

Recommended Readings for the 2008 CREATE Conference: Supplemental Materials

This packet contains materials to enhance participants' understanding of the recommended readings.

- Questions to guide reflection and/or discussion of the readings
- Note-taking guide

CREATE 2008
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS TO GUIDE SELECTED READINGS

ISSUES THAT EXTEND ACROSS CONTENT AREAS

Hiebert & Lubliner (2008); Snow (2007)

- 1) Hiebert & Lubliner differentiate four categories of vocabulary: content-specific, school tasks, literary, and general academic vocabularies. How does this distinction change or affirm your perception of learners' needs in vocabulary instruction?
- 2) Often, reading levels are judged on the basis of the number of unknown words. The article notes that the percentage of words that were cognates with Spanish was actually higher in more challenging texts. If you are teaching Spanish L1 learners, could this have implications for decisions on text difficulty?
- 3) Hiebert & Lubliner and Snow underscore the need to explicitly teach general academic words, particularly to students of poverty and ELLs.

Despite a paucity of research on specific interventions and programs, what do they suggest that such instruction should or should not include?

Is your educational unit currently designing or providing instruction that meets these criteria?

How might teachers across various contents collaborate to develop such instruction?

How might they select the words to teach?

When and in what context would this collaboration take place?

What supports need to be in place in order to sustain this effort? [Note Snow's findings that teachers did not maintain the focused intervention once the researchers were no longer involved in the intervention].

SUPPORTING CONTENT LEARNING: SCIENCE

Lee (2005)

- 1) Despite a limited research base for improving science instruction for ELLs, Lee suggests some promising directions such as:
 - Develop *instructional congruence* whereby the scientific disciplines are articulated with students' culture and language
 - Respect the everyday experiences and informal language that ELLs bring from home and community environments.
 - Use hands-on, inquiry-based instruction to provide opportunities for students to develop scientific understanding, engage in inquiry, and construct shared meanings. This collaborative scientific inquiry may emanate from students' beliefs, observations, and questions.
 - Complement this hands-on inquiry science curriculum with explicit techniques designed to promote language development.

What are some concrete ways in which teachers in your setting have implemented these instructional practices?

What behaviors or instructional moves might teachers exhibit to implement these suggestions?

2) Lee describes some of the goals and challenges in designing professional development to support teachers in providing high-quality science instruction for ELLs.

Should these professional development opportunities be optional or required?

Is it best to address an all-school common goal or to provide content-specific professional development?

Many of the readings promote the focus on academic language across content areas. How do you reconcile this effort with the need to provide content-specific instructional strategies and techniques?

SUPPORTING CONTENT LEARNING: SOCIAL STUDIES & MATHEMATICS *Goldenberg, 2008; Schmidt, W. (2008); Roschelle, et al. (May, 2007).*

1) Goldenberg lists three general findings in his review of national reports and current research:

- Teaching students to read in their first language promotes higher levels of reading achievement in English.
- What we know about good instruction and curriculum in general holds true for ELLs.
- When instructing English learners in English, teachers must modify instruction to take into account students' language limitations.

Which of these major findings do you find most useful and relevant to your work? Why?

How is your educational unit using (or not using) these current findings in educating ELL students?

What adaptations and changes need to take place in order to implement these guidelines?

What is your role in this change process?

What are your greatest obstacles/challenges in accomplishing these guidelines?

2). Goldenberg outlines several instructional modifications on pages 18 - 21. Which of these suggestions affirm or disconfirm your personal beliefs or interpretations of the research?

In thinking about your educational setting, which suggestions:

- are you already implementing?
- might be most beneficial for your students?
- might be most easily accomplished?
- would be most controversial?
- would present the most obstacles?

3). Schmidt and others (e.g., Marzano, Reeves, and Ainsworth) argue for a more focused, rigorous, and coherent curriculum. Some describe a *core knowledge* that all students must

possess; others define *power standards* that all students must attain. To what degree do the standards of your educational unit (e.g., state) support instruction that brings students to proficient levels in content areas, including but not limited to mathematics?

How might this curricular focus and coherence benefit most ELLs?

Have you accomplished this level of focus and coherence at the state, district, or building level?

If so:

For what content areas have you provided this focus?

How did you go about accomplishing this work?

If not:

What content area needs to be addressed first?

Is mathematics the content with which to begin? Why or why not?

SUMMARY:

Francis et al. (2006)

1). This summary of instructional recommendations for supporting ELLs underscores the importance of developing academic language to impact student achievement in reading and math. Typically, however, there is little attention afforded to academic language development in most language arts and content area curricula.

How familiar are your language arts teachers with these recommendations and guidelines?

How familiar are your mathematics teachers with these recommendations and guidelines?

To what degree are these recommendations put into practice in your setting?

Do your mathematics teachers tend to be more resistant to explicitly teaching academic language in their courses?

If you selected one recommended focal point for a school-wide focus, what would it be?

2). Do your teachers identify language objectives alongside content objectives in their daily lesson plans? If so, do you observe this intentional focus on improving academic language addressed in daily lessons?

3). This report highlights the need for structured and planned discussions to increase the academic skills of ELLs.

Are teachers aware of the need for such structured discussions in the classroom?

What types of professional development support teachers' skills in this area?

What supports or models do teachers need to scaffold their efforts in this area?

Author/ Speaker(s): _____ Topic: _____
Title: _____

Key Points:	<p><i>Summary of ideas</i> Research-based findings or recommendations <i>Ideas that I want to remember . . .</i></p>
Questions:	<p><i>I wonder . . .</i> <i>I am puzzled by . . .</i> <i>I want to pose this question in the small group:</i></p>

Author/ Speaker(s): _____ Topic: _____
Title: _____

Interpretation	<i>In my setting, this would mean . . .</i> <i>This would impact my students/ teachers/ clients by . . .</i> <i>Based on current research findings, I would need to rethink this element of our programming</i>
Application	<i>Research-based practices that should be implemented</i> <i>Actions I could take to initiate these ideas . . .</i> <i>In my setting, we could. . .</i> <i>To do this well, we would need to . . .</i>
Reflection	<i>I want to think more about . . .</i> <i>I will consider . . .</i> <i>I need to learn more about . . .</i>