Combining the best classroom practices and research on teaching reading and language acquisition, Mary Cappellini integrates effective reading instruction with effective language instruction. Through the framework of a balanced reading program, she emphasizes the importance of constantly listening for and assessing children's language and reading strategies during read-aloud, shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading, including literature circles. Included in the text are:

- How to set up an environment that will allow all English language learners to succeed;
- The stages of English language proficiency and stages of reading development—how they compare and how to use them to assess and plan for individual children;
- Advice on tapping into children's prior knowledge in their primary language while teaching reading in English and using Spanish/English cognates to help develop academic language;
- A collection of in-depth lessons and mini-lessons based on children's language proficiency emphasizing ongoing assessment, teacher reflection and choosing appropriate books for their reading and language level;
- How to manage numerous guided reading groups with children at all stages of reading and language proficiency;
- Thematic planning, with sample units for primary and upper grades, to support academic language and meet content standards;
- Ideas for events to involve parents;
- Extensive resources, including forms and checklists, and lists of books and guided reading series appropriate for English language learners.

Mary Cappellini is an educational consultant who has worked with English language learners and teachers of ELLs for over 20 years. Her experience includes being an elementary teacher, a bilingual resource teacher, a literacy coach, an ESL teacher, and an adjunct professor. She taught in large urban public schools in Santa Ana, California, as well as at the American School in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Mary consults with teachers and works with children in districts across the nation, and often speaks at national conferences and universities. She is also the author of numerous children's books in both English and Spanish. Mary and her husband are raising three bilingual and bicultural daughters in southern California.
Since my book was first published, more and more English language learners from all nationalities have been filling our nation’s classrooms—over 4.4 million, according to the National Center for Language Statistics—and there are more and more demands on classroom teachers to meet their needs, often with very little training. As I travel the country working in schools and school districts, colleges and universities, there is one question that most teachers ask: How do I possibly help all of my ELLs when I am asked to meet new and demanding standards for all of my students?

I realize that teachers often feel overwhelmed, and yet how do the children feel? Imagine coming into a new classroom not knowing the language and being expected to read and write, listen and speak as your peers. Imagine leaving home with nothing but the clothes on your back, traveling across continents to arrive in a different climate and time zone. Imagine arriving to a country alone, without your parents or family members. Or imagine thinking everyone in your community speaks your language until you get to school and realize that nothing seems familiar. So many of our ELLs in our classrooms today are feeling overwhelmed, just as the teachers are.

Interestingly, the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), although they don’t address specifically the needs of English language learners, encourage the type of teaching and match the best practices to help ELLs that I’ve outlined in my book, including the focus on working collaboratively; discussing what you learn; reading deeper; communicating effectively; comprehending and evaluating what you read; demonstrating independence; understanding other people’s perspectives and cultures; working across content areas; integrating these content areas with English language arts; and knowing the developmental levels of students’ reading, writing, listening, speaking, and language use in English.

One of the areas of difficulty in implementing a curriculum that supports the CCSS is the lack of focus on how to apply them specifically to our English language learners. The CCSS do state that all students, including ELLs, must have the opportunity to learn “and these students can meet the standards . . . without displaying native-like control of conventions and vocabulary” (NGA/CCSSO 2010). Teachers need to understand that ELLs should be judged based on their developmental English proficiency level, and my book helps them look more closely at how ELLs can achieve knowledge of higher-level reading strategies and content-area knowledge even though they aren’t fluent or advanced speakers.

The new standards focus on higher-level strategies rather than on minute skills, which is a promising change from the standards created in the era of No Child Left Behind, yet it is important to make sure that teachers continue to get the training they need to have their ELLs move toward meeting Common Core standards. Knowing the difference between their ELLs’ abilities to use language functions, which include higher-level reading strategies and content-area literacy, and their ability to use language patterns, which include grammar and conventions of English, will help teachers assess their students more effectively and teach them accordingly. My book strives to help teachers with the important skill of assessing both language functions and language patterns. It also strives to help teachers provide scaffolds for all of their ELLs and expect responses and outcomes from every ELL in their classroom regardless of their English language.
proficiency level. Although it may be difficult, English language learners need to be accepted where they are and taught accordingly.

We also have to acknowledge and celebrate their uniqueness, whether they are refugees from Somalia, Chinese immigrants, Mexican Americans, or Central American child refugees. I hope that we can slow down and take the time to look closely at each ELL so that we can start to plan effectively for each ELL’s instruction. We need to slow down to understand each ELL’s background; level of literacy in primary language and in English, as well as any other language; and level of English language proficiency in listening and speaking.

I hope that we also value the cultures and languages of our ELLs, use their native languages in our classrooms, and learn about their struggles and hardships adjusting to our language and our educational system. We can help ELLs adjust by reading as many multicultural books as possible so that they will not only see themselves in the books but also might see other children in their classroom who don’t look like them. This is the way we learn about our common humanity. The new appendixes, which can be found online at http://www.stenhouse.com/html/balancing-reading-and-language-learning.htm, provide a list of multicultural books that have been published since my book was first printed. I hope that teachers will read books from this list and create a community of learners that values all students from all walks of life. To help teachers build this inclusive community, the chapter on parent involvement describes ways to include the parents and families of ELLs in classrooms and school communities, even if they don’t speak English. Building a welcoming environment for our ELLs and their parents helps bridge understanding and tolerance in our greater communities as well.

I hope that teachers will use this new study guide to strengthen the great work so many teachers are doing across the country in classrooms with small to large populations of English language learners. And I hope it will help continue the dialog about the importance of focusing on the whole child in order to learn from him or her, to teach him or her, and to build a stronger community of learners. Enjoy! And celebrate together the joy of teaching ELLs!

—Mary Cappellini

References

Introduction

Ten years ago, Mary Cappellini shared with the educational community her book *Balancing Reading and Language Learning*. The book is brimming with practical strategies and clear, manageable ways to assess the language of ELLs and plan for instruction through literacy. The reality in many schools is that the pressure to score higher on a test outweighs the research about language acquisition, and many English language learners are in a race to pass an assessment rather than grow language. Throughout Mary’s book, meaningful, easily differentiated components of balanced literacy are described with an eye toward supporting and planning for language. Mary believes that language learners will have the opportunity to succeed in our schools when they are exposed to rich language and literacy experiences and supported by teachers who understand what language components each child needs particular access to. The chapters offer specific strategies for immediate implementation to create an environment where students both acquire and learn English regardless of a school’s literacy structure. Immersion in rich, language-filled opportunities will provide the experience needed for learners to take risks!

This guide is meant to help classroom teachers, ESL teachers, administrators, and others looking to focus on meeting the needs of this growing population through an exploration of *Balancing Reading and Language Learning*. The strong methodology presented in this text stands on the shoulders of so many in the world of literacy and language learning, and Mary brilliantly weaves practical advice with the reasoning behind the instructional moves. To support educators’ use of this study guide, Mary has updated the book’s forms and checklists to reflect her current thinking and recent research in classrooms, and she has provided a list of newer multicultural books. The updated appendixes (including forms, checklists, and New Multicultural Books list) are available for download at http://www.stenhouse.com/html/balancing-reading-and-language-learning.htm.

Today, *Balancing Reading and Language Learning* is more applicable than ever within myriad classrooms with diverse populations of students learning English as a second, third, or even fourth language. While the research in how language is both acquired and learned hasn’t shifted over the past few decades, there are continuing debates about how best to meet the needs of this population by many stakeholders. Some states have decided to shift their own language regarding the conversation around ELLs, and it is important to know what your state’s current standards and assessments are. The creation and adoption of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) has added an additional layer to the instruction debate, though this standards document includes only a short addendum focusing on how to support ELLs. Those teaching in states that did not adopt CCSS probably still went through a shift in their state’s standards that required new curriculum. The CCSS do not include specific standards for ELLs, but *Balancing Reading and Language Learning* provides strategies and content that align beautifully with literacy standards across all states.

This study guide lays out ways to explore each chapter of Mary’s book. These explorations use a variety of lenses for reflecting on practice and planning for implementation that effectively meets the needs of students. This guide is designed to help teachers facilitate conversation and investigation with colleagues to deepen thinking about support for English language learners. When planning staff development opportunities, it is powerful to have educators focus on three to four children throughout the process. Educators can create and
Introduce the reading and language assessment folders for these students and revisit the folders across the year. Mary discusses these folders on page 22 of her book. This collection of student work, artifacts from teaching, as well as checklists and guide sheets, will help deepen reflection by the educators and conversation with colleagues. The data within the reading and language assessment folders is valuable when used to guide analysis, plan for teaching in small-group and whole-class situations, and explore strategies to grow language and literacy. These folders include notes on both the language patterns and the reading strategies used by individual English language learners. Teachers can bring the folders on the three or four students selected to professional development sessions throughout the year to share and discuss with colleagues. Educators take notes on what they observe in their classrooms, try out some of the strategies that Mary presents, and set a date to come together to deeply discuss their observations. In doing so, educators share their learning with other educators within their community. Teacher groups might decide to carry the same focus, or lens, across many months or an entire year, following the same cluster of students. This enriches conversation and provides an opportunity to return to the data gathered in order to track learners’ growth and progress in language and literacy.

The developmental checklists, observation forms, and focus sheets referred to in almost every chapter of Mary’s book provide strong examples for incorporating artifacts into any study of language and literacy. The updated observation forms and language checklists in the updated appendixes available online (http://www.stenhouse.com/html/balancing-reading-and-language-learning.htm) go along with the revised levels of English language proficiency for most states. Any time educators gather to discuss students and think about modifications, the talk and planning should be based on artifacts. Looking at student work, recordings of oral language, observation notes, and images or visuals from classrooms helps to base the conversation and study on particular methods, always bringing the talk back to what the artifacts show. With the updated language checklists and observation forms, Mary provides meaningful connections to how groups in many different schools will explore modifying curriculum and differentiating instruction. The reading focus sheets and reading checklists have not changed, since they already align with the new standards.

Make the forms work for you and your community! It’s important to see all of the appendixes and guide sheets as just that. Meant to guide instruction and planning, these visuals artfully scaffold us to think and record specifics of language that our students are demonstrating, alongside literacy strategies. The analysis and use of artifacts alongside the guide and checklists ensures that what you teach in language and literacy and what you provide in language supports for ELLs are aligned to required standards. As of 2015, thirty-five states have adopted the World-class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development Standards. Several other states, including New York and California, have rewritten their ELD standards in the past few years, and some states have renamed the classification descriptors for English language learners. It is essential to stay current with the language and standards that are expected. Mary simplifies this process for educators in most states by providing them with the new developmental levels of English language proficiency directly on the forms they are using to record information about their English language learners.

Balancing Reading and Language Learning continues to help educators across many grade levels, states, and continents support populations of English language learners in their communities. It is my tattered, flagged,
deeply loved resource that finds its way into my roll-aboard suitcase time and time again. I have used this text as a literacy consultant in diverse ways with other staff developers, teachers, and administrators, including using it for over twelve years as a staff developer for the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project. It was a common occurrence to encounter multiple copies of this text in the buildings I worked in across New York City. The book is brimming with opportunities for professional development sessions, and this study guide will provide you with help and specific moves to get the exploration started. I’m grateful for Mary Cappellini’s tangible, engaging content and strategies and for the assessment and planning sheets threaded with research. These resources enable every educator to embrace this group of learners. It’s time to celebrate language!

This study guide is designed to help you facilitate conversation and investigation with colleagues or even by yourself! The chapters are aligned to the content in Mary’s book, and professional development components are centered on artifacts to deepen thinking about supports for English language learners. It is organized into chapters that match the chapters of the book. Within each chapter of the study guide are the following sections: Key Guiding Questions from the Book, Quotes to Ponder, and Planning for Professional Development Sessions. The Key Guiding Questions are taken directly from Balancing Reading and Language Learning and are just a sampling of the questions offered in each chapter of the book. The questions can be used to build a conversation around the reading of the book chapter or can be used to stimulate discussion or written reflection at the start of a grade-level, faculty, or Professional Learning Community (PLC) meeting.

Quotes are often a strong way to begin a conversation or exploration, and in the Quotes to Ponder sections of this guide you will find specific quotes from Mary’s book. Teachers can choose one quote from the book or multiple quotes that are relevant to their community to put on cards or slides to guide discussion. Some administrators find it powerful to include a quote in letters to staff or communities when the quote relates to a topic being shared.

The third section of each chapter in this study guide, Planning for Professional Development Sessions, is a guide for administrators, coordinators, literacy coaches, and of course teachers to design professional development opportunities for themselves and others. There are numerous options in each chapter of the study guide to allow for flexibility in planning a professional development session or meeting. I hope the suggestions in each chapter will be used across multiple sessions to monitor and explore deeper thoughts of teachers as well as children’s growth in language and literacy. A collection of artifacts for each English language learner is discussed throughout the plans for professional development sessions, including the use of reading and language assessment folders that Mary discusses in Chapter 2 of her book. Educators can return to the artifacts again and again to vary the conversation and to study, as some of the suggested plans lay out ways of returning to data multiple times across the year or course of study. I also encourage educators engaged in any study to use a professional development notebook to record their learning and thinking across the school year. Enjoy the discourse and exploration!

—Emily
Chapter 1: Setting Up the Learning Environment

Key Guiding Questions from the Book

What type of environment do I need to create to support all of my diverse English language learners?
How do we make English language learners feel comfortable to participate in discussions?
How can I get better prepared for all my diverse children before they arrive?

Complete list of guiding questions on page 4.

Quotes to Ponder

“Many of our students are immigrants . . . children who have just arrived speaking different languages and coming from diverse backgrounds and experiences. Many are refugees coming with the clothes on their backs with families fleeing from dangerous situations.” (2)

“There are still many other children, also English language learners, who were born in the United States into families whose parents are immigrants, and who speak their primary language at home.” (3)

“Even though there may be a language barrier, we need to look carefully through the screen and diagnose what each ELL knows about literacy and then teach her accordingly.” (3)

“If we are lucky enough to have a specialized and credentialed ESL teacher at the school, we should look at that person as a resource to supplement, not supplant, what we are already doing in the classroom.” (7)

Planning for Professional Development Sessions

Explore where language is woven across the classroom in meaningful ways.

Participants share photos or images of their classroom layout and discuss specific areas where students are exposed to rich language opportunities and why those are important. What language do students see on the walls? What ways do students have to access words in sentences, not just in isolation? Where are the words they can use in their writing and see in their reading, as well as when they talk? How do students access language prompts? Are there visuals on charts?

Study your own notes to reflect on teaching.

Collect and share conference notes or anecdotal notes for three or four students and analyze how often teaching strategies for language and/or literacy are returned to with each child when you meet with him or her. Is there repeated exposure in teaching experiences for both language and literacy strategies that learners are expected to use? Seeing a strategy demonstrated and discussed multiple times makes it more likely the learner will make an attempt and hold on to the strategy or language independently. When something is taught or exposed to a learner only once, the likelihood is slim that it will be retained and understood. Tally how often
each strategy is referenced as a compliment and as a teaching point. *How often is a skill being developed more deeply? How many distinct strategies are taught to support a particular skill? Is a strategy just mentioned and then on to the next in the conference? What does it mean for the learner to be exposed to a strategy or language pattern multiple times? Do you see a difference in their writing or speaking that reflects that specific learning? When are strategies demonstrated, modeled, and taught by the teacher (individually, small group, or whole class) and referred to? How are strategies modeled or demonstrated and language embedded or taught?*

**Know all that you can about the ELLs in your classroom.**

Participants choose two students and write down all that they know about the children inside and outside of school. *What are their interests? Where are they from and how did they arrive at this school?* Look at the list of documents often found in schools on pages 17–18. *Which documents do you have in your building? How are they being used and how might a document gathering dust in a file cabinet or computer file be meaningfully used as data? What are you still interested in learning?* Revisit these notes every couple of months and add to them.

**Assess how the school community as a whole supports the ELL population.**

Look at the schedule of when students are being supported by outside providers (push-in or pull-out models). Lay this schedule alongside the class flow of the day/schedule and think through what students are present for and engaged in. *What is happening during the times ELLs are working with outside providers and during the times they are in the classroom? Are these professionals running parallel to what is being taught inside the classroom? In what ways? How is the classroom teacher supporting content and language? How do the schedules support inclusion of the ELLs in work that they can feel successful in within the classroom?*
Chapter 2: Knowing Each Language Learner

Key Guiding Questions from the Book

How can I assess my students as English language speakers as well as readers?
What types of assessments am I using to shape my instruction?
How am I keeping track of them?

Complete list of guiding questions on page 21.

Quotes to Ponder

“Besides formal assessments we should also use ongoing informal assessments, which I feel give even more information about our students and help us more effectively plan for individual instruction. We should keep track of our observations of children's development levels of reading and language in the form of anecdotal records, checklists, running records, miscue analysis, informal language assessments and reviews of retellings, and responses to literature, as well as reading interviews.” (22)

“As we are conferencing with a child, we can learn a lot about his language proficiency and can write down sentence structure that we hear the child using in order to better assess his language development.” (22–23)

“And with the support of language assessment, we can develop his English language proficiency as we continue to develop his reading strategies and skills.” (32)

Planning for Professional Development Sessions

Explore language patterns learners use across the year and return to the checklists to monitor growth.

Teachers bring multiple sources of information for each of three or four students, or just one student to start, to the professional development sessions and use the language checklists A3–A7 (and the checklists in the new appendixes to match your state’s developmental levels) to learn what language patterns the students are demonstrating. Strong artifacts include on-demand writing samples, writer’s notebooks or writing folders, reader’s notebooks, and running records. What components will help support those language patterns? Which resources are strong models of those language patterns? Keep page 29 with you when conferring or working with students as a quick reference to common language patterns to monitor shifts and changes, along with the checklists where you’re recording information for particular students. The information you are gathering on each student should be saved in a reading and language assessment folder as discussed in the book (page 22).
Know that even with limited language, students may still have the reading strategies. Get to know students as language learners and readers.

Using Table 2.3 (page 31) as a guide, choose one reader/language learner to discuss with a partner. Take a look at the books a child has in his or her baggie or is reading independently and choose two or three descriptors to focus on across the next few weeks. *When will you support this aspect of reading? Small-group work? Modeling during read-aloud?* Make a plan to bring anecdotal notes (including compliments as well as teaching points for the strategies taught) to a future conversation focusing on the same readers. When you return to those notes, analyze to see if strategies are returned to or if it is constantly a new concept or language pattern. Reflecting on how those strategies were taught is also a powerful method of guiding thoughts for next steps to modify ways of teaching that might be more compatible with students. It's easier to talk this through with colleagues!
Chapter 3: Welcoming Parents as Partners

Key Guiding Questions from the Book

I have so many different languages in my room; how can I highlight their languages and still emphasize English?

I don’t speak the parents’ languages, so how can I communicate with them?

What types of programs could I use to promote family literacy?

Complete list of guiding questions on page 45.

Quotes to Ponder

“We need to make [parents] feel welcome, make them feel a part of our learning community, and give them many opportunities to become involved regardless of language.” (44)

“Every time we see [parents] and have an opportunity to interact with them, we need to show them kindness and respect with the same patience we show their children.” (46)

“Many family members do not read in the primary language, but they do have great stories to tell. Providing them with an opportunity to tell their stories with the help of a community translator supports children’s appreciation of diversity and pride in the primary culture and language.” (47)

“We need to provide opportunities during the school year for families to get to know each other, to build not only tolerance but respect and understanding of each other’s cultures.” (54)

Planning for Professional Development Sessions

Bring parent involvement to the forefront.

With a group of teachers or parents or community leaders, discuss the opportunities Mary presents on pages 46 and 55. Which would work for your school? Who would need to be involved to make that component a success? What would be the roles of each individual? Consider whether there is one opportunity that could be repeated on multiple dates, because often the second and third time an event is offered there has been talk in the community about it and more families might attend.

Celebrate languages and cultures of your student population.

Get to know the languages and countries that are represented in your school community. Look for ways to weave those languages across the campus facility and into newsletters. Share words and phrases of greetings or celebration orally and in writing whenever possible! Think about having those languages included in a mural or visually added to hallways or other open spaces to increase environmental print. Song lyrics or
quotes from books or poems would be ways of celebrating languages. *Who are the ELLs in the community, and what languages do they speak? What resources can be used to support bringing those languages into the classroom and school community?*

**Use printed materials such as books to build language at home.**

On page 54, Mary describes how to create a book room or school library. Consider purchasing or writing a grant for multiple copies of the same title in as many languages as possible. Popular picture books are often published in multiple languages, and families could access this lending library. Think about recording some books onto a recording device or website so that families can listen in addition to reading the books. Choose texts that might be mentor texts, and they can be used to build background knowledge and expose students to texts they will hear in their classroom. *Will you ask parents to monitor this room? How will you schedule a follow-up time to analyze which titles are being used and shared? Be ready for books to be happily adopted by families. What system will be put in place to replenish titles or copies?*
Key Guiding Questions from the Book

What should a balanced reading program for English language learners look like?

What is the benefit of reading to children if their English level is so low?

How do we teach strategies and skills in read-aloud and shared reading?

How can I manage the needs of all of my English language learners and still fit everything in the day?

Complete list of guiding questions on page 59.

Quotes to Ponder

“We need to model for them, encourage them to try, support them, challenge them, interact with them, and then set them free to read and speak independently.” (58)

“Children learn through direct teaching, guided practice, and trying out independently what they have learned.” (58)

“Often it is only in the classroom that ELLs hear English spoken or read, or get to interact with an expert reader of English.” (61)

“ELLs gain confidence form working with peers and observing other children trying out strategies they may not have thought of.” (66)

Planning for Professional Development Sessions

Plan for differentiated shared reading to build language.

Each teacher brings to the professional development session his or her reading and language assessment folders with current data for the students being studied and the Developmental Checklists A3–A7 (updated checklists A3 and A4 for WIDA, NY, TX, and CA are included in the new appendixes: http://www.stenhouse.com/html/balancing-reading-and-language-learning.htm). Discuss where there has been movement of language and find patterns that match where students are, then look across shared reading texts (big books, poems, songs, etc.) to find those language patterns. On page 64, Mary lists strategies and skills to use during shared reading. Which of these will you incorporate into your shared reading plan? What tools will you use to record notes during the shared reading experience?

Reflect on the time in your daily schedule where there is reading to, with, and by children.

Teachers each bring the flow of the day or daily schedule for their classroom (or a photograph of it) to the study group ready to talk about how they plan for instruction and experiences across the day. Refer to pages
Chapter 4: Reading To, With, and By Children (continued)

75–76 (depending on primary or upper-grade classrooms) to see when these opportunities are planned for. How are learners exposed to language? When do they get to practice language and literacy independently? Think about which part of the day to emphasize or focus on, and, for a week or two, fit a component that seems to slip away or get passed over into the schedule in your own room. It might be a whole-class experience like shared reading or read-aloud time that may have slipped out of the day, or it might be varying small groups or guided reading during independent reading time. How will you ensure that the component that isn’t making it into the schedule on a regular basis actually happens and that language learning is maximized?

Research a learner to notice reading behaviors and language.

Choose a learner to focus on for the month, preferably someone who has been stagnant in language growth or caught your eye for some reason. Pull out the reading and language assessment folder (see page 22 in the book) you created with information from earlier in the year and share with a colleague what you know about this child and his or her language. Set a plan for the next week or two to take anecdotal notes across the day about this learner. When does the student appear to be fully engaged? When does he or she seem to be distracted? What behaviors does the student demonstrate when working independently? How does he or she interact in small- or whole-group situations? Come back together to explore and share your thinking, and set another goal for another student to research based on the information in that student’s folder.
Chapter 5: Thematic Planning

Key Guiding Questions from the Book

How can we integrate our content instruction into our literacy block and choose appropriate themes?

How can we make content more accessible to our English language learners?

What strategies are we teaching our English language learners to use while reading in the content areas?

Complete list of guiding questions on pages 81–82.

Quotes to Ponder

“Children can use different functions of language like classifying, describing, comparing, and contrasting in the context of a common theme, which allows them to revisit language within the same topic as they go more into their thinking and learning processes.” (82)

“By having a framework and planning an overall structure with lessons and literature we want to use to encourage their literacy development, we can set the children up for success by giving them plenty of time in the independent reading and small-group work to explore their topics of interest within the theme.” (85)

“By providing a range of literature and resource materials at various developmental levels, we can set all children up for success regardless of their developmental language and reading levels.” (85)

Planning for Professional Development Sessions

Explore themes that are meaningful to your population and that meet history/social studies content-area standards.

A month or two before beginning a unit where you will incorporate thematic planning, come to a study group with your history/social studies curriculum and content-area standards to think about options for your grade level. In the third paragraph on page 83, in the section titled “Choosing Themes,” Mary explores ways in which suitable themes can be named and incorporated. Plan out the resources you might use during your unit. Refer to Appendixes D2, E5, and F2 in the book, where multicultural fiction and nonfiction books are listed, as well as to the New Multicultural Books list (D3) in the updated appendixes (http://www.stenhouse.com/html/balancing-reading-and-language-learning.htm). Which of these books do you have already in your classroom library or building library? Where will you find texts to support a theme being studied in your building or community? Are they already there, or will a variety of titles need to be researched, located, and ordered? When will you have these collected for creating deeper plans? Set a date to come back together and plan! This is also a wonderful topic to revisit during end-of-the-year planning, as educators head off to different places over the summer and can keep their eyes out for new, engaging titles.
Use a range of materials to support language growth within the content area and theme and plan thoughtfully.

Using the Thematic Planning Framework (examples on pages 92–93 and in new appendixes), begin to plan out how you will strategically weave in the texts collected to support the content area and theme. The new Appendix C1 helps to guide the planning around this work. *How will you incorporate this theme? What will you use as artifacts to represent the learning? When will you discuss with colleagues what worked and what was challenging about this thematic planning?* Set a time, possibly at the end of the year, to plan for themes within classrooms or across the building for the next school year. Consider integrating content-area knowledge and building on language explored within the themes. Teachers can return to the language patterns provided on page 29 and the data sheets from student folders to plan small-group work to support the language levels of various ELLs within the theme. *What materials are needed to implement an exploration of these themes at various stage of language?*
Key Guiding Questions from the Book

What types of books should I choose to read to my English language learners from such diverse backgrounds?

How do I read aloud to my English language learners in my primary classrooms when their English level is so low? Can I use their home language?

How often should we stop during a read-aloud?

When is the best time to point out new vocabulary with a read-aloud?

Complete list of guiding questions on page 99.

Quotes to Ponder

“In Becoming a Nation of Readers (1985), the Commission on Reading stated that the single most important factor in children’s reading success is having people read aloud to them.” (98)

“For English language learners who may not have been read to in English at home, I still want to read books that will entice them to continue reading and books that are above their current language and reading levels.” (99)

“The pacing should be natural, and the main purpose to share a good piece of literature. Yet, English language learners need time to talk as well. I try to encourage a dialogue mostly before and after the reading of the text.” (101)

“The discussion . . . confirmed my belief in the importance of building a community of readers who realize that although we may have different ways of doing things, we also have much in common.” (102)

“As we accept all levels of response during a class discussion, we encourage participation and thinking, which are critical to their academic English development.” (104)

Planning for Professional Development Sessions

Choose multicultural books to share across the school and celebrate all the learners.

Begin a book-of-the-month celebration where a different population, culture, language, or tradition is represented each month. Students or parents can present the book or write a blurb about it and share their thoughts to classrooms or the community. Use Appendix D2 from the book or the New Multicultural Book list (Appendix D3 in the new appendixes) to help choose titles. Who in your community knows books or bookstores well and might be able to help make a list? What cultures or languages would benefit from being represented? How can these texts support units of study or themes being explored across the building, including social justice issues?
Use readers’ data to plan for strategies and language to model during a read-aloud.

Look back to your reading and language assessment folders for those three or four students you are exploring or make a decision to shift the focus to another group. After you have used the developmental checklists (Appendixes A3–A7 in the book; updated checklists A3 and A4 for WIDA, NY, TX, and CA are included in the new appendixes at http://www.stenhouse.com/html/balancing-reading-and-language-learning.htm) and have assessed where the students are as readers and language learners, gather with colleagues to plan for instructional read-alouds. Look at the samples of writing about reading that Mary shares in Chapter 6. Plan for places in your read-aloud where you will model the thinking and writing work that you want children to try independently. Use Appendix D2 in the book, and the New Multicultural Books list in the new appendixes, which lists a variety of read-aloud books for different purposes. Some titles will stimulate discussion; work on rhyme, rhythm, or patterns; and provide rich language for ELLs. Which books will you weave into your read-aloud experience? Choose one or two to model more than once. How will the experience with the read-aloud text include language patterns that students also need? Are they directly in the text being used or will they be shown as conversational prompts across multiple read-aloud texts? Use data from checklists and student work as well as informal anecdotal notes you take during the read-aloud and during the discussion to plan small-group work during independent reading, so skills and strategies are returned to in multiple times in different contexts. You can plan your read-aloud text with places for learners to turn and talk as well as stop and jot ideas on sticky notes or in notebooks, which you can observe in the moment or gather and analyze. What do the examples of writing about reading look like across the next month for these learners once they have had exposure to the language patterns in the read-aloud? Look for evidence across days and weeks to allow for time to practice the language.
Chapter 7: Shared Reading with Primary-Grade Students

Key Guiding Questions from the Book

What are the important elements of an effective shared reading lesson?
How do I teach skills and strategies in a shared reading lesson?
What can I learn about the reading and oral language development of my ELLs in the context of a shared reading?
How can I keep track of what I learn and use it to plan instruction?

Complete list of guiding questions on page 114.

Quotes to Ponder

“Shared reading is a time when reading becomes comprehensible to English language learners and so does the language. Children have the opportunity to see a large text in front of them, which an expert reader is modeling how to read, and then they can join in when they feel comfortable.” (114)

“Knowing his developmental language level up front, I know what I should expect from each child and can tap into the appropriate language level right away, as the classroom teacher would be able to do.” (115)

“I fill in a focus sheet of outcomes (Appendix E1), a form designed to help teachers think about the language and reading outcomes they should expect from students with different English language proficiency levels during shared reading.” (116)

“I encourage children to read along with me even on the first reading. Sometimes a book has a very repetitive pattern that they pick up on right away.” (121)

Planning for Professional Development Sessions

Deepen knowledge of learners through assessment in shared reading.

Teachers plan for a small-group shared reading experience to be delivered during a professional development session. The students are brought into the room, and their own teacher conducts the lesson with them. Teachers can decide to deliver in partnerships to help each other to reflect, with one person being the voice and the other researching and taking notes. Decide how the information garnered from the session together will be recorded for the next study group. Will it be video recorded? Anecdotal notes collected by both the “voice” and “researcher” if you decide to use that structure? Use Appendix E4 (or the new appendixes for your state’s developmental levels: http://www.stenhouse.com/html/balancing-reading-and-language-learning.htm) to guide note taking during the shared reading experience focused on the same group of students whose data
has been studied across weeks or months. List the students’ names under their developmental level. Plan for a follow-up professional development session and use the questions on page 123 to guide the reflection. How do these answers to the assessment questions influence your future teaching? Will you choose texts differently or coach specific students or bring them into the conversation about language patterns you know they need to practice more, based on data? When and where will you build on the language and reading strategies that learners need to strengthen?

Expand the repertoire of strategies that you weave into shared reading.

Bring the student assessment folders that you’ve been maintaining to the study group to think about where those three or four students are now. Has there been a change? What do the artifacts and data tell you that they need more of when building language and supporting reading strategies? Using the list on page 125, choose a few strategies that the readers need to work on and choose shared reading texts with which you can incorporate those strategies. Mark up the texts to include where and when you will pause to guide that thinking. How will you model those strategies? Where will the learners get a chance to try them?
Chapter 8: Shared Reading with Upper-Grade Students

Key Guiding Questions from the Book

Is shared reading different for older children? If so, how?
How do I teach strategies when there are so many levels of readers?
How can I help my English language learners comprehend so much new content in the texts when they are just learning the vocabulary?

Complete list of guiding questions on page 133.

Quotes to Ponder

“During shared reading, the teacher scaffolds developing readers and language learners as they climb the ladder of literacy. Upper-grade children are not necessarily expected to read text on their own during shared reading; the teacher still demonstrates good reading strategies and appropriate language use with longer texts containing more difficult academic language so that older ELLs can be successful in trying these out on their own in guided reading, literature circles, and independent reading.” (132)

“The elements built into a nonfiction book are there not only to break up long text passages and make the format more attractive, but also to ease comprehension for readers by giving them several ways of accessing the detailed content of the book.” (133)

“The lesson format for a shared reading with upper-grade children is the same as for primary-grade children with perhaps a bit more shared writing.” (135)

“The discussion before, during, and after a shared reading lesson is a vital part of the language and literacy development of upper-grade ELLs.” (135)

“By drawing on their knowledge in their primary language and using cognates to make connections . . . ELLs [have] an academic advantage while reading higher-level content (Cummins 2002, 2003; Bear et al. 2003). See Appendixes C2 and C3 for more lists of cognates.” (141)

Planning for Professional Development Sessions

Set learners up for purposeful exploration of a shared reading text.

On page 134, Mary includes a planning sheet for an upper-grade shared reading experience. Skim through this plan with a colleague/partner and pay particular attention to the expected language outcomes and reading outcomes. Decide on a group of students you have collected data on (be sure it is up-to-date looking across fresh writing samples and running records). Plan one shared reading session to deliver to this small group of students based on the language and reading work from which they would benefit. Which strategies
will particular students need a bit more coaching on? What features are in the text that support those strategies? Where is there an opportunity to experience those strategies multiple times? After guiding the shared reading experience back in the classroom, come together again with your colleague/partner to discuss what was manageable and what was challenging about planning for both language and reading. Choose another text that will allow the learners to have another go with those strategies. How do your notes from the second text compare to your notes from the same strategies with the first text? What are you learning about these children based on the outcomes?

Acknowledge that choosing a text for shared reading can be complicated. Explore the selection process with colleagues and talk it through!

Teachers bring artifacts to the study group that represent the recent reading and language learning for the same group of students they have been studying. These might include notebooks, running records, and drafts of writing. Take some time to look over the developmental checklists and the information folders and add thinking about these learners. Once language patterns that learners need to be exposed to or that need to be reinforced are identified, decide which language and reading outcomes are desired. This work can be done individually or in teacher partnerships for deeper conversation. Teachers can then pair up to read through and look at different texts they can use to support the curriculum and desired language patterns in whole-class or small-group shared reading experiences. Are there Big Books or picture books? Poetry anthologies or high-interest nonfiction articles? Genre examples begin on page 147, and teachers might access a book room or their own materials to find possibilities, then talk through which texts might work. Will all children in the group be able to see the text? Where are the features found? What language patterns are included? How will this text help to support the outcomes that were decided upon earlier? Set a time to return after the shared reading session and discuss the anecdotal notes collected as you reference the planning sheet (E1–E4 in the book, and see new versions of these sheets in the updated appendixes available online: http://www.stenhouse.com/html/balancing-reading-and-language-learning.htm).
Key Guiding Questions from the Book

How can we use guided reading to help our English language learners?

How do I form guided reading groups with so many different levels of speakers and readers in my classroom?

How do I differentiate a reading problem from a language problem?

Complete list of guiding questions on page 153.

Quotes to Ponder

“We can help children become better readers by having them read on their own with guidance and support from us. In a small group, with just a few children, a teacher has the opportunity to tailor instruction to each reader as he tries out new language and new strategies for the first time.” (152)

“Forming groups and choosing appropriate texts for guided reading with ELLs are more complex than with native speakers, because it is not only a child’s developmental reading level that must be assessed but also his English language proficiency level and concept development in the primary language.” (152)

“Just as with all children, we need to know each ELL’s individual needs in order to help them become literate.” (153)

“If a child’s basic knowledge of the three cueing systems in English is not developed, she will have a difficult time sustaining meaning through the reading strategies of sampling, predicting, checking, confirming, and self-correcting.” (154)

“Exposing children to new vocabulary in the context of reading a story and themes they are familiar with is a very effective way to build their academic vocabulary.” (158)

Planning for Professional Development Sessions

Return to resources to investigate children as language learners and readers, then look for growth.

Go back to the folders you’ve been maintaining and choose a group of three or four students at the same independent reading level. Collect reading data such as running records for those students, if you haven’t included those documents already. It is essential to have running records to plan for guided reading, so if you do not already administer this type of reading assessment, this can be a time to explore using them in your building. The miscues and the comprehension data are essential in planning for next steps, and teachers should attempt to analyze the running records on their own before coming together again for the next study.
group session. With a partner, look at the miscue analyses to decide on what cueing system(s) each reader needs more support with. Explore the information on page 162 and take notes on what abilities each learner demonstrates. **How will you guide this reader during his or her reading? What prompts will help to support the learner? What text will allow you to coach for these moves with the reader reading independently at his or her instructional level?**

**Coach ELLs while they are reading independently within their guided reading groups by scaffolding new language skills and supporting the thinking they are able to do even when the level of language is low.**

In Chapter 9, Mary discusses forming guided reading groups and the challenges we face when grouping students. Consider the learners in your room and what you know about them based on the developmental checklists and running records. Gather with colleagues to discuss and plan for guided reading groups, taking into account which learners would benefit from being in the same group to support language and which would benefit from being together to support reading. Keep in mind that this is a “guided reading” group, so the focus is on reading level. Analyzing language patterns demonstrated across developmental checklists and running records you have collected is easier to do when talking it out with colleagues! Once you decide on a group, find a couple of texts to explore and decide which one best matches the features and language that you want to expose the readers to. Use the Text Features Form in Appendix F1 to plan out your introduction to the book. **What difficulties do you expect? Which parts of the guided reading session would you like to explore with a colleague? How do you like to work with another teacher during a lesson? Whispering in? Talking after?**

Partner with a colleague and possibly go into each other’s rooms, or pull readers into the study group meeting right there, in the moment, or into a future meeting, where you can support each other through the delivery of the lesson.
Chapter 10: Guided Reading with Emergent Readers

Key Guiding Questions from the Book

What are the reading strategies that emergent readers use and do they correlate to their language level?
How can we really decide a child’s reading level if her language is just beginning?
*Complete list of guiding questions on page 172.*

Quotes to Ponder

“How we build on the language patterns and reading strategies that students are (or are not) using has great impact on their success.” (172)

“In order to use guided reading effectively with emergent readers, I believe, ELLs need to have at least early intermediate language proficiency, which means that they should be responding with more than one or two words or yes/no as beginning English speakers do.” (173)

“The introduction is a very important part of the guided reading lesson for emergent readers. This is the time when the teacher sets the scene for what the children are going to discover in the text, taps into their prior knowledge, and gets them thinking what that book could be about.” (174)

“Instead of front-loading them with words all at once, the teacher draws attention to pertinent vocabulary through careful questioning, designed to have the children come up with the words themselves.” (174)

“If the orientation was effective, and if the book was chosen appropriately, the children should be able to read the book on their own. My task now is to observe and instruct if necessary.” (177)

“Knowing the skills and strategies that are used at each developmental stage of speaking and reading (see Tables 2.1–2.3 and Appendixes A3–A7), and comparing children’s output with those, is essential.” (185)

Planning for Professional Development Sessions

Think about the emergent readers receiving instruction in English only.

When you are working with emergent readers who are receiving instruction in English only, take time to read the sections on pages 173–177. *How will this information inform your decisions in planning and introducing the text?* The general format of a guided reading lesson at this stage of reading is on page 173. Partner with a colleague who is also trying to analyze the work of a learner at the same stage of language acquisition (or a different one if there is not a colleague exploring a similar stage) and alternate observing and taking notes on the coaching moves the other partner makes. Both teachers can also use Appendix F3, the Group Observation Sheet, to collect information on the readers and then gather together to discuss the
delivery and the behaviors of the readers in the group. In this scenario, only the classroom teacher engages with the readers; the colleague takes notes to explore and talk through together in the next study group. *How did the classroom teacher follow the format of a guided reading lesson* (on page 173)? *What observations did you make about what the readers were able to do in the text? How does this match what the child needs as a reader and a language learner?*

**Explore the oral language and reference to the text read during the discussion.**

On page 184, Mary lays out thoughts about the “Discussion” part of the guided reading lesson. Record or transcribe a discussion in your classroom and come to the study group ready to analyze the reading strategies and the language that students demonstrated. *What are you learning about the oral language of these learners? Which strategies do they appear to be using as readers? When do they use these strategies? What do the language patterns tell you about them? What would be strong next steps to grow that language?* Plan for another guided reading lesson and modify the specific areas of language and literacy to be observed and coached by the teacher. Use the Appendix F3 observation form from the book and come together again to talk through what you noticed in the second session. Add your notes to each student’s folder.
Key Guiding Questions from the Book

What are the reading strategies that early readers use, and do they correlate to their language level?

How much of the vocabulary of the book do they need to know in order to be successful in the guided reading lesson?

What can I do to monitor their comprehension during the guided reading lesson?

Complete list of guiding questions on page 191.

Quotes to Ponder

“Early readers are starting to use many more reading strategies than they did as emergent readers. But they are also facing new challenges with longer texts and less picture support to sustain meaning.” (190)

“What we learned through the discussion, however, is that the assumptions of the children’s language levels were not correct. I have found that if more time is spent during the introduction and orientation, less time needs to be spent helping children during their first independent reading.” (196)

“They were understanding the story fine and responding to my prodding appropriately. I am sure they understood the concept of the past; their English was just not developed enough to use that tense effectively.” (199)

“Unfortunately there are many fourth- and fifth-graders who are reading at first-grade level. We should be careful not to choose texts that seem too young for them.” (200)

Planning for Professional Development Sessions

Explore instructional moves to plan for individualizing language instruction while evaluating language demonstrated within the miscue analysis of a running record.

Gather the instructional-level running record for at least one learner. After completing the miscue analysis and understanding what cueing systems the learner uses (M, S, and/or V), push a bit further to explore what your findings tell you about the student as a reader and where he or she will need more support. How will you teach and coach the reader in order to provide support during the guided reading session? Will you also weave the focus into shared reading for that learner? Possibly plan a reading conference during independent reading time? Consider choosing a read-aloud text that has similar opportunities for access to the language patterns that the learner needs support in based on the running record data. Model the language specifically with that read-aloud text. Explore ways of highlighting the language pattern before the read-aloud with a quick introduction. For instance, if a focus you discover is irregular past tense support for an early advanced language learner, you might begin with an introduction such as this: “In this text we’re going to hear words like went, ran, and saw. (You can have these words on chart paper or sentence strips, preferably with the sentence
that appears around them in the text.) These are words for verbs, action words, that already happened, but they don’t have -ed so we have to be careful! We are going to hear each one more than one time. Listen for these words!” Then when you come to that part of the text you can point to the chart while reading aloud, but resist the urge to stop and teach in the moment. Look back at your earlier assessments of this learner. Use the current running record alongside Table 2.2 (page 29) and note the language patterns that are demonstrated in the reading that may not have been used by the child earlier in the year (growth) and patterns that may be repeated errors (future teaching, if appropriate next steps). What does this information about language tell you about the reader? What will be the next steps for this reader? In your study group, think about and talk through the inconsistencies you may notice and record your thoughts for upcoming conferences with the learner.

Think about your early readers receiving instruction in English only and plan a guided reading session that you can record or transcribe and then reflect on.

When working with early readers who are receiving instruction in English only, take time to read the sections on pages 191–196. How will this information inform your decisions in planning and introducing the text? Remember that Chapter 10 provided the general format of a guided reading lesson on page 173. Partner with a colleague also trying this stage (or a different one) and alternate observing and taking notes on the coaching moves the other partner makes. Both teachers can also use Appendix F3, the Group Observation Sheet, to collect information on the readers and then gather together to discuss the delivery and the behaviors of the readers in the group. In this scenario, only the classroom teacher engages with the readers; the colleague takes notes to explore and talk through together in the next study group. How did the classroom teacher follow the format of a guided reading lesson (on page 173)? What observations did you make about what the readers were able to do in the text? How does this match what the child needs as a reader and a language learner?

Look at the students receiving instruction in multiple languages.

When students are in bilingual or dual language settings they find ways to explore different languages with similar strategies. Investigating the work they can do and are ready for is important. On page 198, Mary begins to lay out thoughts about the way teachers need to carefully plan for the work readers will do in guided reading in this environment. Use the data, specifically running records, in both languages to analyze the miscues. What are meaningful strategies and next steps for these learners? How will you support these strategies while the children are reading independently in both languages? What phrases might you use to coach them to use the strategies on their own? Are there any areas noted in the running record in one language (accuracy, intonation, etc.) that are also needed in the second language? Where there are similar strategies or language patterns demonstrated by the learner that need to be practiced? How will you support those strategies and language patterns in the language that needs the support? Set a plan with colleagues to collect information on an observation form you create or on the Developmental Checklists A3–A7 (updated checklists A3 and A4 for WIDA, NY, TX, and CA are included in the new appendices: http://www.stenhouse.com/html/balancing-reading-and-language-learning.htm) and come back together to discuss.
Chapter 12: Guided Reading with Early Fluent and Fluent Readers

Key Guiding Questions from the Book

- How do I choose a focus for the fluent guided reading group?
- How much time should I spend teaching vocabulary in the lesson?
- What are we doing to keep track of the expanding and sustaining meaning strategies children are using?

Complete list of guiding questions on page 203.

Quotes to Ponder

“As English language learners become more fluent readers in English, they can figure out words on their own, and they often sound like they can read just about anything. But because they are reading longer and more difficult texts, they sometimes lose track of the overall meaning of what they read.” (202)

“Unfortunately, some ELLs are more concerned with sounding out words and pronouncing them correctly than checking to see whether they understand what they are reading.” (202)

“The records for each child, such as checklists of strategies to expand meaning (Appendix A7), are stored in their reading and language assessment folders (see Chapter 2), and I consult these to help me in my planning.” (203)

“The children didn’t respond to these questions, so I realized that they knew very little [about the content of the text] even though they had read the words fine.” (206)

“I encourage children to try to figure out new words on their own first, even if a book has a glossary, by using strategies like thinking about how a word is used in context, using their background knowledge and the pictures, and thinking about any other way a word has been used. They can use a focus sheet (Appendix F4) to help them.” (209–211)

Planning for Professional Development Sessions

Think about the language needs of your early fluent and fluent readers.

Teachers bring to the study group running records for students at this stage of reading as well as their language folders with current data from the developmental checklist you are using. The way we choose the focus of a guided reading lesson and the text is particularly important for learners at this level. On page 205, the book describes how one teacher began to plan for a guided reading lesson. Skim through this description and talk together about how best to plan for a lesson. What will the language focus be? Which of the guide sheets in the appendix will you use for the fluent readers? Take notes of the language pattern work you plan to focus on with the learner when you deliver the lesson. You might plan to have a few sticky notes or a column on your planning page to record what you’re noticing while you actually teach with the small group. You can
use those quick anecdotal notes to talk about how that data will affect the next guided reading session with the same learners. What will you do differently during your next session with those readers? Which strategies and language patterns will you continue to support during your next session? Think about the format on page 204. How does this flow match what you tried in your group? Add these anecdotal notes to the ongoing assessment folders for these learners.

Explore the oral language and reference to the text read during the discussion.

On pages 208–209, Mary lays out thoughts about the discussion and follow-up of the guided reading lesson. Record or transcribe this discussion with your own group of students and come to the study group ready to analyze the reading strategies and the language. What are you learning about the oral language of these learners? Which strategies do they appear to be using as readers? When do they use these strategies? What do the language patterns tell you about these students? What would be strong next steps to grow that language? Plan for another guided reading lesson and modify the areas to be observed and supported, quickly giving short moves to provide coaching on the work being done by the learner. Use the Appendix F3 observation form during the second guided reading session you have with the learners and come together again with colleagues to talk through what you noticed in that session. Add the information to each student’s folder. Often a strategy is only supported once, then a teacher moves on to the next thing. Lingering and teaching more deeply across multiple sessions supports the learner in carrying over those strategies to his or her independent work.

Investigate the balance of how much students focus on the collection of words and how much they focus on the reading.

Often when language learners at higher levels of reading are asked to write notes while they read, the focus becomes making that information or those notes “look good,” and the actual reading of the text can fall to the side. One study group can plan to have a guided reading lesson during the study group time with the students in the room with the teachers. Teachers focus on watching the group of learners and notice what fluent readers do when recording vocabulary and language during the guided reading session. Modify forms (Appendixes F5–F10) that are for students so that they can be used by teachers observing the lesson. So, rather than filling out the forms, the readers are interacting with the teacher leading the session and possibly jotting thoughts as they read. Along with using the planning form (Appendix F1) teachers can take a few minutes during the guided reading lesson to hold back and just watch. Jot down some thoughts about what each reader is doing. How often are they stopping to write? When do you notice them collecting words or ideas? How quickly do they return to the text and read? Your notes will inform your discussions with colleagues and future work with the learners to support growth of language and reading.
Chapter 13: Independent Reading and Literature Circles

Key Guiding Questions from the Book

How can I successfully help children choose books for independent reading?

Where can I fit into my schedule a long independent reading time as well as literature circles?

How can I manage both literature circles and guided reading groups?

Complete list of guiding questions on page 227.

Quotes to Ponder

“We hope, of course, that ELLs will improve their English language ability enough not to routinely rely on the primary language to express their comprehension, and we know that one of the best ways to improve it is for them to read more books in English.” (226)

“A large selection of books for independent reading should be easily accessible in a well-organized classroom library to all children, whatever their reading and language levels, in leveled collections, category collections, theme and genre collections, author collections, series collections, and if possible in primary languages other than English.” (226)

“As shown in Tables 4.1, 4.2, [and] 4.3 . . . during reading workshop, when I am conferring with students or meeting with small groups for guided reading or mini-lessons, the rest of the children are reading independently.” (230)

“Children are very capable of taking part in literature circles by themselves, and ELLs often use both the primary language and English to express themselves in such settings.” (232)

Planning for Professional Development Sessions

Be informed by the books that readers choose for independent reading.

Each teacher brings to the study group a book baggie or the books a reader is reading on his or her own for each of the three or four learners that they have been focusing on. These should be titles chosen by the reader herself or himself. Look through the texts and notice the text features, language structures, language features, vocabulary, and content. What is similar across the texts the learner is holding? What is different in them? How will these books support the work that was identified in the developmental checklist? Create some research questions together to ask students in conferences. The lists on page 229 are a great start. Pull learners into the study group, and each teacher can ask his or her own reader the research questions they came up with. Discuss with your colleagues what you learned about the students’ choices of books. How do they choose texts? Do they read series, and why do they enjoy a particular series? Let this information guide your teaching and the organization of your classroom library.
Study oral language during literature circle discussions.

Transcribe or record a book talk by students in a literature circle. Since each reader in the small group has a copy of the same title, it is a wonderful time to notice the text-based evidence and oral language used by the students. For the same group of students you have been studying, review what is in their assessment folder. What do you expect of their language? What have you taught them as readers? Gather with colleagues to think about what the learners discussed and the language that they used during the discussion through conversational prompts. Think about the evidence of questions and language prompts students have been taught to use when talking about books (possibly some titles from Appendix D2 in the book and the new Appendix D3 online: http://www.stenhouse.com/html/balancing-reading-and-language-learning.htm). Do students say things like “I had a thought about the character . . .,” “One part I liked was when . . . because . . .,” “On page . . . it said . . . and that made me think . . .,” and so on? Where is the evidence that prompts are being used in students’ discussions, or do they just throw ideas out there without solid language? What language patterns are learners ready to work on? How does the language match what the data you have collected in your assessment folders say? Where are there differences? This can help you plan small-group instruction when students are reading independently rather than reading common texts in literature circles.
Chapter 14: Individual Instruction

Key Guiding Questions from the Book

What do I do with the assessment information I have gathered?
Are there any extra reading activities that will help my English language learners?
What do we learn about our children in our conferences that will help us shape instruction?
Complete list of guiding questions on page 243.

Quotes to Ponder

“[W]e have to take into consideration that all children (and adults) have different learning styles and different ways of making meaning for themselves. Some readers are very literal and try to translate literally from one language to another. Some are visual learners and depend heavily on pictures. Others are auditory learners and can move along best by reading along with audiotapes.” (242)

“We need to look at their developmental progression in reading and language since they arrived at the school and in light of their prior histories. If our ongoing assessment does not help us plan for instruction or reach the goals we have set for our students, there is no point in doing it.” (243)

“Throughout the book I have emphasized observing children, taking notes, and making ongoing assessments. Unless we use this information to plan individual instruction effectively, gathering it becomes just so much more busywork.” (243)

“Reader’s theater is an enjoyable way to explore literature and practice talk and reading.” (250)

“A one-on-one conference can be powerful for both the child and the teacher. As I mentioned, all children strive for individual attention. Setting up daily conferences, even if it is with only two or three children per day, tells students that they will have the opportunity to meet with the teacher individually every two weeks or so.” (250)

Planning for Professional Development Sessions

Modify your conferences during independent reading to support individual learners.

Anecdotal notes are meant to record what behaviors and strategies learners are using, and teachers use that data to guide instruction. Gather conference notes for the group of three or four learners you have been studying (or a different group if it is time to change to another study). Look across their artifacts, their developmental checklists, and the conference notes you have kept. An example reading conference sheet is on page 251 and in Appendix A2 in the book. For each learner, ask, What strategies for reading is this learner demonstrating? What does he or she still need to strengthen? What strategies for language is this learner...
demonstrating? What does he or she still need to strengthen? Plan for small-group sessions and additional whole-class or small-group component work, such as read-aloud or shared reading, that will provide additional opportunities for developing these strategies.

Make sure that knowledge and skills are transferring.

A study of what ELLs are doing independently is a powerful way of reflecting on our own teaching as well as on what our learners are doing throughout the day. For the small group of students you have been studying, look at the reading and language assessment folders that you have been collecting over weeks or months. Where have students grown? What do students need to continue to strengthen? Often there is so much going on, and we are quick to move to the next strategy. Look back at your conference notes for language and reading strategies that you have taught to each of the learners. Tally up where you see evidence of these strategies or language patterns in their writing, their running record comprehension, and in your records of oral language during discussions. What do you notice about these learners? Notice what they have strengthened, and set a plan for what language and reading strategies they need to spend more time on. How will you guide this work? What will the supports for language and literacy look like throughout the day?

Take time to talk to children about their own reading.

After looking at multiple ELLs’ reading and language assessment folders over the course of the weeks or months of your study, is there one student that you would like to continue to coach and think alongside? If you had all the time in the world, what would you do for that one student? Would you read aloud with him or her? Would you sit next to and read with him or her as you might read with a child in your life at home? In the last chapter of her book, Mary describes the importance of working with individual ELLs in private reading conferences. This means truly reading and coaching learners on reading strategies, language patterns, language functions, and on finishing a book that they love, just as a soccer coach runs actively next to a player he or she is developing—guiding, questioning, and molding the moves that player makes. Can you plan out time in your day to do the same? If finding that time is difficult, what other ways can you and your colleagues think of to meet the individual needs of each of your English language learners? What resources are accessible at your school or within your district to give ELLs extra time with an expert to explore topics they are interested in or extra time with a trained English coach to help them read and speak better? And in what ways can you continue to foster a love of reading with students who are also learning the language for the first time?