such as graphic organizers and supplementary texts for building background knowledge, to guide students in their analysis and creation of poetry. This chapter also illustrates how the arts can support students' literacy and language development.



The final chapter in the English language arts section builds on the notion of translanguaging as an everyday classroom practice in a senior English classroom of Spanish/English bilinguals who are relatively new to the United States. Seth M. Ross and Mary Amanda Stewart illustrate how giving students opportunities and encouraging their use of all their languages in responding to literature can lead to greater higher order thinking, literacy development, and engagement with complex texts in English.

## Social Studies

The three chapters in the social studies section have strong ties to the language arts, as they also use literature in their lessons. Jacqueline Riley and Patsy Sosa-Sánchez explain the benefits of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP; Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2008) model in the U.S. history classroom by teaching about migration from Mexico, specifically through using an adolescent novel as their focal text. The chapter authors explain the many SIOP strategies appropriate for using before, during, and after reading the novel that make both the history content and the academic language relevant and comprehensible to learners.

Using children's literature to teach history, Tamra Dollar, Patricia Flint, and Holly Hansen-Thomas share how they used a picture book to teach a group of newcomer ELs historical content from World War II, comprehension strategies of cause and effect, and vocabulary. Although picture books are most commonly thought of in the lower grades, the chapter authors use them in appropriate ways with older learners to help the newcomer students make meaning from text as they shift from the picture book to a historical article found online. The authors' experience teaching this lesson provides teachers with key strategies they can use to help their ELs comprehend complex texts often found in the social studies classroom.

Next, Laura Schall-Leckrone and Debbie Barron discuss genre pedagogy as a way to teach both language and content regarding the expansion of the Roman empire. The teacher in this lesson, the second author, provides the appropriate scaffolds to assist students in deconstructing and then constructing historical explanations. Through this engagement with history, students also develop more experience with complex linguistic features of history.

## Science

The first chapter in the science section takes an overt multilingual stance to ESL or English to speakers of other languages teaching, acknowledging and leveraging the many first or home languages that ELs bring with them into the English-medium classroom. Brian Seilstad, Derek Braun, Somin Kim, and Min-Seok Choi share how high school ELs created biomes through The Bilingual Biome Project. Although the teacher did not speak all of the students' multiple home languages, he encouraged them to use all of their languages to work collaboratively, understand the vocabulary related to the project, and discuss the key concepts. The authors also illustrate how they honored students' cultural identities by encouraging them to select for the project a biome that exists in their countries of origin.

In the next chapter, Francine M. Johnson, Cynthia Lima, and Jorge Solís share a teaching exemplar in which they use a dialogic discourse strategy, accountable talk, to teach climate patterns. This lesson highlights the role of dialogue with peers in the science classroom to make sense of the content and further one’s learning. The authors expertly illustrate how, when teaching ELs, the high school science teacher can attend both to language functions used in scientific practices and content knowledge.

Rounding out the section on science, Alandcom W. Oliveira, Luciana de Oliveira, and Carla Meskill discuss a lesson that teaches earthquake science through guided visualizations. They explain how teachers of ELs should carefully evaluate and plan how they will use visual aids to support student learning. By focusing on visual literacy throughout the lesson, ELs had appropriate scaffolding that allowed them to fully engage with the scientific content, leading to verbal practice and development. This chapter helps all teachers understand how to most effectively use a variety of visuals to enhance the language and content learning of their students.

## Mathematics

The last chapter of the book focuses on math—specifically algebra, which happens to be a gatekeeping class for high schoolers. That is, algebra is a subject that most students must demonstrate proficiency or mastery in to graduate. Geraldine Devine and Suzanne Toohey introduce functional relationships and their representations through responsive and explicit language instruction within the math classroom. Specifically, the authors explain how the teachers purposefully incorporate reading, writing, speaking, and listening practice and scaffolding seamlessly throughout the algebra lesson to facilitate comprehension.

## Overcoming the Challenges and Unveiling the Promise in the High School Classroom

These authors all acknowledge the challenges of teaching in the high school classroom with ELs, yet they all expertly illustrate the scaffolding that allows teachers to deliver dynamic language and content instruction simultaneously. They both tell and show how TESOL research can inform all content areas of the high school classroom. Most important, the lessons described in this volume also demonstrate the vast prior knowledge, unique geographic understandings, varied cultural practices, and multilingual linguistic abilities high school ELs possess. These abilities can be leveraged to maximize academic and social success. Surely, when students have the supports they need, when their strengths are leveraged, we will unveil the great promise ELs have in the high school classroom and beyond.

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