CHAPTER 2

Contextualizing Literacy Development for the CLD Student in the Grade-Level Classroom

CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- How are the multiple dimensions of the CLD student biography addressed within literacy lesson planning and delivery?
- How can teachers access CLD students' sociocultural needs to support literacy development?
- What cross-language transfer occurs between a CLD student's native language and English to support literacy development?
- How is the academic knowledge of CLD students built on during literacy instruction?
- How can CLD students' existing cognitive assets be built on to promote literacy development?

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The CLD Student Biography
- The Sociocultural Dimension
- The Linguistic Dimension
- The Academic Dimension
- The Cognitive Dimension

When describing her approach to literacy instruction, one elementary teacher explained as follows:

When I first started teaching, I approached literacy instruction in a very systematic and structured way, as prescribed by the district-mandated curriculum. However, as the biographies of my CLD students became increasingly diverse, I found that this structured approach no longer worked. So I began to pull from a variety of resources and instructional methods that complemented and enhanced my mandated curriculum so that I could better meet the needs of my CLD student populations.

As demonstrated by this quote, effective educators of culturally and linguistically diverse students not only base their literacy instruction on scientifically based research methods but they also adapt existing curricula to address the multiple dimensions of the CLD student biography. This chapter explores in depth the sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive dimensions of the CLD student biography. Each dimension helps to inform educators about the diverse assets, as well as the differential learning needs, that CLD students bring to the literacy process.

The CLD Student Biography

The CLD student biography is based on the following four dimensions: sociocultural, linguistic, cognitive, and academic. Research by Thomas and Collier (1995) found that these four interdependent and complex dimensions form the foundation for understanding CLD students' linguistic and academic growth. These four dimensions, known as the prism
model are depicted in Figure 2.1 (Goffee, 1987; Thomas & Collier, 1997). Evolving from the work of Thomas and Collier, Herrera (2010) defines the CLD student biography as a "concept that accounts for the challenges and processes associated with each of the four dimensions" (p. 22). To better understand the implications of the CLD student's biography on classroom practice, consider the following example: the CLD student's biography as classroom practice, consider the following example.

Culturally and linguistically diverse students bring multiple knowledge reserves to the classroom (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 1992). Thus, the more teachers know about these existing knowledge bases, the more accurately they can structure literacy lessons to reflect students' needs. The following conversation between two teachers, Mrs. Ramirez and Mrs. Dye, illustrates how information gathered about a fifth-grade CLD student, Yamin, can support literacy instruction in the classroom.

Mrs. Ramirez: Hello, Mrs. Dye. I wanted to see how things were going with Yamin. It has been a week since he moved from my ESL pullout class into your classroom for literacy instruction. Do you have any questions?

Mrs. Dye: Thanks for coming to see me. As a matter of fact, I do have some questions. I've noticed Yamin is having difficulty with the story we are reading this week: The Wall, by Eve Bunting.

Mrs. Ramirez: I love that story! It's a really powerful example of the impact of war. It is so sad that the little boy never got to meet his grandfather, who died while fighting in the war. But I love the fact that the father could take his son to the Vietnam Memorial, where he could see his grandfather's name inscribed on the memorial with the names of all the other soldiers who died fighting.

Mrs. Dye: I agree. The story really has grabbed the interest of the class, and I thought Yamin would connect with it as well. But he really doesn't seem engaged when we read the story.

Mrs. Ramirez: Actually, I think the content may be a little too real for Yamin. When he first enrolled in school, I did a home visit and talked to his parents. They shared with me that the whole family had recently moved from Iraq to escape the war. They talked about losing their oldest son in the war and how they wanted to give Yamin a chance at a better life. They have only been in the United States for five months.

Mrs. Dye: Wow! I didn't know that. I wonder if Yamin is having a hard time keeping up with English in school. He's an English is a little weak, but overall, it's pretty good, so I assume he had been here longer than that.

Mrs. Ramirez: Yes, his grasp of conversational English is deceptive, making him appear to know more English than he does.

This conversation illustrates the central role the CLD student's biography plays in instruction, as well as some key considerations teachers should explore as they meet the literacy needs of CLD students. These considerations go beyond...

FIGURE 2.1 The Prism Model

LINGUISTIC

Communication L1 and L2
Expression L1 and L2

SOCIOCULTURAL

Love
Laughter
Life

ACADEMIC

Access
Engagement
Hope

Questions to Consider

SOCIOCULTURAL DIMENSION:

Love, Laughter, Life

• How has the student been socialized to literacy based on culture/family background?
• What type of resources and literacy experiences has the student had within the home?
• How is reading perceived defined, and how does it fit the teacher/school definition?

LINGUISTIC DIMENSION:

Comprehension L1 and L2, Communication L1 and L2, Expression L1 and L2

• How is the native language used as a resource to support the CLD student's literacy development in English?
• What stage of language acquisition is the CLD student in, and how is literacy instruction accommodating to meet the CLD student's language level?

ACADEMIC DIMENSION:

Access, Engagement, Hope

• What literacy skills does the student bring to the classroom based on his or her prior academic experiences?
• In what ways is the CLD student immersed in academically challenging tasks to promote grade-level literacy acquisition?

COGNITIVE DIMENSION:

Know, Think, Apply

• How is instruction designed to build on existing cognitive and language assets to promote literacy development?
• What learning strategies are explicitly taught to promote the cognitive academic language skills CLD students need to understand grade-level text and academic concepts?
THE SOCIOCULTURAL DIMENSION

Central to the culturally and linguistically diverse student biography is the sociocultural dimension, which consists of the social and cultural factors that influence student learning. As depicted in Figure 2.1, this dimension is the heart of the process model. The sociocultural dimension also represents the heart of CLD students—what they lose, what makes them laugh, and what shapes and defines their lives to make them who they are as individuals. According to Herrera (2010), the sociocultural dimension also includes “the adjustment and development processes that students go through as they learn to respond to the unique, idiosyncratic ways of being and behaving both in and out of school” (p. 22). It is difficult to overstate the importance of sociocultural influences in shaping CLD students’ lives, particularly when it comes to literacy instruction.

The following list identifies the multiple sociocultural influences on CLD students’ literacy development, as noted by Raphael and colleagues (2001):

- Historical background of the family: the values, beliefs, and goals within the family, as influenced by cultural traditions and experiences
- Literacy resources: types and uses of literacy resources, as well as the time spent on literacy activities
- Perceptions: the children’s perceptions of both teachers and the nature and importance of reading

To promote deeper understanding of these sociocultural influences on literacy development, we will explore each in greater detail.

Historical Background of the Family

The historical background of the CLD student’s family reflects the values, beliefs, and goals of the family. The more insight educators have into the historical background to enhance their instructional practice.

Consider, for example, the historical differences between immigrant and native-born CLD students. Those students who are recent immigrants to the United States may have more economic gaps by their families to excel academically to they can achieve the “American dream.” As such, newly or recently arrived students may struggle to balance the expectations of the family with those or adjusting to a new culture, while maintaining the values, beliefs, and goals of the family can be very difficult for CLD students. For instance, parents of newly arrived immigrants often want their children to acquire the English language as quickly as possible; therefore, they do not want their children to receive special services, such as English as a second language (ESL) instruction. Research has shown, however, that such a complete and abrupt loss of the native language may actually hinder rather than promote the acquisition of English (Cummins, 2000; Encarnación, 2004; Krashen, 2002).

The process of acculturation also occurs for culturally and linguistically diverse students who were born in the United States. However, CLD students who are second generation (i.e., their parents were also born in the United States) or even third generation (i.e., their grandparents were born in the United States) may not experience the same demands as those of recently or newly arrived CLD students. For example, second- and third-generation CLD students may have become so acculturated to life in the United States that they have actually begun to lose their native language. This is particularly true among third-generation students, who may still speak the native language at home or with grandparents but who have not been taught to read or write in their native language. Educators who are aware of such family dynamics are better equipped to understand the sociocultural demands that might be placed on students and the implications of these demands.

Understanding the family’s goals, beliefs, and values provides educators with valuable insights into the behaviors and learning patterns of their CLD students. Educators who want to learn more about the historical backgrounds of these students can engage in numerous formal and informal activities. For example, teachers might do a class activity such as creating family brochures. Family brochures can be structured in multiple ways, but the key is to request information that will inform educators about the family dynamics and cultural backgrounds of CLD students in the classroom. Strategies in Practice 2.1 provides a glimpse of the valuable information one teacher gained by doing family brochures with his CLD students.

Teachers can also conduct home visits to learn about their students’ historical backgrounds and see nontraditional forms of literacy development and evidence of student skills that might not otherwise have been observed in the traditional classroom setting (Herrera, 2010). Home visits can provide valuable insights as to the roles of extended family members in supporting a child’s education, family perceptions of involvement in school, and a family’s overall goals for the children. For example, if a teacher learns during a home visit that the student has no access to books or other texts in the home, he or she will have a new understanding about the challenges this student might face in practicing reading skills outside the classroom. To address the needs of students who do not have access to books or other
text in the home, the teacher can send home books that students can easily read and share with siblings or parents. If the parents are literate in their native language, sending books home in the native language is a wonderful way to actively involve parents in the student's literacy practice while simultaneously validating the native language and culture. Research has shown that modeling of literacy skills in the native language supports the development of foundational literacy skills that can then be readily transferred to English (Collier & Thomas, 1992; Cummins, 2000; Escamilla, 1987; Rodriguez, 1988).

Another more informal way to learn about families is to conduct student interviews, in which educators talk to students about their family and home lives. This information can also be gathered through informal discussions with parents before and after school or even during parent/teacher conferences. The more teachers can learn about CLD students’ sociocultural backgrounds, the better prepared they will be to address each student’s individual needs in and out of the classroom.

**Literacy Resources**

Culturally and linguistically diverse students approach literacy learning from the basis of their own exposure to and experiences with text, and often, these experiences are less formal than those traditionally valued in U.S. classrooms. For instance, consider that many monolingual English-speaking children are raised with extensive exposure to text. Whether in the form of books read by parents at bedtime or the simple availability of books, magazines, and other reading materials in the home, literacy experiences and ongoing text exposure are natural elements of these students’ daily lives. By contrast, CLD students may not have such access to text in the home, let alone have formal interactions and repeated reading practice with a parent. Consequently, their experiential knowledge related to formal literacy instruction may not be as extensive as that of their peers. However, this lack of formality should not be interpreted as a lack of relevant knowledge or ability. Rather, the important point to consider is that different cultural groups encounter and develop literacy in different ways.

A study by Heath (1983) emphasizes varying modes of literacy development among diverse groups. Heath explored the literacy orientations of three culturally distinct sets of families and found marked differences in how they reinforced literacy development. For example, children from an African American mill community were socialized in the oral tradition, in which storytelling is the main form of literacy development. Caucasian children from the same mill community were expected to learn to read by memorizing the alphabet and doing drill and practice worksheets. The third group, however, came from upper-class Caucasian families, in which the children engaged with authentic text, created written and oral
narratives, and encountered written materials and questioning routines geared toward higher-level thinking skills.

When a CLD student enters school with limited experiential knowledge of text or formal literacy practices, this lack of experience can have a profound impact on the rate and speed at which he or she learns to read. Therefore, those teachers who have the greatest success helping CLD students become literate in English do so by tapping into students’ nontraditional literacy experiences. When literacy instruction builds on the background knowledge and experiences of CLD students, these students are able to make valuable connections to text as they construct meaning (Mazzaro, 2004).

One way teachers can gather information about these experiences is to create student literacy profiles, which paint a vivid picture of the experiential knowledge an individual CLD student brings to the reading process. A literacy profile can be created for each aspect of the CLD student’s biography: sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive. Figure 2.2 presents a sampling of questions teachers can ask when developing a sociocultural literacy profile.

Perceptions

When a CLD student enters school, he or she brings along the cultural identity of the home. Oftentimes, this home identity conflicts with the school culture, leading to discontinuity. The term cultural discontinuity describes the internal conflict a CLD student may experience when his or her cultural background or social values conflict with those taught in school or demonstrated by the teacher. This type of conflict can have a negative impact on how a CLD student approaches and learns about literacy in the classroom. As educators, it is important to recognize when and how cultural discontinuity occurs so it can be addressed proactively.

When CLD students first enter the classroom, they continually assess the environment to determine what perceptions the teacher and other students may have acknowledged or repressed through posters or native language books. Students from culturally and linguistically diverse students also consider whether they are teacher allots the role of native language or even whether the examples of the perceptual filters that CLD students often use when they enter a new classroom. It is essential to consider how such filters influence CLD students students have and the more welcome they feel, the more likely they are to be active members of the class.

![Figure 2.2: Sociocultural Literacy Profile](image)

**FIGURE 2.2 Sociocultural Literacy Profile**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sociocultural Profile</th>
<th>Completed Sociocultural Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name: Sahle</td>
<td>Grade level: 6th Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age: 11 years old</td>
<td>Native language: Amharic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of birth: Ethiopia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of origin: Ethiopia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. What language do you speak most at home? English and Amharic
2. What language did you first learn to read? Amharic
3. What do you read at home (e.g., letters, cookbooks, books in the native language, books in English, magazines, newspapers)? The Bible.
4. Who do you read with at home? I read with no one at home.
5. Do you like to read? What do you like or dislike about reading? I don’t like to read, but do it to get better.
6. If you could choose anything to read about, what would it be and why? I would read about Jesus, it changes my attitude and gives me strength.
7. What kind of reader do you think you are? C—Average reader
   A. A very good reader
   B. A good reader
   C. An average reader
   D. A poor reader
   E. A very poor reader
After they have been accepted within the community of learners, CLD students directly approach the learning process. However, just as they use their preconceived filters to determine their role as learners, when they encounter the most educators expect CLD students to become readers, the most likely they do is to "draw out our CLD students' experiences, knowledge, and problem-solving skills and frame them within the contexts of our academic world" (Kersten, 2012, p. 27). Another way educators can do this is to immediately immerse CLD students in rich and authentic experiences with text. This approach not only helps CLD students see themselves as readers but it also promotes increased English language development, as students are exposed to text in context-embedded and meaningful ways. To better understand how this exposure to text promotes CLD students' English language acquisition, the next section will explore the dynamics associated with the linguistic dimension of the CLD student biography.

THE LINGUISTIC DIMENSION

Language is more than words and more than cognition. The linguistic dimension contributes greatly to CLD students' sense of identity. It is through language that students comprehend the world around them. Language is also the vehicle through which students communicate and express themselves. For the CLD student learning to speak English as a second language, the native language is the medium through which he or she is socialized and through which his or her culture is transmitted. If educators fail to acknowledge the value of the CLD student's native language, they are in fact also devaluing the student's family and sense of self.

Transfer Theory

Placing value on the native languages of students involves more than making teachers to embrace the value the native language has for English language development. Research by Cummins (1981, 2000) showed that CLD students' transfer theory also supports the idea that a second language development, Cummins's (2000) hypothesis proposes that first language proficiency transfers across languages will tend to make stronger progress in acquiring literacy in their second language (p. 173).

Additional research has also shown that the more proficient a CLD student is at reading in the native language, the faster he or she will acquire English, because existing native-language reading skills support second-language reading ability (Collier & Thomas, 1992; Escamilla, 1987; Rodriguez, 1988). Clay (1993) found that the least complicated starting point for literacy learning with CLD students is to use what the student already knows from the native language to boost English language acquisition.

Unfortunately, a common misconception is that use of the native language hinders English language development. Consider the following example (Escamilla, 1998):

Two students finish kindergarten at the end of the school year. The first student, José, knows three colors in Spanish and three other colors in English. His teacher determines that he is limited in both Spanish and English and recommends that he be taught in English only as he enters the first grade. Bill is a monolingual English speaker. He knows five colors in English at the end of kindergarten and is labeled as an average student who has no problems. Who actually knows more, José or Bill?

José actually knows one more color than Bill, but because the teacher does not recognize the importance of knowledge in the native language, José is labeled as knowing less.

Educators who would like to learn about the native language literacy profiles of their CLD students can do a linguistic literacy profile. Figure 2.3 provides a sample of the types of questions an educator might ask in order to learn about a CLD student's native language literacy skills. These questions are only a starting point, from which educators can build to learn more about the linguistic profiles of their CLD students.

STAGES OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND CLD STUDENT LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

Another important aspect of linguistic knowledge can be best understood in terms of the stages CLD students go through when developing second language proficiency and literacy skills. Culturally and linguistically diverse students arrive in the classroom with varying levels of English language proficiency. Although most CLD students are conversationally proficient in English within two years, it takes five to seven years to acquire the academic language needed to perform at grade level with their native English-speaking peers (Collier & Thomas, 1998; Cummins, 1989).

The more a teacher knows about a student's particular stage of second language acquisition, the better able the teacher is to plan literacy lessons that support the student's comprehension and engagement in academic tasks.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Linguistic Profile</th>
<th>Completed Linguistic Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name: Alicia</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age: 9 years old</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade level:</td>
<td>5th Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native language:</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of birth:</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of origin:</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. What is your first language?</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What language do you most often speak at home?</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What other languages do you speak at home and with whom?</td>
<td>I speak Spanish at home with my mother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do you read in your native language? If yes, who taught you how to read and how well do you think you read in your native language?</td>
<td>I like to read in Spanish. I learned how to read in school, but I think my English reading is better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What types of things do you read in your native language (e.g., books, magazines, newspapers, letters from your home country)?</td>
<td>My mother has a book that she kept when I was little. She has me read it to my little brother.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Do you write in your native language? If yes, who taught you how to write and how well do you think you write in your native language?</td>
<td>I learned to write in Spanish when I first went to school. I think I write pretty good in Spanish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Does it help you to read in English when you know words that are written or sound almost the same as words in your native language?</td>
<td>It helps me to read in English when the words are written or sound almost the same as words in my native language cause they sound the same and are spelled almost alike.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2.4 summarizes the literacy development demonstrated by CLD students according to Krashen and Terrell's (1983) five stages of second language acquisition: preproduction, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency. As demonstrated in the figure, there are multiple considerations for instructional practice based on a CLD student's stage of second language acquisition. It is important to note that these stages are not fixed, as students can move in and out of these stages at various rates. The transition from one stage to the next is highly influenced by the CLD student's native language literacy level.

The more proficient the CLD student is in his or her own language, the faster he or she will transition from one stage to the next. Research by Herrera (2010) indicates "the optimal learning environment for CLD students is one that leads to literacy skills in both the student's native language and in English" (p. 33). To better understand how a CLD student's native language literacy supports this transition, educators can consider the academic dimension of the CLD student biography.

**THE ACADEMIC DIMENSION**

The academic dimension reflects the CLD student's prior academic experiences, as well as the curriculum and instruction that he or she is currently experiencing in school. Knowing the types of academic experiences a CLD student has had provides valuable information about the kind of access he or she has had to literacy development. Such insight into students' literacy experiences helps educators make sense of differences they may observe in students' levels of engagement and students' hopes that they can and will acquire the literacy skills they need.

According to Herrera and Murry (2005), also "critical to this dimension is an understanding of the differential academic challenges that CLD students encounter, especially those that relate to academic policy" (p. 45). This section, therefore, will explore each of these elements in greater depth, including their implications for literacy development and instruction.

**Prior Schooling**

The academic dimension takes into consideration the CLD student's prior academic experiences in school. These include both experiences the student has had within the United States and those in his or her native country (if applicable). The following three short case studies exemplify the importance of knowing CLD students' prior academic experiences.

Juan Carlos arrived in the United States as an eighth-grader. He emigrated with his family from Colombia, where he had attended school since he was 3 years old. In Colombia, he was placed in advanced courses and was set to begin coursework that would prepare him for a college degree.
FIGURE 2.4 Continua of English Language Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Preproduction</th>
<th>Early Production</th>
<th>Speech Emergence</th>
<th>Intermediate Fluency</th>
<th>Advanced Fluency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LISTENING:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cannot yet understand simple expressions or statements in English.</td>
<td>Understands previously learned expressions.</td>
<td>Understands sentence-length speech.</td>
<td>Understands academic content.</td>
<td>Understands most of what is heard.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understands new vocabulary in context.</td>
<td>Participates in conversation about simple information.</td>
<td>Understands a simple message.</td>
<td>Understands more complex directions and instructions.</td>
<td>Understands and retells main idea and most details from oral presentations and conversations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPEAKING:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is not yet able to make any statements in English.</td>
<td>Uses isolated words and learned phrases.</td>
<td>Asks and answers simple questions about academic content.</td>
<td>Initiates, sustains, and closes a conversation.</td>
<td>Communicates facts and talks casually about topics of general interest using specific vocabulary.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Uses vocabulary for classroom situations.</td>
<td>Talks about familiar topics.</td>
<td>Effectively participates in classroom discussions.</td>
<td>Participates in age-appropriate academic, technical, and social conversations using English correctly.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expresses basic courtesies.</td>
<td>Responds to simple statements.</td>
<td>Gives reasons for agreeing or disagreeing.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asks very simple questions.</td>
<td>Expresses self in simple situations (e.g., ordering a meal, introducing oneself, asking directions).</td>
<td>Relates a story or event.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Makes statements using learned materials.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Compares and contrasts a variety of topics.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asks and answers questions about basic needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Preproduction</th>
<th>Early Production</th>
<th>Speech Emergence</th>
<th>Intermediate Fluency</th>
<th>Advanced Fluency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>READING:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is not yet able to read any words in English.</td>
<td>Reads common messages, phrases, and/or expressions.</td>
<td>Reads and comprehends main ideas and/or facts from simple materials.</td>
<td>Understands main ideas and details from a variety of sources.</td>
<td>Reads authentic text materials for comprehension.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is not yet able to identify the letters of the Roman alphabet.</td>
<td>Identifies the letters of the Roman alphabet.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is not yet able to decode sounds of written English.</td>
<td>Decodes most sounds of written English.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Preproduction</th>
<th>Early Production</th>
<th>Speech Emergence</th>
<th>Intermediate Fluency</th>
<th>Advanced Fluency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WRITING:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is not yet able to write any words in English.</td>
<td>Copies or transcribes familiar words or phrases.</td>
<td>Creates basic statements and questions.</td>
<td>Writes more complex narratives.</td>
<td>Write summaries.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is not yet able to write the letters of the Roman alphabet.</td>
<td>Writes the letters from memory and/or dictation.</td>
<td>Writes simple letters and messages.</td>
<td>Composes age-appropriate original materials using present, past, and future tenses.</td>
<td>Takes notes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writes simple expressions from memory.</td>
<td>Writes simple narratives.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Compares and contrasts familiar topics.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Writes simple autobiographical information as well as some short phrases and simple lists.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Composes short sentences with guidance.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Uses vivid, specific language in writing.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

specific links are made to the sound system of the native language. To learn more about the academic profiles of CLD students and the academic assets they bring to the classroom, teachers can complete an academic literacy profile (see Figure 2.5).

Academic Policy
Regardless of the level of language proficiency or academic background knowledge that a CLD student brings to the classroom, he or she needs to be immersed in academically challenging tasks that promote grade-level literacy acquisition. Herrera and Mistry (2003) highlight the reason this issue is so important for educators to note:

From the standpoint of curriculum and instruction, one of the most contemporary, harmful, and emergent academic challenges for CLD students is the trend toward increasingly reductionistic curriculum driven by a strict focus on high-stakes assessments at the national, state, or local levels. Extra-educational and national reform agendas, such as the No Child Left Behind initiative, drive efforts to increase accountability, as measured by high-stakes assessments, often at the expense of low socioeconomic status (SES) and CLD students. (p. 47)

When under pressure to demonstrate student achievement, teachers of CLD students may feel excessive pressure to "reach the test," which severely restricts CLD students' access to and interaction with text. In fact, research by McNiel (2000) found that in the area of reading, a reductionistic approach to literacy development actually limited students' ability to "read for meaning outside the test setting" (p. 3). As this example illustrates, a reductionistic approach to instruction actually inhibits CLD students' academic success. To understand the power of engaging CLD students in complex and cognitively challenging grade-level tasks, it is important to examine the cognitive assets that CLD students bring and to consider how educators can identify and build on these assets to support ongoing academic success.

THE COGNITIVE DIMENSION
The cognitive dimension is perhaps the most complex because it represents how students know, think about, and apply information. As such, it is closely related to the other dimensions of the CLD student biography. For example, the cognitive dimension explores the relationship between known language proficiency and applied literacy skills. Similarly, the cognitive dimension examines the cognitive and sociocultural connections that exist in the ways students think about what they are reading. There are numerous additional relationships between the cognitive and academic dimensions as well. However, the purpose of this text, only the interrelationships just identified will be discussed.

Cognition, Language, and Literacy Development
When it comes to understanding cognition, language, and literacy development among CLD students, it is important to first understand how these three elements are
FIGURE 2.5 Academic Literacy Profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Profile</th>
<th>Completed Academic Profile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Miguel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>7 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade level</td>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native language</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Place of birth</td>
<td>Peru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of origin</td>
<td>Peru</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Which schools have you attended?
   - I went to a different school for kindergarten and first grade.

2. Did you participate in any type of ESL classes or get additional help in the classroom to learn English?
   - Some teachers worked with small groups of us kids who didn’t speak English very well.

3. What do you find hardest about reading in English?
   - I have trouble with words that sound the same, like wear and where.

4. What have your teachers done that really helped you to understand books in English?
   - In kindergarten, we had centers where we got to look at books after the teacher read them to us.

5. What helps you understand new words?
   - I make up my own sentences with the new word that I understand, and then I remember that sentence.

6. What do you do when you get to a word you don’t know in English?
   - I sound out the word and read the sentence without the word in it to figure out what the word means.

7. What strategies do you use when reading to help you understand?
   - I try to picture it in my mind. Then I read it again and try to remember the sentence I had a question about to help me understand.

---

interrelated within the context of daily literacy instruction. As stated in Chapter 1, educators may approach literacy instruction with CLD students by focusing on identifying individual words and the sounds within them. This phonics-based approach to literacy instruction is founded primarily on the belief that CLD students in the early stages of acquiring English do not have the language skills they need to read or, more importantly, to comprehend text in English. However, CLD students are generally more successful at acquiring English vocabulary and content knowledge when learning is focused on identifying word meanings in context, rather than on isolated word parts that have no contextual ties (August & Hakuta, 1997; Herrera & Marry, 2005).

Educators of CLD students who identify and build on existing cognitive and language assets do much to promote literacy development. Such efforts might include teaching learning strategies that promote the cognitive academic language skills CLD students need to understand grade-level text and academic concepts. Specific strategies for how educators can do this are explored in greater depth in subsequent chapters of this text. Educators also can encourage parents to maintain and foster CLD students’ native language skills to promote cognitive development, which is utilized in English literacy development processes. Students who do not have this ongoing support in the native language may experience more challenges in processing cognitively challenging tasks, as they will have to learn and apply concepts in a second language. Teachers can actively seek ways to make meaningful connections in their daily instructional practice to students’ current knowledge and cognitive skills. Perhaps one of the most powerful ways educators do this is by incorporating culturally relevant texts into their existing curriculum.

Culturally Relevant Texts: Making the Sociocultural Connection

A key way to build cognitive knowledge is to provide CLD students with culturally relevant texts. Traditionally, the materials used by teachers in grade-level classrooms are selected from a predetermined curriculum. For example, teachers who use basal or anthology literature instruction teach the prepackaged stories from these texts. Historically, these curriculum materials have targeted a monolingual English-speaking student audience and therefore have reflected the experiences and backgrounds of this population. Consequently, CLD students often experience a cultural disconnect from many of the stories within such curricula. However, in the last decade, publishing companies have become more attuned to the need for stories that reflect the diverse backgrounds of CLD students and have worked to incorporate more multicultural stories into their series. Educators who want to assess the cultural relevance of the stories they teach can use the “Assessing the Cultural Relevance of Texts” checklist provided in Figure 2.6.

Research has found that reading culturally familiar texts enhances CLD students’ literacy achievement (Abu-Rabia, 1995; Kroep, 2000; Schon, Hopkins, & Vojir, 1984). When CLD students can relate to the material presented, they are
has had in daily life. Students who have had more access to literacy development frequently have more strategies and skills on which to build. To support the academic success of all CLD students, educators can immerse students in academically challenging tasks that promote engagement, hope, and grade-level literacy acquisition.

The final dimension of the CLD student biography is the cognitive dimension. Building on existing cognitive and language assets by explicitly teaching learning strategies promotes CLD students’ literacy development. Using culturally relevant texts is another way to enhance students’ cognitive connections and knowledge. Given the diversity of the CLD student population, teachers who understand and access the sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive assets of their CLD students’ biographies are better equipped to provide instruction that meets these students’ differential learning needs.

**KEY THEORIES and CONCEPTS**

- academic dimension
- CLD student biography
- cognitive dimension
- cultural discontinuity
- home visit

**PROFESSIONAL CONVERSATIONS on PRACTICE**

1. The four dimensions of the CLD student biography are sociocultural, linguistic, academic, and cognitive. Discuss the ways you currently gather information about your CLD students within each of these dimensions.
2. The CLD student biography is presented as a prerequisite to effective literacy instruction for CLD students. Identify the components of the CLD student biography that you believe are central to supporting literacy instruction with these students.
3. Share two strategies you might use with your CLD students to learn more about their biographies, based on what you learned in this chapter. Be sure to articulate why you selected these strategies and how you think they will support your future literacy instruction.

**QUESTIONS for REVIEW and REFLECTION**

1. Why is it helpful for teachers to know the biographies of their CLD students before beginning literacy instruction?
2. Culturally and linguistically diverse students read at varying levels of linguistic proficiency. How can a teacher identify a CLD student’s proficiency level and then use this information to support his or her literacy development?
3. What kind of academic knowledge supports literacy development for CLD students, and how can teachers help students apply this knowledge?
4. In what ways can CLD students’ existing cognitive assets be built on to promote literacy development?
Teaching Reading to English Language Learners
Differentiated Literacies
SECOND EDITION

Socorro G. Herrera
Kansas State University

Della R. Perez
Kansas State University

Kathy Escamilla
University of Colorado, Boulder