



# HISPANIC ACHIEVEMENT CONFERENCE 2009

"Crossing the Bridge Together"

## Closing the Achievement Gap for Limited Formal Schooling and Long-Term English Language Learners

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Freeman, Yvonne, and David Freeman. 2002. *Closing the Achievement Gap: How to Reach Limited Formal Schooling and Long-Term English Learners*. Heinemann.

### Types of English learners

Newly arrived with adequate schooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recent arrivals (less than 5 years in U.S. )</li> <li>• adequate schooling in native country</li> <li>• soon catch up academically</li> <li>• may still score low on standardized tests given in English</li> </ul>
Newly arrived with limited formal schooling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recent arrivals ( less than 5 years in U.S. )</li> <li>• interrupted or limited schooling in native country</li> <li>• limited native language literacy</li> <li>• below grade level in math</li> <li>• poor academic achievement</li> </ul>
Long term English learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 or more years in the U.S.</li> <li>• below grade level in reading and writing</li> <li>• mismatch between student perception of achievement and actual grades</li> <li>• some get adequate grades but score low on tests</li> <li>• have had ESL or bilingual instruction, but no consistent program</li> </ul>
Standard English Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English is the native language</li> <li>• Speak a variety of English that differs in structure and form from Standard English</li> <li>• Understand Standard English but do not speak, read, or write it well</li> <li>• Includes some Mexican-Americans, African-Americans and students who speak regional dialects of English</li> </ul>

### Four Keys for School Success for Older English Learners

1. Engage students in challenging, theme-based curriculum to develop academic concepts
2. Draw on students' background - their experiences, cultures, and languages
3. Organize collaborative activities and scaffold instruction to build students' academic English proficiency
4. Create confident students who value school and value themselves as learners

### Reasons to Teach Language through Content

1. Students get both language and content
2. Language is kept in its natural context.
3. Students have reasons to use language for real purposes
4. Students learn the academic vocabulary of the content area

### Connect Content Areas through Thematic Instruction

Themes should provide students with opportunities to investigate big questions

These question should be drawn from state standards

**Why Organize around “Big Question” Themes?**

1. Through themes, teachers can connect curriculum to students’ lives and backgrounds and draw on their language strengths
2. Students know what the topic is even when instruction is in the second language.
3. Because the same topics are studied across content areas, students build academic concepts and vocabulary more easily.
4. Because the curriculum makes sense, second language students are more fully engaged and experience more success.
5. Teachers can differentiate instruction to accommodate differences in language proficiency.

**Conversational Language** Cummins 1989

The ability to comprehend, speak, read, or write when there is rich context and the topic is not cognitively demanding  
 in casual conversation, in games, when there are visuals, realia and other nonlinguistic support, when students already know about the topic in their first language

**Academic Language**

The ability to comprehend, speak, read, or write when the context is reduced and the topic is cognitively demanding  
 reading textbooks, novels without photos or pictures, writing long compositions  
 understanding a long presentation without visuals, learning new concepts

**Time to Develop**

Conversational Language - Students need about two years in order to be able to understand, talk, read and write in context-rich, cognitively undemanding situations  
 Academic Language - Students need 4 to 9 years to use the new language in order to learn and to read, and write in the academic content areas that are context reduced and cognitively demanding

**Language Proficiency**

	conversational language		academic language	
	English	L 1	English	L 1
Newly-arrived with adequate schooling	(X)	X		X
Newly-arrived with limited formal schooling	–	X	–	–
Long-term English learners	X	X	–	–