Express! Asset-Based Access to English:

Research Foundation

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Introduction

Kieffer and Thompson (2018) defined multilingual students as those students who report a primary home language or languages other than English. This research foundation for *Express! Asset-Based Access to English* (*Express!*) provides the current research about bilingual, multilingual, or English Learner[1] students learning English. *Express!* was built based upon the discussed research, ensuring students are receiving the most effective instruction using high-quality instructional materials.

Many factors are involved in the success of educating students who are multilingual (Kirss, Säälik, Leijen & Pedaste, 2021). These factors are related to more than just the classroom, including the country or region, the school or district, and the teacher and students. This research foundation will focus on the curriculum and the factors that make the curriculum effective, for instance, being asset-based, socially and culturally relevant, and inclusive of all learners.

There are several different situations that students could be in when learning English. Students, especially younger students, could be learning both the first language and English at the same time. Students could be learning English where the oral vocabulary is being developed while word reading is being developed. Students could have a well-developed first-language oral vocabulary but no understanding of reading in the first language while trying to learn English. Undoubtedly, there will be other situations for those learning English.

For the purposes of this research foundation, the students we are referring to have already learned their first language. This means English is not being learned at the same time as the first language. English is being learned after some amount of first-language learning has taken place. In the case of students in Grade K, learning to read in their first language is just beginning but the oral vocabulary is developed and still growing. The format of this research foundation is to discuss the research that supports the major topics This is followed by the ways in which the research is implemented within the *Express!* program.

Research Supporting Effective Multilingual Schools and Students

Kirss et al. (2021) conducted a study that "systematically reviewed the research evidence on specific factors explaining multilingual student success in multilingual education programs" (p. 1). The systematic literature review identified the "critical factors conducive to student success in multilingual education" (p. 1). One of the critical factors was the curriculum, specifically, high-quality instructional materials.

Loreman, Forlin, and Sharma (2014), when discussing curriculum, recommend the diversity of learners' needs should be considered. This applies to, for example, the teaching representations reflecting the students, the ways in which engagement is accomplished, and what opportunities are available to show expression. Kirss et al. found successful multilingual schools used similar curricula that included the following two indicators relevant to *Express!* The curricula should:

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[1] These terms will be used interchangeably except where the term is used in a direct quote.

1. Focus on including student home cultures and languages, ensuring learning would be relevant, both linguistically and culturally (Alanis & Rodriguez, 2008; Berman et al., 1995; Guglielmi, 2008, 2012; Montecel & Danini, 2002; Thomas & Collier, 1997, 2002; Uchikoshi & Maniates, 2010).
2. Demonstrate high levels of flexibility so there were sufficient opportunities to meet the particular needs of the multilingual students (Berman et al., 1995; García, Woodley, Flores, & Chu, 2013; Montecel & Danini, 2002; Perez & Ochoa, 1993; Smith, Coggins, & Cardoso, 2008).

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2018) report *How People Learn II* concluded that "effective instruction depends on understanding the complex interplay among learners' prior knowledge, experiences, motivation, interests, and language and cognitive skills; educators' own experiences and cultural influences; and the cultural, social cognitive, and emotional characteristics of the learning environment" (p. 160).

Pivot Learning (Muñoz-Muñoz, Goldenberg, & Krivoruchko, 2023) led a project in 2022 to develop a shared vision of how to approach complex disagreements in California's literacy policies and implementation practices. Literacy practitioners, researchers, advocates, and others from the reading, literacy, and advocacy communities were part of this project that aimed to find areas of convergence; establish productive working relationships between the project members; and discuss specific promising areas of consensus, so that each student in California has "adequate and equitable opportunities for success in school and beyond" (p. 3). Two of the three thematic areas tackled by this project are of interest to the ways emergent multilingual learners learn.

Literacy and multilingual learner (ML) and English learner (EL) (Muñoz-Muñoz et al., pp. 6–7):

1. To the extent feasible, ML and EL students should be in programs that utilize and build competence across at least two languages (English and the home language), honoring, cultivating, and sustaining language competencies in at least two languages.
2. Literacy instruction should be guided by relevant research on ML and EL students, vary by learner profile as needed, and be differentiated for learners with diverse strengths and needs, including different language proficiency levels.
3. For ML and EL students, English oral language should be developed simultaneously with literacy. In addition, all EL students should be provided integrated and designated English language development aligned with the CA ELA/ELD standards[2].
4. Monolingual English-speaking students should have the opportunity to be in multilingual programs to build competence in English and another language.

Foundational Skills (Muñoz-Muñoz et al., pp. 10–11):

1. The definition of foundational skills—print concepts, phonological awareness, phonics, word recognition, and fluency—is an important part of the comprehensive literacy program.

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[2] The standards to which the English language development is aligned is not limited to just California standards. This project happened to take place in California so naturally the participants wanted their standards to be met.

2. Foundational skills should be directly connected to additional elements in instruction, such as oral language development, cross-linguistic connections, morphology, and considerations for bidialectal students[3].

3. Foundational skills should be implemented in a way that is connected to the overarching literacy plan leading to skilled proficient readers who make meaning of complex text.

4. Foundational skills should be taught explicitly and systematically and based on students' strengths and needs.

Research Supporting Asset-Based Pedagogy

Asset-based pedagogy views students' culture, language, and history as a strength. Too often student differences around culture, language, and history are viewed as deficiencies. López (2017) suggests that teacher expectancies about students can influence students' outcomes. This circumstance is often thought of as a self-fulfilling prophecy, defined by Merton (1948) as "a *false* definition of the situation evoking a new behavior which makes the originally false conception come *true*" (p. 195). The false definition does not have to be a deficiency. It could be a desired outcome such as succeeding and exceling.

López (2017) conducted a study based on extant literature to investigate how teacher beliefs inform their expectations and shape students' achievement identities. Achievement identities include self-beliefs such as self-efficacy (Bandura, 1986), self-concept (Marsh & Shavelson, 1985) and expectancy value (Eccles et al., 1983). There is evidence that suggests teachers' beliefs and behaviors shape students' academic self-concepts (López, 2017).

The López (2017) study included six schools with a large population of students (n = 568) that identify as Latino. Thirty-six teachers participated in the study. The conceptual framework used in the study included the concepts of "how teacher beliefs inform their expectations (*teacher expectancy*) and behaviors (*teacher effectiveness*), and how these in turn shape students' achievement identities" (p. 194). For this study, the framework also incorporated critical awareness, asset-based pedagogy, and students' ethnic identities.

Teacher expectancy is defined as "inferences (based on prior experiences or information) about the level of student performance that is likely to occur in the future" (Good & Nichols, 2001, p. 113). Critical awareness was brought into the framework because it was necessary to "consider ways to abate teachers' biases when examining teachers' expectations" (López, 2017, p. 195). Critical awareness "allows us to consider ways to ameliorate the many ways teachers' expectations can otherwise be confounded with students' cultural background" (López, 2017, p. 195).

Teacher effectiveness "detailed teacher behaviors such as how they provide and elicit information, the pacing of instruction, along with numerous other behaviors, and how these behaviors are associated with student achievement" (López, 2017, p. 195). López (2011) provided evidence that general quality

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[3] Bidialectal refers to students who can communicate in both standard English and another dialect of English.

teaching behaviors are insufficient to meet the needs of Latino students. Therefore, three components of asset-based pedagogy were added to the framework. These included:

- Cultural knowledge "encompasses teachers' knowledge about how to access and validate students' prior knowledge in genuine ways that consider students' culture as assets" (López, 2017, p. 197).
- Cultural content integration "is about the provision of culture that is not typically validated in the formal curriculum" (López, 2017, p. 197). This leaves the teacher to determine what is included in the curriculum, how this is done, and where it should be in the curriculum.
- Language is "one of the most powerful transmitters of culture" (López, 2017, p. 197). As a result, language has a central role in the tie between people and a sense of heritage and ultimately the "survival of subordinate cultural populations" (Darder, 2012, p. 36).

This study enhanced the understanding of the factors described and how they interact. Specifically, "teachers' critical awareness moderates their expectancy, resulting in higher achievement; and teachers' critical awareness and expectancy beliefs were found to be directly associated with teachers' behaviors, which were in turn related to students' ethnic and achievement identities" (López, 2017, p. 193). These findings add to the accumulating evidence of the promise of asset-based pedagogy.

Arias (2022) voices a need for "a paradigm shift in thinking about education of students of color" (p. 1). "In today's world of cultural and linguistic diversity, educators can turn away from a deficit perspective with a new view towards the benefits of multilingualism and a positive orientation toward the language and culture students bring to school" (p. 1). Arias identifies three of the well-known asset-based pedagogies: Ladson-Billings' (1995, 2021) conception of culturally relevant pedagogy; the funds of knowledge research by Moll, Amanti, Neff, and Gonzalez (1992); and Paris's (2012) culturally sustaining pedagogy. One addition that could be made is Gay (2000, 2010) for her culturally responsive teaching.

Application of Asset-Based Pedagogy Research in Express!
It is understood that the teachers are incredibly important to the successful usage of asset-based pedagogy and curricula. Another part of the pieces that must work together is the instructional materials available to teachers. *Express!* was created for Grades K–6 English language learners. The program is designed to leverage students' first-language knowledge to facilitate learning English. Highly scaffolded and visually supportive practice and instruction ensure students acquire the essential foundational grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, writing skills, and content knowledge to support grade-level standards.

Express! embraces students' identities and home language as instructional assets by:

- Encouraging students to negotiate meaning using all their linguistic resources as they learn English
- Connecting essential questions to their individual experiences
- Integrating the home language at the word-level (vocabulary)
- Integrating and using cognates at the word-level (vocabulary)
- Providing access to the Multilingual Glossary available in 10 languages
- Providing Home Connection Letters available in 5 languages

Research Supporting Sociolinguistic and Sociocultural Learning Perspectives

The social learning perspectives, including sociolinguistic and sociocultural theories, emphasize the role of social interaction in the development of knowledge and learning (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Anthropologists fostered the understanding that reading and writing could be cultural events and that cultures could influence reading and writing. Regan (2010) wrote about second-language learners and the sociolinguistic competence and its consequences.

> Sociolinguistic competence is the ability to style-shift and use registers[4] appropriately. This ability is an essential element of second-language acquisition, as it is of L1 [first language] acquisition. It permits people to interact in a meaningful way with others, and includes the knowledge of how and when to speak, to whom, how to shift style, register, and so on. Above and beyond knowledge of linguistic structure alone, it enables humans to bond with others, identifying with others, accommodating to their speech, indicating empathy and solidarity. Part of this competence is the acquisition and fine-tuning of the variation patterns that are used by all speakers of their language or languages. (p. 22)

Tracey and Morrow (2017) state "sociolinguistics emphasizes that language is learned as a result of people's social interactions with each other" (p. 162). It makes sense that due to differences in educational and social class there are various patterns of language. It is important to understand there are differences and to ensure the differences are acknowledged and understood.

Similar to sociolinguistics, sociocultural theory is related to the roles of social, cultural, and historical factors in what they call the human experience (Tracey & Morrow, 2017). Davidson (2010) wrote the following about literacy development:

> From the sociocultural perspective, therefore, children's literacy development is understood by exploring the cultural, social, and historical contexts in which the children have grown. One is obliged to consider how the thinking of a particular group of individuals has directed the children's thinking, how the children understand who they are in relation to others, and how they interpret their world. (p. 249)

Davidson (2010) continues by describing how the sociocultural approach works:

> The sociocultural approach attempts to be nonjudgmental and to understand and employ the practices of culturally diverse groups to foster literacy learning. The sociocultural belief is that cognitive reasoning works in conjunction with beliefs, values, and habits of mind that form an individual's identity and that needs to be considered when interventions [any instructional materials] are designed for maximum learning. (p. 251)

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[4] Register refers to a variation of a language that is determined by use—a situation or context. Registers are ways of saying different things and they often reflect social processes. Registers are associated with the characteristics of the language, especially academic language used in tests. (Solano-Flores, 2006, p. 2357)

"Biliteracy is a special form of literacy that must be understood as distinct from that of monolinguals" (Dworin, 2003, p. 173). Some of the differences include participating in different social networks than a monolingual might, there might be a need for a different lens when studying biliteracy, and a bilingual perspective may need to be developed as something independent from a monolingual perspective regardless of language. Bialystok (2001) states "monolingual and bilingual children move in different cognitive worlds, experience different linguistic environments, and are challenged to communicate using different resources, remaining sensitive to different abstract dimensions" (p. 88). According to Bialystok, this is why bilingual children are special and different.

Grosjean (1989) suggests the main point is that using a monolingual view to understand bilinguals and bilingualism or biliteracy is not sufficient and can be misleading. Grosjean identified five features of bilinguals that are relevant to understanding students who are developing bilinguals:

> First, they usually acquire and use their languages for different purposes, in different domains of life, with different people. Second, and as a direct consequence of this first characteristic, bilinguals are rarely equally fluent in all language skills in all their languages. Level of fluency depends in large part on the need and use of a language (and a particular skill). Third, some bilinguals may still be in the process of acquiring a language (or language skill) whereas others have attained a certain level of stability. Fourth, the language repertoire of bilinguals may change over time; as the environment changes and the need for particular language skills also changes, so will their competence in these skills. Finally, bilinguals interact both with monolinguals and with other bilinguals and they have to adapt their language behavior accordingly. (p. 3)

Application of Sociolinguistic and Sociocultural Learning Perspectives Research in Express!

Express! affirms the notion that all modes of language communication, whether interpretive or expressive, should be active and engaging. Students engage in language production to negotiate ideas within the context of the facts and ideas presented in the lesson as well as their personal knowledge and experiences. Interactive oral language activities build opportunities for students to engage in negotiation of meaning and knowledge building.

Express! offers a systematic approach to grammar, language development, and comprehension building, including metacognitive, vocabulary, and comprehension strategy instruction. Text and materials are based upon a sociolinguistic/sociocultural approach to learning language and content simultaneously. With differentiated instruction and formative assessment in every lesson, as well as abundant visual support and integration of first-language knowledge, teachers and students create an asset-based space to optimize students' English language acquisition and comprehension of grade-level complex text.

Research Supporting Instructional Practices

Creating a curriculum is both an art and a science. The instructional practices are incorporated into the design of the curriculum. The goals for the curriculum point to the content, topics, and instructional practices. There is still the element of art that makes the instruction compelling and successful. The following identifies some of the instructional practices in *Express!* The research will be presented first, followed by how the research is implemented in *Express!*

Differentiated Instruction

Puzio, Colby, and Algeo-Nichols (2020) conducted a meta-analysis to determine the effects of Tier I differentiation instruction. The study showed that "differentiated literacy instruction is an effective evidence-based practice at the elementary level. When teachers are supported to differentiate instruction, students have significantly higher literacy achievement scores" (p. 459). While there is no one size fits all, Puzio et al. state

> When done well, a teacher differentiating instruction will focus on clear conceptual goals; consider a wide variety of assessment data; carefully plan lessons and units considering students' needs, preferences, and strengths; and flexibly adapt the curriculum and instruction to suit his or her students. (p. 460)

One type of differentiated instruction is referred to as content differentiation. Puzio et al. describe this type of differentiation as making what students learn different by differentiating the text or topic. Students could read different or more advanced texts. These texts could be read by an individual student or in the context of a group. The texts could also be modified. As an example, Tobin (2005) pre-highlighted important textual passages for students who needed additional support.

The theoretical support for differentiated instruction includes Vygotsky's (1978) zone of proximal development (ZPD) and the related idea of scaffolding (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). According to Puzio et al. (2020), "in typical usage, the ZPD is thought of as each person's range of learning potential—where that learning and potential is socially and culturally shaped" (p. 465). This means "learning and development are supported and stimulated by moderately challenging work, where 'just enough' scaffolding and support are provided for the student to accomplish something that the student could not do alone" (Puzio et al., p. 465).

> Because students are so diverse, different (or flexibly designed) texts, tasks, and tools are required to moderately challenge every student. It is further argued that when students encounter moderately difficult tasks, they are more likely to sustain learning efforts, especially in the face of difficulty. (Puzio et al., 2020, p. 465)

Vocabulary Learning

According to sociocultural theory, social interactions are an important part of the learning process (Vygotsky, 1978). "New word meanings are learned through interactions with peers and teachers and this learning is facilitated by carefully scaffolding instruction to take into account the students' previous knowledge and current level of ability" (Loftus-Rattan & Furey, 2021, p. 319). The Dual Coding Theory (Paivio, 1991) "assumes that cognition occurs in two independent but connected codes: a verbal code for language and a nonverbal code for mental imagery" (Sadoski, 2005, p. 221).

The verbal code contributes by representing and processing language in all its forms, including speech and writing. The nonverbal code contributes by the representation and processing of nonverbal objects, events, and situations through mental imagery. Sadoski (2005) asserts that concepts, which are words serving as verbal labels, represent concrete things, actions, or observable qualities. Concepts that represent abstract things, actions, qualities, etc., are usually acquired with maturity. "Concrete language

enjoys a natural advantage over abstract language because it can be more readily represented and processed in two codes (i.e., dual coding)" (p. 223).

Sadoski concludes by stating

> Meaningful vocabulary has been traditionally acquired through contextual analysis or by direct instruction in definitions. Using verbal contextual analysis alone to learn new vocabulary is a common educational technique that may not be potent enough to produce an advanced vocabulary. Direct instructional techniques that employ imagery, such as self-generated imagery, illustrations, or the keyword method, have proven effective in vocabulary learning. Using both verbal contexts and imagery in the direct learning of definitions may be a highly effective combination. Methods that use visual displays of vocabulary relationships, such as the graphic organizer, tend to produce organized vocabulary learning better than methods that do not. The study of words in their own right, including morphemic analysis and the investigation of interesting word etymologies, should be beneficial as well. (p. 234)

Beck and McKeown (2001) investigated the kinds of text and the kinds of talk that were most beneficial for read-aloud experiences. They developed a technique call "Text Talk" (p. 13). There were multiple areas of this technique: the texts themselves, initial questions, follow-up questions, the pictures in the texts, students' background knowledge, and vocabulary. The vocabulary instruction included the following steps and activities:

> The instructional activities for each word began by bringing to mind the use of the word from the story and explaining its meaning. Then students were involved with using or responding to use of the word. Each activity also included having children repeat the word so they had a phonological representation of what they were learning. (Beck & McKeown, 2001, p. 18)

Beck and McKeown (2007) extended the investigation of the Text Talk vocabulary instruction, called "Rich Instruction" (p. 254). Rich Instruction included "explaining word meanings in student-friendly language, providing multiple examples and multiple contexts, and requiring student to process words deeply by identifying and explaining appropriate and inappropriate uses and situations and creating multiple contexts" (p. 254). In the first of two studies, students in Grades K–1 received the Rich Instruction. The students who received the vocabulary instruction showed significantly more vocabulary learning than the group that received no instruction.

The second study by Beck and McKeown (2007) was carried out in a different school setting. There were two treatment conditions: Rich Instruction for three of the six words and More Rich Instruction for the other three words. All words were treated to Rich Instruction, but three of the words also had additional instruction presented across several days in two additional review cycles. In both grades, the additional review cycles made students learn a statistically significant higher number of words during the study.

McKeown and Beck (2014) examined two approaches to vocabulary instruction: a repetition condition and an interactive condition. The repetition condition, based on Biemiller and Boote (2006), used repeated reading of a storybook and practice with definitions of identified words. The interactive

condition was based on a cognitive process approach (Beck, Perfetti, & McKeown, 1982; Coyne et al., 2010). In addition to reading a story one time, "the cognitive processing-based instruction offers additional contexts for the words and engages students in responding to the contexts and generating their own contexts" (McKeown & Beck, 2014, p. 522).

Results from the McKeown and Beck (2014) study of 131 Grade K students showed that both treatment methods enabled recognition of word meanings when compared to a control group that read only stories. Between the two treatment groups, the cognitive processing-based instruction was superior on the higher-order processing, particularly context integration and production. An implication of this study is that "instruction that prompts active processing allowed children as young as Grade K to have more success in tasks that tapped high-order language processing relative to instruction that offered repeated reading and word meaning practice or story reading only" (McKeown & Beck, 2014, p. 528).

Oakhill, Cain, and Elbro (2015) identify two purposes for teaching vocabulary: helping students learn the meaning of specific words, and helping students learn how to best figure out the meaning of new words through independent reading. When teaching the meanings of specific words, it is helpful to explain key words and link those words to topic knowledge before students read a text. It is also helpful to provide instruction on Tier 2 words (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan, 2005). Repetition of new vocabulary words is also helpful.

Oakhill et al. (2015) identify two ways to help students learn how to best figure out the meanings of new words. These methods are not mutually exclusive. Teaching students how to derive meanings from context is one way to figure out the meanings of new words. Oakhill et al. (2015) state "children can be taught to search the context for clues about the unknown word's category (what sort of thing is it?), for defining characteristic (how can you describe it?), and for likes and opposites (do you know of something similar or the opposite?)" (p. 66).

The other method to help students learn how to best figure out the meanings of new words is to teach word knowledge through morphology. Morphemes are the smallest meaningful units of language (Moats, 2010). Morphology is the study and description of the meaning components of words (Oakhill et al., 2015). Moats (2010) states "knowing morphemes enhances reading, vocabulary, and spelling. Awareness of morphemes is one aspect of a verbally proficient person's word knowledge" (p. 118). Moats (2010) continues by stating "with morphological knowledge, a good reader can guess at a definition for a word first encountered in text" (p. 118) and concludes by stating "the ability to use words well depends on levels of linguistic knowledge that are gained slowly with much exposure to text—knowledge of words' sound structures, grammatical categories, meanings, and spellings" (p. 119).

Moats (2010) states "direct instruction about base words, inflections, and compounds can be started in first grade. Second- and third-grade students should continue to learn base words, prefixes, suffixes, and suffix ending rules" (p. 143). Suggested activities include listening for specific parts of words (e.g., suffixes, prefixes, or base words); combining words to make compound words; removing inflections and simple suffixes from base words; sorting past tense or plural words by the sounds of their endings; and categorizing words by meaning (words for things or words that describe) or by form (compound words or contractions).

Derivational morphology occurs when a new word is derived from an old word by the addition of affixes (Stuart & Stainthorp, 2016). Some affixes are prefixes and must come before the root, and some are suffixes and must come after the root. "Using affixation to support vocabulary extension in school can be very productive and fun and has the benefit of supporting spelling skills as well" (Stuart & Stainthorp, 2016, p. 108).

Oral Language Development

For monolingual students just learning to read, "they already have an extensive oral vocabulary which supports their understanding of what they are reading" (Stuart & Stainthorp, 2016, p. 130). This oral vocabulary smooths the transition from understanding spoken words to understanding words that are written. "Word reading processes, like reading comprehension processes, are built on the pre-existing foundations of oral language" (p. 43). "As time goes on, oral vocabulary continues to develop: more word meanings are stored in the semantic lexicon; more word pronunciations are stored in the phonological lexicon; and links are formed between these new word meanings and their pronunciations" (pp. 43–44).

Bialystok (2001) states "oral language uses include highly skilled functions such as lecturing and more common activities such as casual conversation. . . .The cognitive demands, and hence the degree and nature of language proficiency involved, are strikingly different in these two cases" (p. 15). Similarly, children's conversations, consisting of short utterances, make the lowest demands on cognitive processes. "Conversations in a second language require both more formal knowledge and highly skilled attention to perform at a reasonable level of proficiency" (p. 15).

"The patterns of vocabulary acquisition for the two languages, although idiosyncratic, develop systematically in response to language exposure in the environment" (Bialystok, 2001, p.66). Often the amount and kind of language exposure is not considered in many studies. Pearson, Fernández, Lewedeg, and Oller (1997) showed instead that there is a correlation between language input and language acquisition if the language heard in the environment is related to language acquisition for bilingual children.

Oral language is important and required for speaking, reading, and writing. Huang, Bedore, Ramírez, and Wicha (2022) studied the contributions of Spanish and English oral narrative skills to English reading for 95 dual language learners in Grades 1 and 3. The students' "oral narrative skills in English as well as in their home language Spanish contributed to their English reading outcomes" (p. 653). Additionally, this study shows that the home language skills are beneficial to their English reading development.

Gradual Release of Responsibility

Effective instruction, for most areas of instruction, is based on the gradual release model (Blevins, 2017; Moats, 2010; Pearson & Gallagher, 1983). The gradual release model is based on three steps or stages based on how well students are picking up on what is being taught. First, the teacher provides a brief introduction to the skill (I Do). Next, the teacher models again while the students join in during guided practice. When students demonstrate that they understand, the teacher slowly turns over the responsibility of practice to the students (We Do). Finally, students practice collaboratively with a partner or on their own (You Do).

Webb, Massey, Goggans, and Flajole (2019) take a close look at the history of the gradual release of responsibility. As with many instructional methods, over time the original intent either changes or morphs into something different. Webb et al. call for an expanded view of the gradual release of responsibility where a teacher is able to use a variety of scaffolds based on the needs of the students. One of the conclusions is students' needs should drive how much gradual release is used and when it is used. Additionally, Webb et al. believe challenge is a good thing and necessary for student progress. This implies that teachers should be cautious of doing too much of the work for students.

Cross-Linguistic Transfer Support

Cross-linguistic transfer is based on the idea that learning a primary language (L1) can facilitate the learning of a second language (L2) (Fumero & Tibi, 2020; Kuo, Uchikoshi, Kim, & Yang, 2016). According to Chung, Chen, and Geva (2019), there are several useful frameworks in the research literature on the concept of cross-linguistic transfer: 1) the contrastive or typological hypothesis (Lado, 1957); 2) linguistic interdependence hypothesis (Cummins, 1981, 2012); 3) common underlying cognitive processes theory (Geva & Ryan, 1993); and 4) transfer facilitation model (Koda, 2008). Collectively, these researchers propose an interactive framework to capture the complex linguistic and cognitive processes involved in cross-linguistic transfer.

The contrastive/typological perspective framework involves "comparing and contrasting two or more languages to determine similarities and differences of *specific* components of spoken language … and features of the writing system or orthography" (Geva, Xi, Massey-Garrison, & Mak, 2019, p. 121). This framework attempts to explain challenges that might be encountered by L2 learners. It may be challenging for an L2 learner to differentiate two English phonemes when one of the phonemes does not exist in his/her native language. On the other hand, speakers of Cantonese have an enhanced ability to distinguish vowel sounds in English because their language has not only phonemic distinctions between vowel sounds, but it has tonal differences as well (Cheng, 1991). This framework is "useful for understanding which specific elements in the spoken or written language are easier or harder to acquire in the L2" (Geva et al., 2019, p. 122).

The linguistic interdependence hypothesis emphasized the transfer of higher-level metacognitive strategies. According to Cummins (1981, 2012), skills from a student's home language (L1) can be transferred, enhancing the learning in the L2, as long as the student has had quality instruction in L1 and has sufficient language proficiency in L2. Metalinguistic knowledge and metacognitive strategies and skills, such as monitoring comprehension, accessing and using prior knowledge, noticing the author's point of view, using knowledge of text genre conventions, and inferencing, can be transferred across languages, even languages that have very different writing systems or do not share cognates (Abu-Rabia, Shakkour, & Siegel, 2013; Li, McBride-Chang, Wong, & Shu, 2012; Mora, 2016).

The common underlying cognitive processes theory (Geva & Ryan, 1993) proposes that metacognitive strategies as well as shared cognitive processes, such as working memory, phonological awareness, rapid automatized naming, and executive functioning, underlie performance in the L1 and L2 and explain observed associations between similar L1-L2 tasks. "The common underlying cognitive processes framework states that individual differences in reading skills in L1 and L2 can be predicted by a common set of underlying cognitive constructs" (Chung et al., 2019, p. 150).

The transfer facilitation model proposed by Koda (2008) explains how metalinguistic skills, such as phonemic awareness, morphological awareness, and orthographic processing, that develop in one language contribute to the development of reading skills in a second language, in this case, English. The transfer of well-established L1 competencies is automatically activated by L2 input. For transfer to occur, the competencies to be transferred must be well rehearsed to the point of automaticity in L1 and will continuously mature through processing experience with L2 input.

The current conceptualization of transfer theory and research underscores the way the concept of transfer has evolved. The frameworks are useful for identifying factors that affect transfer and the extent to which these factors interact to enhance learning in cross-linguistic contexts (Chung et al., 2019). The review of the literature in Chung et al. (2019) "provides overwhelming evidence that transfer is a complex process that involves units of analyses varying in complexity and that is determined jointly by multiple factors" (p. 158), making the concept of transfer central to biliteracy reading development.

Reading and Writing

Herbert, Massey-Garrison, and Geva (2020) remind us that "literacy skills are critical factors for success at school for all students, regardless of language status" (p. 36). Research findings support the understanding that young students learning English develop writing skills in essentially the same way as their peers whose first language is English. Fitzgerald and Shanahan (2000) indicate that "reading and writing are connected. . .because they depend on identical or similar knowledge representations, cognitive processes, and contexts and contextual constraints" (p. 40). Graham (2020b) ties this together by stating "writing and writing instruction improve students' reading and vice versa" (p. S35).

There is theoretical support for the claim that reading and writing are connected at the "most intimate level. We write so others will read, and we read what others write" (Graham, 2020a, p. S37). Graham (2020b) suggests the theories that help support the reading and writing connections are:

- Shared Knowledge Theory: Reading and writing share four sources of knowledge (Fitzgerald and Shanahan, 2000).
    - Metacognitive and pragmatic knowledge (Langer, 1986; Shell, Colvin, & Bruning, 1995)
    - Domain knowledge about substance and content or semantics
    - Knowledge about universal text attributes, including graphophonics, syntax, and text format
    - Procedural knowledge and skill to negotiate reading and writing (Langer, 1986)
- Rhetorical Relations Theory: The purpose of both reading and writing is communication, which involves a conversation between the readers and the writers (Rubin, 1984).
- Functional Theory: This theory proposes that writing can be used to facilitate reading and vice versa, and that both reading and writing can be used to enhance learning (Langer & Applebee, 1987; Shanahan, 2016).

According to Graham (2000b) these theories provide compelling rationales for how writing and reading are connected. One does not have to be involved in both reading and writing at the same time. The students will carry the experience learned in one modality to the other.

Graham (2000b) also offers empirical evidence that reading and writing are connected. One study (Graham & Hebert, 2011) looks at the impact of writing and writing instruction on reading. The other study (Graham et al., 2018) examines the impact of reading and reading instruction on writing. The first study found that writing about text improves comprehension. The second study found that instruction designed to increase specific reading knowledge and skills resulted in similar improvements in students' writing.

Application of Instruction Practices in Express!

Express! provides differentiated support based on language acquisition levels during the guided peer interaction. Formative assessments, available in every lesson and aligned to the lesson objectives, are written as "can do" statements. These statements are organized around three criteria: linguistic complexity, vocabulary use, and language control. Teachers will use this information to monitor students' progress with support for three levels of language acquisition: Entering/Emerging, Developing/Expanding, and Bridging/Reaching. Additionally, *Express!* texts are highly scaffolded with visually supportive instruction.

Goals and tasks in *Express!* are aligned with the Science of Reading as appropriate for Multilingual Learners. This includes:

- Embracing a student's bilingualism
- Supporting language development as a foundation for literacy
- Scaffolding and targeting instruction for Multilingual Learners to bolster comprehension, participation, and language development
- Integrating meaning-making and oral language development

A skills matrix for each grade and unit identifies the metacognitive, text comprehension, and vocabulary strategies in each lesson, as well as the language objectives (use, function, and features) for each lesson. Through a highly scaffolded approach with visually supportive instruction, students practice and acquire the essential foundational, grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing skills needed to succeed. Lessons engage students in explicit interpretive (listening, reading, viewing) and expressive (writing, speaking, representing) language modes.

Students are engaged in oral language production over 90% of the time. Every lesson includes:

- Turn and Talk opportunities that appear frequently throughout each lesson
- Guided Peer Interaction that includes Differentiated Language Development Support to scaffold students' oral language production. This accountable talk gives students opportunities to apply the vocabulary and language structures they are learning.
- Think-Speak-Listen question prompts that help students engage in thinking beyond the literal level of the text and understand what is missing or implied in the text. Students build, expand, and support ideas as they discuss topics and develop precise language.
- Vocabulary usage that is presented in context with visual and graphic support. Teaching and learning interactions are systematically developed at the word, sentence, and discourse levels. Vocabulary instruction and word play includes practice and opportunities for students to use and reuse words for effective communication through a seven-step process where words are

introduced, examples are identified (including illustrations), the meaning and definition are discussed, and the vocabulary word or phrase is connected to students' home language.

- Collaborative conversations that are scaffolded to help students build, expand, and support ideas
- Prompts for students to express their understanding about the content and topics, as they reflect upon the language and content knowledge learned
- Lesson formative assessments that are tied to the Learning Objectives

The types of oral language students are requested to learn and use range from informal, spontaneous questions/answers, peer interaction to construct or affirm meaning making based on content, and the very important sustained collaborative conversations with prompts that encourage students to build, expand, support, elaborate, etc., on the topic.

Express! offers a Guided Writing Process lesson at the end of Week 3 of every unit. These lessons are designed to teach students to recognize text type and identify structure and purpose. Each week there is a Language Structure lesson that focuses on an aspect of structure from the writing students will do in week 3. As an example, signal words are taught to support reasons in the unit where students will be writing an opinion essay including reasons to support their opinion.

Summary

Kieffer and Thompson (2018), using National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) data from 2003 to 2015, found that Multilingual Students' scores improved two to three times more than monolingual students' scores in both reading and math in Grades 4 and 8. This information is in line with other information about students who are learning English or another language. *Express!* has been built, using research findings, to provide lessons that enable the teacher to provide sound instruction while providing students with meaningful topics, foundational skills, opportunities to practice their new language, etc., in a safe and inclusive environment. *Express!* provides ways to honor students' home languages and cultures while connecting to the new language, English.

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