

Integrated Literacy for Experienced Multilinguals

Grades 4–12

Dedication

*Beth: To all the educators who have shared their practice and their students with me,
especially my brilliant daughter, Mari McCarville.*

*Tan: Beth, years from now, generations of students will rest in the
shade under the tree you planted with this book.*

Integrated Literacy for Experienced Multilinguals

Grades 4–12

Tan Huynh
Beth Skelton

CORWIN

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Introduction

A NOTE FROM TAN

I felt lost for years when teaching experienced multilinguals. I entered my classes with only principles of multilingual learner instruction and a list of English language arts standards. I had no idea how to integrate the principles to teach these standards effectively.

In the early years of my career, I recycled the familiar practices my teachers had used (e.g., worksheets, workbooks, textbooks, comprehension questions, book reports). After seeing that these approaches bore no fruit, I explored other methods (e.g., writing workshop, inquiry-based teaching, Socratic Seminar, Harkness Method, sentence imitation). You name it; I tried it! While these methods were more student-centered, they did not effectively meet the needs of my multilingual students, particularly my experienced multilinguals.

Everything changed when I stumbled on *The Writing Revolution* (Hochman & Wexler, 2024). After reading just the first two chapters, I completely restructured my plans for the upcoming school year. The results were immediate. Since implementing *The Writing Revolution* in my classes, I have developed a framework that includes the principles of language acquisition, the integration of all language domains, and the development of all dimensions of academic language. The book you possess is the embodiment of this classroom-tested framework.

If I had knowledge of this framework when I first started teaching all my multilinguals, particularly experienced multilinguals, I would not have been so lost for so many years. While I cannot turn back the hands of time, I can offer this framework to the field with the hope that this seed grows into a forest to shelter and shade generations of teachers and their multilingual learners.

A NOTE FROM BETH

Years ago, I was assigned my first class with experienced multilinguals. I was surprised by their proficiency in English. I had previously only worked with beginning- and advanced-beginning-level students, so this class of multilinguals seemed quite advanced in comparison. During the first week, they comprehended the story I had selected for the first unit, participated in discussions, and wrote simple-sentence answers to comprehension questions.

I was curious about why these students were still in an English language development (ELD) class, so I talked to my colleagues in the core content areas. I quickly learned the difference between the social language my students had already acquired and the academic language expected in their content classes. The content-area teachers showed me work samples from my students and expressed dismay at their disorganized and incomprehensible written work. My colleagues wondered if the students had learning issues since they seemed to understand what was happening in class but struggled to express that knowledge coherently on assessments.

I quickly realized I needed to learn more about teaching students at this intermediate proficiency level, especially explicitly teaching academic, discipline-specific literacy skills. I sought out every resource I could find, attended many workshops, and slowly developed my teaching skills. As I talk to other ELD teachers around the world, they share similar concerns and express a need for a practical approach to teaching experienced multilinguals.

Fortunately for us, Tan has worked diligently over the past several years to develop and refine an intentional, systematic approach to teaching academic writing skills to experienced multilinguals. I have been amazed at his students' growth. Their ability to write complex sentences and paragraphs about grade-level content topics after just a few months of instruction is impressive. I wish I had this book and approach when teaching that first class of students so many years ago!

Book Overview

Part 1: The Integrated Literacy Framework

The first part of this book, Chapters 1–6, describes the needs of experienced multilinguals and each part of the Integrated Literacy Framework. Part 1 provides concrete examples of each part of the framework from various social contexts using one of Tan's units of study about the Japanese internment camps. This first part of the

book provides everything a teacher needs to get started implementing the framework. Part 2 provides four complete units as examples of the Integrated Literacy Framework in action. These units provide additional explicit guidance in building a systematic yearlong curriculum.

Chapter 1: The Instructional Needs of Experienced Multilinguals

The first chapter introduces the special instructional needs of experienced multilinguals, a subgroup of multilingual learners who have been classified as English learners for five years or more. While all teachers are responsible for making their content classes accessible to this subgroup of students, English language development (ELD) and English language arts (ELA) teachers play a crucial role in supporting their academic language growth. The chapter introduces the dilemmas and opportunities these students and their English teachers face.

Chapter 2: The Integrated Literacy Framework

This chapter provides an overview of the Integrated Literacy Framework and aligns its components with the principles of WIDA and SIOP. The alignment is based on designing a thematic unit that meaningfully integrates all language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) to develop all the features of language (context, vocabulary, sentence structures, and organizational patterns).

Chapter 3: Intentionally Starting With Unit Planning

Chapter 3 describes a process for backward planning a summative assessment for a contextualized ELD unit. Tan's examples from the unit on Japanese internment camps, along with the "Try It Out" feature throughout the chapter, guide educators in designing their own summative assessments.

Chapter 4: Lesson Planning for Academic Literacy

This chapter outlines a step-by-step process for designing lessons that develop students' topic-specific knowledge required for the summative assessment (input) and cultivate the language proficiency they need to express their thinking about the content (output) effectively.

Chapter 5: Designing Integrated Vocabulary Instruction

Chapter 5 not only shares which words to teach in a unit and how to teach them, but it also explains how to integrate vocabulary instruction into each lesson so that students meet the summative assessment requirements.

Chapter 6: Integrated Literacy Routines

This chapter establishes the recurring routines necessary for systematic and intentional academic literacy instruction. Additionally, it introduces the recurring engagement models needed to scaffold experienced multilinguals' ability to gradually use a variety of sentences independently.

Part 2: The Units

Part 2 presents four chronological units that span an entire year, each one building on the prior. These 8- to 10-week units are designed to teach specific linguistic concepts systematically using the Integrated Literacy Framework. Within each unit, vocabulary-, sentence-, and organization-level instruction is described in detail. Even though the units are presented chronologically, teachers can enter any one that addresses the needs of their students. Therefore, teachers do not have to read each unit from beginning to end.

The content in these units is just for example, and teachers can replace the texts and topics to match their district's curriculum and teaching context. The linguistic concepts in each unit build on each other. If teachers read a unit and are unfamiliar with the acronyms, linguistic concepts, or teaching strategies, it is best to refer to the preceding unit(s).

Finally, these units are designed so that by the end of the academic year experienced multilinguals should be able to independently:

- Understand a range of academic thinking verbs
- Comprehend academic texts
- Use a range of linguistic concepts at the vocabulary, sentence, and organization level to more clearly express ideas in presentations and writing
- Brainstorm, edit, and revise presentations and writing

While the linguistic concepts shared in the units are intentionally sequenced, teachers can analyze the units and be inspired to:

- Determine their own unit-specific conceptual vocabulary and transdisciplinary thinking verbs
- Sequence the progression of sentence structures for the year
- Identify the cohesive devices that support transitioning between ideas
- Design literacy routines where writing instruction develops reading, listening, and speaking skills
- Create engagement models that cultivate independence

Point of View

There are two points of view in this book. When we are speaking about the experiences of teachers, their students, the field, and the framework, we use the third-person point of view. However, since Tan created the Integrated Literacy Framework, the pronoun *I* will refer to him throughout the book. In this book, Tan walks teachers through a complete year of instructing his middle school experienced multilinguals. Part 2 of the book describes his instruction in four 8- to 10-week-long units.

Meet Jasmine

Jasmine is a fictional experienced multilingual. She is a ninth-grader who was born into a Palestinian family in the United States. She grew up speaking a mix of Arabic and English at home with her parents and older relatives, Arabic with her cousins and in Palestinian establishments in the neighborhood, and English at school. She was classified as an English learner when she entered kindergarten and has not yet scored high enough on the state's English language proficiency test to exit the ELD program in her high school.

Jasmine is highly engaged in school. She participates in many activities, such as soccer, and volunteers for events hosted by the student council. None of her classmates or teachers have difficulty understanding her because she speaks social English fluently. Teachers and friends are often surprised to learn that she is not in their English literature class. While Jasmine does not earn award-winning grades, she embodies the school's spirit with charm. Unfortunately, she cannot charm the state-standardized tests, especially those that assess her English language proficiency.

Meet Mrs. Consuelo

Mrs. Consuelo is a fictional teacher. We used her to represent a teacher who is highly passionate about working with experienced multilinguals and is seeking a systematic approach to meeting their linguistic needs.

Who This Book Is For

Two specific groups of teachers are the primary audience for this book: ELD and ELA teachers. This book serves ELD teachers who have a class dedicated to experienced multilinguals and ELA teachers who have an English literature class comprised of general-education students and multilinguals from a diverse range of English proficiencies.

Features of the Book

The following special features in each chapter of the book are designed to make the concepts and strategies presented more concrete and comprehensible. These features

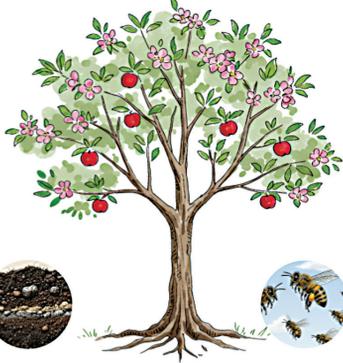
are just some of the ways we intentionally model the numerous teaching strategies for experienced multilinguals, specifically a protocol we affectionately call the *Input–Output Loop*, which will be introduced in Chapter 2. These features invite readers to write reflections and make notes directly in the text to process the book’s content (input) and to try out different aspects of the framework (output). These features are designed to create optimal conditions for implementing the Integrated Literacy Framework with experienced multilinguals in ELD classes.

CHAPTER SKETCHNOTES

The instructional needs of experienced multilinguals



Planning from the summative





Integrating all dimensions of language



Acquiring topic-specific knowledge through a text set



Integrating all language domains

All the visuals at the beginning of each chapter were generated by artificial intelligence and designed to encapsulate the main ideas in each chapter. These images are all related in

some way to the orchard metaphor in the Integrated Literacy Framework, which is a recurring theme throughout the book. Through these annotated visuals, we model for teachers one way to make abstract concepts and processes more accessible to experienced multilinguals.

TABLES

There are many tables that summarize such things as key routines, language concepts, ways to differentiate, and content for the units. They are meant to synthesize and emphasize details.

FIGURE 1.2: COMMON LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY FRAMEWORKS AND THE NAMES OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVELS

FRAMEWORK	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
TESOL	Starting	Emerging	Developing	Expanding	Bridging
WIDA	Entering	Emerging	Developing	Expanding	Bridging
New York	Entering	Emerging	Transitioning	Expanding	Commanding

TAN'S CLASSROOM

Throughout the book, these boxes highlight examples from Tan's actual units and classroom. They contextualize the approaches and strategies offered in each chapter in Part 1 and in each unit in Part 2.



TAN'S CLASSROOM

Input-Output Loop to Process Content

In one unit, I wanted students to learn about the Pearl Harbor attack as the cause for the creation of the Japanese internment camps. For the input, I found a short video about the reason for the attack and the events of that notorious day. I played the video and strategically paused at specific points to segment the content. For the output, I asked students to orally summarize what they learned about each chunk of the video with a classmate. After students processed with partners, I explained the content to make sure everyone understood. I then repeated this process until the end of the video. Because I chunked the 6-minute video into several short segments, rather than waiting until the end of the video to ask students questions, this lesson was effective for the experienced multilinguals in my class.

TRY IT OUT

These boxes pose questions that encourage teachers to try the discussed strategies and apply them to their classes. The "Try It Out" activities are meant to model the Input-Output Loop introduced in Chapter 2. After reading a segment of text, we ask teachers to discuss the information, make connections to their own context, or apply the information to their own classroom.



Try It Out

Write an exit ticket prompt for one of your lessons that contains a thinking verb and the essential content you taught.

REFLECTIONS

The reflection questions encourage teachers and leaders to reflect on their own practice. These questions also model the Input-Output Loop introduced in Chapter 2. After reading a segment of text (receiving input), we suggest educators pause and reflect in speaking or writing as a form of output. These

(Continued)

(Continued)

questions could also be stimuli for department meetings, professional learning communities, or a book study.



Reflection

- Describe the role exit tickets have in your lesson design.
- Describe how you design exit tickets.
- Describe how you scaffold the exit tickets to be comprehensible.
- Describe how you scaffold the response for the exit ticket. ●

SUMMARY

At the end of each chapter, we provide a list of the most pertinent concepts in that chapter for you to review before going onto the next chapter or to review before diving into that specific chapter to get an overview.

Summary

- Experienced multilinguals are students classified as English learners for five or more years.
- Experienced multilinguals often have well-developed social language skills but still need support in acquiring academic English skills.
- Experienced multilinguals need explicit, systematic, and integrated instruction to develop their academic literacy skills.
- The dimensions of academic language consist of context, vocabulary, sentence structures, and organizational patterns related to various academic purposes.
- ELD teachers can focus their time with experienced multilinguals on explicit academic literacy instruction to best support their language growth.

APPENDICES

In the appendix, there are several resources that teachers can reference, download, and print to support their implementation of the framework, including:

- A list of thinking verbs (Appendix A)
- A fully drafted informative essay (Appendix B)
- A blank lesson planning template designed specifically for the framework (Appendix C)
- A full list of all the acronyms and mnemonic devices for sentences and paragraph structures (Appendix D)
- A glossary of terms (Appendix E)

Part 1

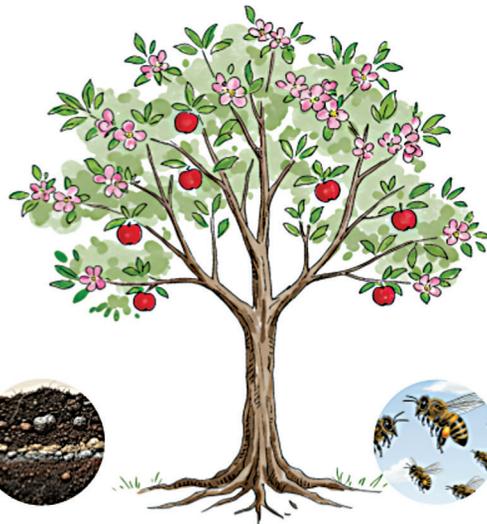
The Integrated Literacy Framework

The Instructional Needs of Experienced Multilinguals

The instructional needs of experienced multilinguals



Planning from the summative



Integrating all dimensions of language

Acquiring topic-specific knowledge through a text set



Integrating all language domains

It's a cold January morning in Jasmine's hometown. Walking into school, she greets her friends, hangs her coat in her locker, and grabs her books for the first period. The bell rings for first period. While most of her friends attend English literature class, she is still enrolled in English language development (ELD) class. Jasmine sighs because today, she has to take the annual English language proficiency test. Since she was classified as an English learner when she entered kindergarten, Jasmine has to take an English language proficiency test every year until she reaches the state's requirements for English proficiency. She has taken the test eight years in a row already, but her testing results show that she has remained at one level below the

requirement for language proficiency for the past three years. It's like there is a testing glass ceiling that she can see past but cannot break through. She thinks, "Maybe this will be the year I pass!"

Jasmine is just one student who makes up the ever-increasing population of multilingual students in schools worldwide. Regardless of school context, from rural to urban schools across the United States to English-medium international schools, students who speak languages other than English are becoming the norm, not the exception (Miguel, 2025). Students identified on an English language proficiency assessment as not yet proficient are known by various terms, including **emergent bilinguals**, **English learners**, and **multilingual learners**. We chose the term *multilingual learners* because it acknowledges students' capability in their heritage language.

Who Are Experienced Multilinguals?

Jasmine is part of a subgroup of multilingual learners who have reached intermediate levels of language proficiency but struggle to achieve the requirements for language proficiency. These multilinguals in Grades 4–12, who have been learning in an English-medium school for five or more years and are still classified as English learners, are sometimes known as *long-term English learners* (Uysal, 2025). Since our first book, *Long-Term Success for Experienced Multilinguals*, was published in 2023, many educators have abandoned the term *long-term English learners* and embraced the more affirming term **experienced multilinguals**.

After reading our book *Long-Term Success for Experienced Multilinguals* (Huynh & Skelton, 2023), one high school teacher wrote the following reflection about how the term *experienced multilinguals* influenced how he sees these students:

Calling them "experienced multilingual learners" helps me appreciate the hard work and success they've achieved in learning different languages. It makes me want to support and celebrate their language skills, knowing that these abilities can enhance their learning and the learning environment for everyone. This perspective shift helps create a more positive and inclusive atmosphere where their multilingualism is seen as a valuable asset.

As shown in Figure 1.1, this group of students falls under the large umbrella of all multilingual learners in English-medium schools whose caregivers speak languages other than English at home.

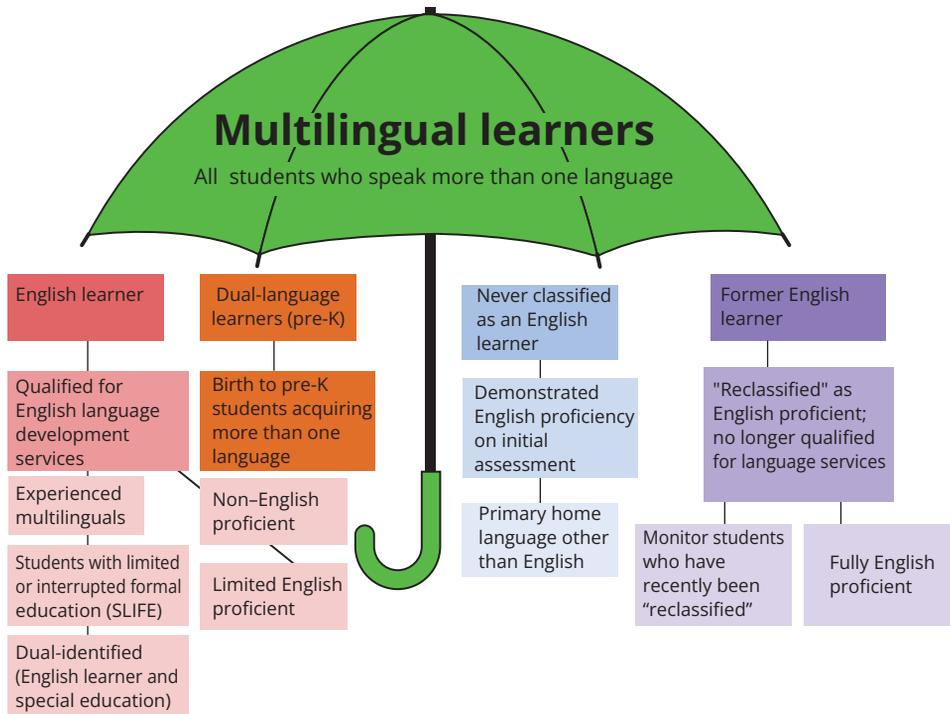
emergent bilingual: A student who speaks a language other than English and whose English language proficiency requires additional support in accessing grade-level academic coursework in English

English learner: Any student who is acquiring English as an academic language and speaks another language

multilingual learner: A student who uses more than one language to navigate their lives

experienced multilingual: A multilingual learner who has reached an "intermediate" level of proficiency after five years of learning in an English-medium school

FIGURE 1.1: WHO ARE MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS?



Source: Huynh & Skelton, 2023.

The percentage of English learners who remain classified for five or more years varies significantly in the United States, from 5% in Mississippi to 65% in Oklahoma. Between 2017 and 2022, the percentage of experienced multilinguals in the majority of states increased (Office of English Language Acquisition, 2024). There are many reasons for this increase, including the global pandemic and the recent influx of students with limited or interrupted formal education, also known as SLIFE.

While these causes of the increase in experienced multilinguals are out of the control of schools and districts, we do have control over the education we provide. If a school or district has high numbers of experienced multilinguals, it may indicate that the programs and instruction are not meeting the unique needs of these students (Umansky & Avelar, 2023). Programs designed for students new to learning in English, focused on social and survival language, are not appropriate for experienced multilinguals. They need instruction specifically designed to develop their academic literacy. This book addresses this growing need.

Programs designed for students new to learning in English, focused on social and survival language, are not appropriate for experienced multilinguals.



Reflection

Discuss how your school describes and serves students like Jasmine, who have been learning in English for several years but have not yet exited the ELD program. ●

What Is the Dilemma for Experienced Multilinguals?

Because they have been learning in English for several years, students like Jasmine know how to navigate the school day. Unlike multilingual learners who have recently arrived, experienced multilinguals can navigate the systems at school and understand classroom norms. They interact with their peers fluently using social language during group work. Experienced multilinguals can chat with their teachers and ask questions about assignments. Their experience with schooling in English is an asset, but it also creates a dilemma for many of these students.

Experienced multilinguals' ability to use social English fluently often masks their frustration with comprehending grade-level content texts and their struggle with writing academic assignments. While they seem capable of engaging with classmates and teachers without additional support, their underdeveloped academic literacy skills are often why they remain classified as English learners.

Experienced multilinguals' ability to use social English fluently often masks their frustration with comprehending grade-level content texts and their struggle with writing academic assignments.

The following sentence exemplifies an academic text Jasmine regularly encounters in her social studies class:

Although Executive Order 9066, a directive signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942 that granted sweeping powers to military commanders to

designate exclusion zones, did not explicitly mention Japanese Americans, it effectively authorized the forced removal and internment of people with Japanese ancestry, resulting in more than 110,000 Japanese American citizens being interned.

While she can decode almost every word, she struggles to understand the text. When she tries to express her understanding, she uses simple sentences that are nowhere near the complexity shown in the example. While even some of Jasmine’s classmates who only speak English might need some support in deconstructing the multiple clauses in this sentence, supporting Jasmine with this type of academic literacy—both reading comprehension and expanding her writing skills—is essential for her acquisition of academic English.

Experienced multilinguals also struggle to meet the reclassification requirements on language assessments such as WIDA ACCESS, ELPA21, or other state or school measures of grade-level academic proficiency. They often struggle to acquire more complex academic language at “intermediate” ranges of language proficiency, especially in reading and writing. Figure 1.2 shows some of the common language proficiency frameworks and the names they give to each level of language proficiency. Different frameworks often have different labels for the same language proficiency level, which can cause confusion about students’ levels. For the purposes of this book, we will occasionally use the term *intermediate*, which includes students in Levels 3, 4, and 5, regardless of the names various frameworks use.

FIGURE 1.2: COMMON LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY FRAMEWORKS AND THE NAMES OF LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY LEVELS

FRAMEWORK	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
TESOL	Starting	Emerging	Developing	Expanding	Bridging
WIDA	Entering	Emerging	Developing	Expanding	Bridging
New York	Entering	Emerging	Transitioning	Expanding	Commanding
ELPA21	Emerging	Emerging	Progressing	Proficient	Proficient
California	Emerging	Emerging	Expanding	Expanding	Bridging
Texas	Beginning	Beginning	Intermediate	Advanced	Advanced High

(Continued)

(Continued)

FRAMEWORK	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4	LEVEL 5
Bell Foundation	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E
Middle Years Programme (MYP)	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5

.....
Source: Adapted from Honigsfeld (2024).

When experienced multilinguals hit the glass ceiling of intermediate proficiency, they may actually have an unidentified special education need. If this is the case, these students should go through a thorough identification process and receive support for both their language development and their special learning needs. They may also have a previously identified learning support need that impacts their language development. Unfortunately, experienced multilinguals are overrepresented in special education compared with other groups of students (Thompson, 2015; Uro & Lai, 2019). The reasons for this overidentification are beyond the scope of this book, but the Integrated Literacy Framework for explicit ELD instruction outlined in this book can support all experienced multilinguals.



Reflection

Describe how your school addresses the dilemmas and academic needs of experienced multilinguals. ●

What Is the Dilemma for ELD Teachers?

During our workshops, ELD teachers around the world often tell us that they need more support to work with experienced multilinguals. They wonder how to move the needle on their students' language development. They have tried a variety of strategies, attended workshops and webinars, searched the internet for resources, and spent their hard-earned money buying activities on Teachers Pay Teachers. However, they still feel like their instruction may not be as effective as it could be. As one ELD

teacher from Maryland, Katherine Marsh, wrote, “I had lots of ideas for helping newcomers, but many of my experienced multilinguals fell through the cracks” (personal communication, October 2024). These ELD teachers have asked for guidance on effectively teaching experienced multilinguals to acquire academic language proficiency. This book is our attempt to contribute some guidance.

ELD teachers in different school contexts work with experienced multilinguals in many ways. Common practices we have seen include providing in-class support during a subject-area class, pulling upper-elementary students from their grade-level class a few times a week, teaching a dedicated ELD block, and teaching a sheltered English language arts (ELA) class. Unfortunately, many schools do not offer dedicated ELD classes for experienced multilinguals. Limited ELD staffing often means that only students new to English and those at beginning levels of language proficiency receive direct services. This “lack of ELD instruction may be one reason for [their] stagnation” at intermediate levels of language proficiency (Saunders et al., 2013). Asking experienced multilinguals to grow their academic language in content-area classes without explicit language instruction is like expecting a plant to grow without nutrients.

Asking experienced multilinguals to grow their academic language in content-area classes without explicit language instruction is like expecting a plant to grow without nutrients.

Despite issues with adequate staffing, we do not recommend placing experienced multilinguals in the same class as students at beginning levels of language proficiency. When grouped by their English proficiency level for this designated ELD class, experienced multilinguals benefit because teachers can better focus on their unique language development needs (Spycher et al., 2020). The Integrated Literacy Framework outlined in this book is designed for ELD teachers and ELA teachers in fourth through twelfth grade who have scheduled, dedicated time to work with experienced multilinguals on a regular basis.

Even when teachers have an ELD block dedicated to teaching experienced multilinguals, they may feel torn between using this precious ELD block to help experienced multilinguals complete assignments and explicitly teaching academic literacy skills. When they choose homework help, they may feel like glorified tutors and sense that students are not systematically learning skills to succeed independently. When they choose academic literacy skills, many feel frustrated with teaching seemingly random listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities disconnected from what the students are learning in their subject-area classes. We have also struggled with these dilemmas in the past.

When ELD teachers commit to teaching academic literacy skills rather than serving as a “homework helper,” they often ask us how to effectively implement a curriculum for this purpose. Whether they have the freedom to create their own language

development curriculum or are required to follow a purchased program, they may find themselves jumping from one activity to the next without a systematic plan for developing students' English skills. Teachers who create their own curriculum can feel overwhelmed with planning their units, and those with a purchased curriculum may feel overwhelmed with all the supplementary materials and myriad activities packed into each chapter. Regardless of the materials or resources these ELD teachers use, everyone seems to crave an integrated framework for teaching experienced multilinguals. This book provides a framework that explicitly develops academic literacy for experienced multilinguals.



Reflection

- Describe how your school addresses the teaching dilemmas ELD teachers face when working with experienced multilinguals.
- Describe any staffing dilemmas ELD teachers face in your school context. ●

What Is the Opportunity for Experienced Multilinguals and ELD Teachers?

The ELD class provides growth opportunities for both teachers and experienced multilinguals. During this class, teachers can dedicate time to making complex, academic language more comprehensible and making writing in an academic register more structured. Students in these dedicated ELD classes have the time to practice reading and deconstructing complex, grade-level texts and communicating in speech and writing using an academic register.

Students develop this academic language best when taught within the context of an identity-relevant and engaging content topic (Echevarría et al., 2022; WIDA, 2020). In the ELD class, teachers have the opportunity to use a content-based unit to focus on academic language development. The engaging and unifying content enables them to integrate instruction in all dimensions of academic language, including:

- Context
- Vocabulary
- Sentence structures
- Organizational patterns

These dimensions of academic language, as described in Figure 1.3, must all be considered and explicitly addressed in ELD units. Part 2 of the book shares four

example units that explicitly teach each dimension of language in a unifying text and context. In Figure 1.3 and the visuals for each chapter, we use the analogy of a tree to describe the dimensions of academic language. The leaves are like the essential vocabulary words in the unit. The leaves are organized on branches like sentences that structure words and phrases into meaningful messages. The branches come together at the trunk, just like the sentences have to be organized into paragraphs and longer texts. The trunk serves as the organizing feature of the tree, just as each text type (argument, explanation, narrative, etc.) has an organizational pattern. Finally, the various purposes of extended texts students read and write are similar to how each tree grows in a specific environment or context, serving different purposes, such as producing fruit, providing shade, enhancing beauty, or providing wood.

FIGURE 1.3: DIMENSIONS OF ACADEMIC LANGUAGE

DIMENSION	DESCRIPTION	CHAPTER
<p>Context</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose for the project, report, essay, etc. (e.g., raising awareness, reflecting, persuading others to take action, listing steps) Students' role in the project 	3
<p>Vocabulary</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unit-specific vocabulary (e.g., <i>internment camp</i>, <i>sentinel towers</i>) Transferable academic terms and phrases necessary for the task but not widely used in social language (e.g., <i>consequences</i>, <i>implications</i>, <i>factors</i>, <i>perspectives</i>) 	5
<p>Sentence Structures</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Simple, compound, and complex sentence structures students need to express ideas related to the topic 	6
<p>Organizational Patterns</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transitional phrases and cohesive devices that link one idea to another in a coherent paragraph or multiparagraph text about the topic Sequencing ideas in a scaled prompt 	6

Sources: Adapted from Dutro & Moran (2002); WIDA (2012); Zwiers (2014).

ELD teachers can create integrated opportunities for students to use these distinct dimensions of academic language to process content while also acquiring academic

literacy. Just like a tree needs the different parts to work together, multilinguals need their teachers to integrate all the aspects of language meaningfully.

Although both the content-area classes and the ELD class can integrate content and language, there is a difference in focus. Content-area teachers often focus on teaching the discrete skills and concepts of their discipline, and language development in these courses is often just a by-product of this discipline-specific instruction, not the focus. In contrast, the ELD class or sheltered ELA class should explicitly and systematically develop academic language *through* a content-based unit.

The explicit instruction in this ELD or ELA class should make this highly complex academic literacy visible to experienced multilinguals. While these students have been exposed to grade-level texts for years, if no one directly taught them transferable academic vocabulary, complex grammar, and genre-specific organizational patterns, these dimensions of academic language may remain a mystery. To reveal academic language to experienced multilinguals, the ELD class can engage experienced multilinguals by integrating all the language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) within a cohesive unit of study.

In this kind of intentionally designed ELD class, students develop their academic literacy by engaging with carefully curated **text sets** of videos, readings, and shared experiences about a topic to build background knowledge, reading, and listening comprehension. Additionally, while discussing their understanding of the topic in small groups, they have opportunities to develop their oral language. When they write about the topic, they intentionally use specific grammatical structures and strategically sequence ideas to express themselves coherently. This approach to systematically planning explicit, integrated academic language instruction in the ELD class is the heart of the Integrated Literacy Framework described in this book.



Reflection

- Describe how your ELD curriculum explicitly teaches each dimension of academic language (context, vocabulary, sentence structures, and organizational patterns).
- To what extent is that instruction integrated into a unifying content-based unit of instruction? ●

text set: A collection of thematically connected texts and text types within a unit

What Is Explicit, Systematic, and Integrated ELD Instruction?

We use the term **explicit instruction** several times in this chapter. In this book, explicit instruction means that teachers:

- Explain new vocabulary, sentence structures, and organizational patterns clearly
- Provide structured opportunities for students to practice the vocabulary, sentence structures, and organizational patterns in context
- Design post-reading prompts that formatively assess their understanding of the content and intentionally provide opportunities to practice using specific linguistic skills (Wexler, 2025a)

This style of direct teaching has been shown to help *all* students achieve in reading, language, writing, and other content areas (Stockard et al., 2018), and experienced multilinguals, specifically, make significant progress in academic English through direct, explicit instruction.

Additionally, this book describes **systematic instruction**. This type of instruction is backward planning from the end of the year so that each unit intentionally develops the required skill to meet the end-of-year goals for academic literacy.

This type of ELD instruction helps experienced multilingual learners develop features of academic language they have not noticed before (Spada & Lightbrown, 2008). Although these students have been exposed to many complex texts during their years in school, that exposure is rarely enough for them to acquire these academic language structures. Even after students can *comprehend* words, phrases, sentences, and organizational patterns in text and speech, they still need structured and guided practice before they can independently *produce* academic language.

By directly explaining and modeling how to use a new word, complex sentence, or transitional phrase in the context of the unit, academic language becomes visible to the students. When students see and practice these language patterns in the ELD class, they learn when and how to use them independently in other content classes. This type of language instruction “that explicitly focuses students’ attention on the targeted language form produces higher levels of second-language learning, at least in the short term than the studies examined, than instruction that does not” (Saunders et al., 2013, p. 19). Explicitly teaching the **dimensions of language** gives experienced multilinguals the tools they need for success.

explicit instruction: Instruction where specific skills are taught one step at a time

systematic instruction: Instruction designed so that the end-of-year language goals are achieved

dimensions of language: The elements of language, including vocabulary, sentence structures, and organizational patterns

Integrated ELD instruction means that these dimensions of academic language are taught using all four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). When integrating instruction, teachers design learning experiences where students activate their listening and reading skills to think about content. Furthermore, integration means students have opportunities to use selected vocabulary words within particular **sentence structures** to express their thinking about content.

After years of experimenting and combining key principles and processes from numerous instructional concepts from different approaches, Tan has developed the Integrated Literacy Framework to explicitly and systematically teach academic English in an ELD block. The following chapters describe how to plan units and teach lessons using this framework. When students like Jasmine have the opportunity to learn in an ELD class specifically designed to develop their academic language, they are more likely to progress in their English proficiency.

Many ELD teachers have asked us how to structure and organize their instruction. Some experienced multilinguals have voiced their frustration at being placed in ELD classes with newcomers or not receiving any additional support for their language development at all. With this Integrated Literacy Framework, we hope to provide an organizational framework that structures academic language instruction that is teacher-friendly yet student-centered.

Summary

- Experienced multilinguals are students classified as English learners for five or more years.
- Experienced multilinguals often have well-developed social language skills but still need support in acquiring academic English skills.
- Experienced multilinguals need explicit, systematic, and integrated instruction to develop their academic literacy skills.
- The dimensions of academic language consist of context, vocabulary, sentence structures, and organizational patterns related to various academic purposes.
- ELD teachers can focus their time with experienced multilinguals on explicit academic literacy instruction to best support their language growth.

integrated ELD instruction: A type of instruction for multilingual learners where all the language domains are used together in a single lesson

sentence structures: How a particular sentence is organized