

# Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners

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# SECOND EDITION

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WAYNE E. WRIGHT

# Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners

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Research, Theory, Policy, and Practice

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**Caslon Publishing**  
Philadelphia

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Caslon, Inc.  
825 N. 27th St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19130  
caslonpublishing.com

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Wright, Wayne E.

Foundations for teaching English language learners : research, theory, policy, and practice / Wayne E. Wright. — Second edition.

pages cm

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Summary: "Provides information on demographic changes in U. S. schools; language and literacy education; program models; instruction and assessment approaches, methods, and strategies; Common Core and English language proficiency standards and accountability requirements.

Includes a companion website" — Provided by publisher.

ISBN 978-1-934000-15-1 (alk. paper) — ISBN 978-1-934000-16-8 (electronic book : alk. paper)

1. English language—Study and teaching—Foreign speakers. 2. English language—Study and teaching—Technological innovations. 3. English language—Computer-assisted instruction.

4. Web-based instruction. I. Title.

PE1128.A2W75 2015

428.0071—dc23

2015003033

Cover photograph: Tim Fuller

Background graphic from istock photo | © flas100.

Printed in the United States of America.

# Preface

It is an exciting and challenging time in education. English language learners (ELLs) are the fastest growing demographic in U.S. schools, and most teachers and administrators around the country can expect to find ELLs in their classrooms. Federal and state accountability systems include all students, and they require ELLs to take and pass the same standards-based tests as their English proficient peers. Schools are also expected to test these learners' English language proficiency (ELP) each year, and schools are held accountable for ensuring that ELLs make adequate yearly progress in learning English. Unfortunately, many teachers and administrators have not received adequate training in how to effectively address the academic, language, literacy, and learning needs of ELLs. Fortunately, this is changing.

An important premise of this book is that all educators—mainstream elementary and secondary teachers, special education and literacy specialists, administrators, English as a second language (ESL) and bilingual educators—share responsibility for ELL education. These educators need to work together to make important decisions about policies, programs, and practices for ELLs. These decisions should be grounded in a clear understanding of how ELLs learn a second language and how academic content can be taught to maximize learners' comprehension. Decisions should also be made with an understanding of the historical and sociocultural contexts in which schools, teachers, students, and their families are situated.

## Comprehensive, Learner-Centered Approach

*Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners* provides current and future educators with a solid foundation from which to make informed decisions regarding ELLs. The book takes a comprehensive, learner-centered approach to research, theory, policy, and practice. The special features of the book and the Companion Website (described later in detail) facilitate prospective teachers and administrators' learning about how to educate ELLs in their classes, schools, and communities.

*Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners* begins by looking closely at who the students are, emphasizing the diversity encompassed by the *English language learner* designation. Prospective teachers are introduced to the challenges these learners face in school, and they identify what educators need to know and be able to do to address each learner's needs. Concrete examples of students and teachers in classrooms and schools bring the book to life. Samples of student work are included for discussion and analysis to give readers practical experience making the kinds of instructional decisions they will make as teachers.

## Research

The practices, strategies, and techniques discussed throughout this book are firmly grounded in research. Each chapter provides a survey of what we know from scientific research related to the chapter content. These surveys include, for example, the findings of major national reviews of the literature on language and literacy instruction for ELLs. Students are asked to look critically at the research, review the current controversies in the field, and identify gaps to be addressed. Activities at the end of chapters and on the Companion Website provide students with opportunities to make research-based decisions about what constitutes effective policies, programs, and practices. Research activities also invite students to contribute to the research base on ELL education.

## Theory

*Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners* synthesizes theories of second language acquisition, language learning and teaching, literacy development, bilingualism, and sociocultural perspectives. Language and literacy development for academic purposes are important concerns, and the spectrum of second language and literacy approaches and methods are reviewed. Readers see how the sociocultural context shapes learning and teaching as they analyze how different theories of language and literacy development are reflected in policies, programs, and practice. Readers are encouraged to develop their own approaches to providing effective instruction for ELLs based on the theories and research reviewed and synthesized in the text and in relation to the contexts of their own classrooms, schools, and communities.

## Policy

*Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners* skillfully links macro language and education policy debates to the decision-making power that educators have within their local domains of authority. Chapters analyze the evolution of federal and state language education policy, review the range of program models that we find in schools, outline the essential components of effective programs, and introduce readers to the fundamentals of assessment and accountability. Special features in the book and on the Companion Website encourage readers to review and respond to these policies, and to make decisions about appropriate policies, programs, and accountability systems for ELL students at the local district, school, and community levels.

## Practice

*Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners* makes explicit connections among theory, research, policy, and practice. Chapters on oral language, reading, writing, content-area instruction, primary language support, effective ELL programs, and advocacy first review the research, theories of language and literacy learning, and policy debates surrounding the topic, and then describe a range of research-based practices (i.e., approaches, methods, strategies, and techniques) that teachers can implement. This comprehensive, balanced approach equips prospective teachers with the knowledge and skills they need to provide equal educational opportunities for ELL students.

## New to the Second Edition

Much has changed in research, theory, policy, and practice since the last edition of this book was published. For example, No Child Left Behind is fading into the background as most states have been granted flexibility from many of its requirements. Most districts are now facing the challenge of implementing the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts and mathematics, the Next Generation Science Standards, or their states' college and career readiness standards. New multi-state consortia (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Career [PARCC], Smarter Balanced) have emerged to develop computer-based "next generation" assessments. State ELP systems have changed to correspond to CCSS. Restrictions on bilingual education are starting to be loosened; states are allowing greater flexibility for innovative ELL programs, and nearly half of the states have either approved or pending legislation for the Seal of Biliteracy to be awarded on high school diplomas. Thus, many new sections have been added addressing these developments.

New theories and research have brought a greater focus on sociocultural and bilingual approaches to teaching ELLs, and are advancing the field by challenging some traditional beliefs and assumptions with new understanding of the ways ELLs and other bilinguals use languages in daily interactions in and outside of the classroom. This includes challenging the use of some terminology that reflects earlier views of bilingualism, language acquisition, and language use by introducing new terminology. Readers familiar with the first edition will notice this edition moves away from terms such as *L1 (first language)*, *native language*, *native speakers*, *fluency*, *second language acquisition*, and *code-switching* and toward terms such as *home language*, *proficient speakers*, *proficiency*, *language learning*, and *translanguaging*.

Greater attention is given to vocabulary with new sections in several chapters. Other new sections address issues such as response to intervention (RTI), value-added measurements (VAM), text complexity, digital reading, and digital storytelling. Throughout the text, hundreds of references have been added and updated to reflect the latest research and thinking in the field. New books have been added to the Recommended Reading at the end of each chapter.

A number of structural changes have been made to the new edition that were inspired by comments from professors and students, as well as by the changes that have taken place in the field of ELL education. Readers can find a [detailed list of changes to the second edition](#) on the Companion Website. This list makes it easier for users of the first edition to transition to the second edition.



## Special Features

*Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners* uses special features to structure student learning, teaching, and research. These features will also facilitate course preparation for professors and contribute to the field of ELL education.

## Guiding Questions

Each chapter opens with a series of questions that preview the concepts and practical focus of the chapter. Guiding Questions encourage users to read with a specific purpose in mind and to summarize and synthesize major concepts. These questions also prepare readers to apply what they learn in the chapter to ELL teaching and learning situations.

## Key Terms

Key Terms listed at the beginning of each chapter offer a powerful way to approach the concepts discussed in the chapter. These terms are boldfaced and defined in the text and can be found in the Glossary.

## Figures, Tables, and Boxes

Every chapter is supplemented with photographs, summaries, illustrations, samples of student work, or resources for additional research and practice. This material is presented in figures, tables, and boxes that enhance the chapter content.

## Discussion Questions

The end-of-chapter Discussion Questions provide opportunities for students to reinforce their understanding of the material covered in the chapter, and to reflect on and apply chapter content to their own ELL learning and teaching contexts. These questions can be responded to individually or used to guide group discussions.

The Discussion Questions have been revised and standardized in this edition to provide greater consistency and ease of use. There are now five Discussion Questions in each chapter, including traditional questions, questions based on online videos, and questions based on analyzing an online document such as a lesson plan or policy statement. Discussion Questions may be used in traditional class sessions, hybrid or online classes, or as homework assignments.

## Research Activities

Research Activities offer students the opportunity to conduct short classroom-based, school-based, and online research projects on topics and issues discussed in the chapter. Professors can also ask students to expand any of these activities into larger culminating projects and incorporate them into their learning and teaching portfolios.

The Research Activities for each chapter are short and focused. These activities include an ELL Student Interview or Assessment, an ELL Teacher Interview, an ELL Classroom Observation, and an Online Research Activity. This design ensures that students in all types of learning situations (e.g., traditional classes with field observation components; brief summer courses with limited access to ELL students, teachers, and classes; online or hybrid courses) can easily complete at least one research activity.

## Recommended Reading

The list of Recommended Reading at the end of each chapter includes books and journal articles, and has been updated to reflect recent developments in the field. The readings are annotated with suggestions for the further study of topics presented in the chapter.

## Easy-Access Look-Up Page

Readers can access the online resources indicated in the book by **color text** and the  icon. See p. 349 for directions to the easy-access look-up page for website resources.

## Companion Website

*Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners* includes an extensive Companion Website, which adds considerable value for students and professors. The Companion Website provides a space for professors and students to interact and collaborate beyond the traditional university class.

Students can use the Companion Website to participate in discussions about course topics with classmates and with other student communities around the country. Students are encouraged to share research findings on the site, thereby contributing to the development of a national database for the teaching of ELLs. Professors can give assignments and track students' activities on the site for evaluation purposes. This saves the time of setting up assignments and discussion boards on other course management systems. Users can also access the [look-up page for the website resources](#) indicated in the text from the Companion Website.

The Companion Website is organized into sections aligned with chapters of the book, and each includes resources that enrich student learning and facilitate professors' class preparation. Companion Website users will find the following:

- **Links**, highlighted in the book, to additional readings, professional organizations, useful teaching and learning resources, videos of expert commentary, and examples of instructional practices
- **Downloads** including forms, templates, and review activities that students can fill out and use to enhance learning
- **Discussion Questions** that invite students to share their thoughts, ideas, and experiences relevant to the chapter content; view and analyze related videos and documents; and read and comment on postings from other students
- **Research Activities** that appear at the end of each chapter are enriched on the Companion Website; students can upload and share their findings in multimedia formats through the incorporation of text, images, video, hyperlinks, and uploaded documents.
- **Review Questions** that students can complete online in a selected-response format with results made available to course instructors

## Professors' Resource Room

This feature is for professors only. The Resource Room provides professors with (1) tools for setting up class sections so students can self register; (2) a powerful control panel to quickly locate, assess, and comment on students' discussions, research postings, and activities, (3) PowerPoint presentations for each chapter for the professor's use in class; and (4) a Professor Café where professors can interact with and share resources with other professors.

## Access to the Companion Website

Access to the Companion Website is included with a new copy of *Foundations for Teaching English Language Learners*. Professors and students can go to <http://wright2ed.caslonpublishing.com> and use the access code found with the book to register as a Companion Website user. Those using a second-hand copy may purchase access to the Companion Website with this link.

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost I must acknowledge my former ELL students who taught me about their strengths and unique language, academic, and cultural needs. Working in the Long Beach Unified School District for many years afforded me numerous opportunities to work with and learn from many outstanding administrators and teachers dedicated to providing high-quality instruction for ELL students. There are too many to list here, but you know who you are. Thank you!

This book is also a reflection of much of what I learned during my graduate training with many exceptional faculty. In particular I wish to thank my adviser, mentor, and friend Terrence G. Wiley, whom I had the good fortune of studying and working with in both California and Arizona. One could not ask for a better mentor. Other influential faculty members I've had the privilege of learning from include Alfredo Benavides, David Berliner, Eugene Garcia, Gene Glass, Josué González, Sam Green, Gary Hanson, Kay Hunnicutt, Jeff MacSwan, Michelle Moses, Joseph Ryan, Mary Lee Smith, Marilyn Thomson, Caroline Turner, and L. Dean Webb. I also learned a great deal from my fellow doctoral student, officemate, and friend Gerda de Klerk.

This book was also made possible with the support of several graduate students at the University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA). For the first edition, James Knaack and Mariana Kuhl helped track down resources, did extensive proofreading of early drafts, and provided many useful comments. Hsiao-Ping Wu, Pei-Yu Shih, and Sun-Yun Yang also provided much needed assistance. For the second edition, Elizabeth Hubbs and Octavio Castro provided assistance in tracking down research articles and online resources, as well as checking and fixing broken links. I am deeply grateful for my colleagues at UTSA, Juliet Langman, Peter Sayer, Bertha Perez, and Shannon Sauro, who read selected portions of early drafts of the first edition and provided constructive criticism. My colleagues Francis Hult, Howard Smith, and Patricia Sanchez were also very helpful in answering specific questions that emerged as I was writing. I also wish to thank my graduate students who bring a wealth of language learning and teaching experience to my courses. Many also gave useful feedback on early drafts of these chapters for the first edition. For this second edition, I am most grateful to my UTSA colleagues Becky Huang and Peter Sayer who gave insightful comments on earlier drafts of the revised SOLOM form, and to the graduate students in Dr. Sayer's ESL 5063 in spring 2013 who piloted the revised SOLOM. In addition, I wish to express my deep gratitude to my former department chairs at UTSA, Robert Milk and Belinda Flores, and my former dean, Betty Merchant, who provided a great deal of support for my research, writing, and other academic endeavors during my time at UTSA. This support included a much needed faculty development leave (sabbatical) during the spring 2013 semester, which gave the gift of time, allowing me to focus on the revisions for this new edition.

I began a new position at Purdue University in fall 2014, where I have also been fortunate to have a supportive Department Head, Phillip VanFossen, and Dean, Maryann Santos de Barona. Purdue provided a course release and other support during my first semester that made it possible to focus on the final edits and preparations of this new edition. I wish to thank my new Purdue colleagues in ELL education, Susan Britsch and Patricia Morita-Mulaney, who have introduced me to the unique strengths and challenges of ELL education in the midwest. In addition, thank you to undergraduate honors student Marie Cinatl who provided valuable assistance preparing new and updated materials for the Companion Website.

I owe a great deal of gratitude to my editor, Rebecca Field. Having an editor who is a well-known scholar with intimate knowledge of the field and vast experience working

directly with schools and teachers has been a blessing. Rebecca's enthusiasm for this book, her encouragement and patience, and her helpful feedback throughout the process were of tremendous help. Charles Field has also been a constant source of encouragement and guidance. Debby Smith, with her amazing copy editor's eye for detail, was instrumental in helping me prepare the final drafts of both the first and second editions. I am also grateful to the reviewers who gave constructive criticism on the first edition, which led to the structural changes and revisions in the second edition. In addition, I wish to thank Nancy Lombardi, Lisa Green, and others associated with Caslon who contributed in many unseen ways to the production of this book.

A very special thank you to my friend and avid photographer Star Watanaphol; my former graduate student and bilingual teacher extraordinaire Luzelena Ortiz-Lopez; and to students Catherine, Brennen, Emma, Jeffrey, and Thomas for sharing their time and talents to take and pose for photos included in this second edition. Also a big thank you to my former graduate student and outstanding ESL teacher Tiffany Jenkins and her students for their help making new videos for the SOLOM-R practice.

Finally, I wish to thank my dear wife, Phal Mao Wright, and our three amazing children, Jeffrey Sovan, Michael Sopat, and Catherine Sophaline Wright. Their experiences as students and learners and my interactions as a parent with their schools and teachers have given me new perspectives on education. Their love and patience, their role as unpaid consultants sharing valuable insights, and their willingness to be neglected as I spent many long hours and late nights writing made this book possible.

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