

Critical Literacy for Multilingual (ESL/ELL) Students

WHO ARE MULTILINGUAL (ESL/ELL) STUDENTS?

	International Students (‘Eye’ learners)	Immigrant Students. (‘Ear’ learners)
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Global context • Traditional instruction (usually) • Academic English • Higher socio-economic status (often, but not always) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More experience in US • High school in US—May have taken ESL courses • Communicative English often stronger than Academic English
STRENGTHS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading • Grammar knowledge • Motivation and Objectives • Academic skills (overall) • Responsiveness to instructor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaking and listening • Cultural knowledge • Support system (family, friends) • Responsiveness to instructor
CHALLENGES AND NEEDS <i>(linguistic, cultural, academic, personal)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grammar application • Speaking and listening • Appropriateness in vocabulary • Cultural adjustment (often lack support system) • US academic culture • Confidence in language proficiency • Asking for help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grammatical knowledge • Academic literacy and vocabulary • College preparedness (critical thinking, metacognition) • Cultural identity (sense of between-ness) • Confidence in academic skill • Asking for help

WHAT IS CRITICAL LITERACY?

- **Context**
 - Personal/Cognitive
 - Linguistic
 - Sociocultural
 - Political
- **Power**
- **Resistance**

Critical literacy is language use that questions the social construction of the self. When we are critically literate, we examine our ongoing development, to reveal the subjective positions from which we make sense of the world and act in it. All of us grow up and live in local cultures set in global contexts where multiple discourses shape us.
 —Ira Shor

Academic English is a second language for all of us.
 — John Swales

DISCUSS: *What role have these factors played in your own language learning? What were your struggles with reading and writing in a second (or third, fourth, etc.) language?*

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CONTEXT

Title: _____

The procedure is actually quite simple. First, you arrange items into different groups. Of course, one pile may be sufficient depending how much there is to do. If you have to go somewhere else due to lack of facilities, that is the next step; otherwise, you are pretty well set. It is important not to overdo things. That is, it is better to do too few things at once than too many. In the short run, this may not seem important, but complications can easily arise. A mistake can be expensive as well. At first, the whole procedure will seem complicated. Soon, however, it will become just another facet of life. It is difficult to foresee any end to the necessity for this task in the immediate future, but then, one never can tell. After the procedure is complete, you arrange the materials into different piles again. Then you can put them into their appropriate places. Eventually they will be used again, and the whole cycle will then have to be repeated. However, that is a part of life.

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**Examples:** What background knowledge do you need for understanding? (cultural, historical, linguistic etc.)



### “I Have a Dream”


I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation. Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.




## GENERALIZATIONS ABOUT PAPER ORGANIZATION ACROSS CULTURES (i.e. CONTRASTIVE RHETORIC)

One way to think about how languages differ in their conceptions of audience is to consider the range from writer-responsible to reader-responsible (See Hinds, 1987 in Connor and Kaplan's *Writing Across Languages* for more on this.)

Writer responsible languages presume that it is the writer's job to 'connect the dots' for readers, by ensuring that all main points are clearly explained and exemplified, and relevant background information is offered explicitly.

|                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ENGLISH</b><br> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Five paragraph essay format is more standard</i></li><li>• <i>Tend toward deductive reasoning where a thesis statement is located prominently, usually in the first paragraph. Subsequent paragraphs develop the thesis in a linear way until the conclusion wraps it up.</i></li></ul> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Reader responsible languages place more importance on the reader's ability to 'make sense' of information and assume that readers may not need as much explicitness from writers. This can have many variations, as is seen below:

|                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>ASIAN</b><br>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Approach a topic from a variety of viewpoints in order to examine it indirectly, a process that indicates to them, careful thinking.</i></li><li>• <i>Considered the "polite" way to write. Many view English's direct approach as rude or abrupt.</i></li></ul>                             |
| <b>ARABIC</b><br>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Construct paragraphs based on a complex series of parallel constructions</i></li><li>• <i>Sensitivity towards politeness, represented by indirectness. Rather than getting to their point immediately, native Arabic speakers might open up a topic and talk around the point.</i></li></ul> |
| <b>ROMANCE /<br/>EASTERN EUROPEAN</b><br> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>More loosely organized; fewer boundaries that connect the sentence's development with its topic.</i></li><li>• <i>Much greater freedom to digress or to introduce extraneous material</i></li><li>• <i>More complex sentence structure</i></li></ul>                                         |

Adapted from Robert B. Kaplan, "Cultural Thought Patterns in Intercultural Education," *Language Learning* 16:15

**DISCUSS:** What are the implications of this for your work with multilingual (ESL/ELL) students?

## WHAT DOES EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH TELL US ABOUT BEST PRACTICES FOR PROMOTING ACADEMIC LITERACY WITH MULTILINGUAL (ESL/ELL) STUDENTS??

- **Strong pedagogy for all students is critical for these students**
  - Teaching pre, during, and post-reading (into, through, and beyond... ☺)
  - Metacognition and prediction are key.
  - Independent *and* group reading
  - Phonics *and* whole language
  - Meaningful and authentic texts
  - Accessing prior knowledge
  - “Linking Literacies” (reading and writing interconnected)
  - Content-based literacy
  
- **L1 literacy facilitates L2 literacy**
  - Bilingual materials
  - Incorporating oral literacy through myths/fables, oral histories, interviews
  - Choosing culturally-relevant themes that go beyond the “celebrate diversity” stage toward more critical analysis and synthesis.
  - Highlighting multilingualism in texts and in the school environment (esp. among parents!!)
    - E.g. Family literacy and/or heritage language programs
  
- **Acquisition takes time (up to 10 years), but can be accelerated**
  - Challenging texts and tasks (e.g. GLAD)
  - Integrated grammar
    - Mini-lessons based on observed patterns
    - Rhetorical grammar (using grammar to accomplish a purpose)
      - past tense to tell a story
      - adjectives for vivid description
      - transition words and commands in science reports
      - form poems and other creative writing
  - Authentic use of resources
    - Lists, charts, tables
    - Websites (e.g. <http://staff.washington.edu/shapis/> ☺)

## WHAT MAKES ALL OF THIS “CRITICAL”??

- **Context**

- Personal/Cognitive
- Linguistic
- Sociocultural
- Political

- **Power**

- **Qs:** How does power come in to play in our work with multilingual (ESL/ELL) students? And why does she keep using the term “multilingual,” anyway?

- **Resistance**

- **Qs:** What are we resisting? How?

WHAT QUESTIONS, CONCERNS, COMMENTS  
DO YOU HAVE??

## Sample Questions for Literacy Survey or Interview

1. Why are you taking this class?
2. What are your reading goals?
3. What types of materials do you read (e.g. a newspaper, magazine, children's books, etc.)? How often? In which language(s)?
4. When you think about reading, what feelings come up within you?
5. What type of writing do you do each week?
6. What are your writing goals for this class?
7. When you think about writing, what feelings come up within you?

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## 60 Most Common Academic Words

|    |                    |    |                    |
|----|--------------------|----|--------------------|
| 1  | <b>analyze</b>     | 31 | <b>indicate</b>    |
| 2  | <b>approach</b>    |    |                    |
| 3  | <b>area</b>        | 32 | <b>individual</b>  |
| 4  | <b>assess</b>      | 33 | <b>interpret</b>   |
| 5  | <b>assume</b>      | 34 | <b>involve</b>     |
| 6  | <b>authority</b>   | 35 | <b>issue</b>       |
| 7  | <b>available</b>   | 36 | <b>labor</b>       |
| 8  | <b>benefit</b>     | 37 | <b>legal</b>       |
| 9  | <b>concept</b>     | 38 | <b>legislate</b>   |
| 10 | <b>consist</b>     | 39 | <b>major</b>       |
| 11 | <b>constitute</b>  | 40 | <b>method</b>      |
| 12 | <b>context</b>     | 41 | <b>occur</b>       |
| 13 | <b>contract</b>    | 42 | <b>percent</b>     |
| 14 | <b>create</b>      | 43 | <b>period</b>      |
| 15 | <b>data</b>        | 44 | <b>policy</b>      |
| 16 | <b>define</b>      | 45 | <b>principle</b>   |
| 17 | <b>derive</b>      | 46 | <b>proceed</b>     |
| 18 | <b>distribute</b>  | 47 | <b>process</b>     |
| 19 | <b>economy</b>     | 48 | <b>require</b>     |
| 20 | <b>environment</b> | 49 | <b>research</b>    |
| 21 | <b>establish</b>   | 50 | <b>respond</b>     |
| 22 | <b>estimate</b>    | 51 | <b>role</b>        |
| 23 | <b>evident</b>     | 52 | <b>section</b>     |
| 24 | <b>export</b>      | 53 | <b>sector</b>      |
| 25 | <b>factor</b>      | 54 | <b>significant</b> |
| 26 | <b>finance</b>     | 55 | <b>similar</b>     |
| 27 | <b>formula</b>     | 56 | <b>source</b>      |
| 28 | <b>function</b>    | 57 | <b>specific</b>    |
| 29 | <b>identify</b>    | 58 | <b>structure</b>   |
| 30 | <b>income</b>      | 59 | <b>theory</b>      |
|    |                    | 60 | <b>vary</b>        |

## Reading ↔ Writing Process

### Cognition

- Connecting with prior knowledge and experiences (schemata)
- Asking relevant questions
- Knowing what you know and don't know (metacognition)



### Context

- Exploring the Ws: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY of the text (genre knowledge)
- Making predictions



## Noticing (Con)Textual Clues

- ✓ WHAT (product, medium, genre, format, language)
- ✓ WHO/WHEN/WHERE (By whom? For whom?)
- ✓ WHY (reader's and writer's purposes)

*Leads to....*

- ✓ HOW (to read the text more effectively)
- ✓ WHAT (you should/could be looking for; you know/don't know)

## Asking Engaging Questions

- I wonder if/why/how...
- What's the gist here? Is the author saying that...?
- How is this similar to/different from....?
  - Text-to-Self
  - Text-to-Text
  - Text-to-World
- Why don't I understand this?
- How rhetorically effective is this?