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Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *But Does This Work With English Learners?* by Mary Amanda Stewart and Holly Genova. This excerpt explains how to maximize a reader's workshop for English Learners.

Modification of Reader's Workshop for Language Learners

Now that you are well-equipped in the reading trifecta—knowledge of 1) Reader's Workshop, 2) students' reading abilities in all their languages, and 3) the basics of second-language acquisition regarding reading—you can begin to modify. Remember that much of what you will read from rock star teachers/researchers/authors/presenters is about implementing Reader's Workshop with monolingual English-speaking students. Or, at best, the students they are considering are pretty proficient in English. (In other words, they've never been in Holly's classroom!) We appreciate the structures they have established and the foundational model they've put into place, but we've got to make some changes for language learners. These modifications fall under support, choice, conferencing, and academic conversations.

Support

We need to offer language learners, particularly older students presented with advanced content, support—and lots of it. This support should be ongoing, occurring before, during, and after their reading. Our job is to make the content comprehensible for them. If you have a class of 20 students or more, that can be hard to do if every student is reading their own self-selected text. We like to choose texts that are at the general i + 1 level of the class and use these as shared reading.

We know people apply the term *shared reading* in different ways. To our early childhood colleagues it might mean sitting around a horseshoe table as students take turns reading a leveled book out loud with the teacher's expert guidance. Or it might denote students sitting on the brightly colored classroom rug as the teacher holds a big book that everyone can see. (The older, bigger, and rowdier your students are, the less you can envision this actually working.) To us, shared reading simply means the students can see and hear the text. They get at least two supports. Then, if possible, we give them visuals as well to support their comprehension. This is usually through us, the teachers, reading out loud as students follow along in their own copies.

First, we make sure we choose books that on the surface look as if they might be appealing to our students. Human beings judge books by their covers, and our students are no different. We have noticed that students are swayed by the cover of a book, the pictures (or lack thereof), the

thickness of the book, and even the size of the font. For example, we have had students shut down with a small font because the text looked too daunting. We've also had to open up *Long Way Down* (Reynolds, 2017), to prove to students there really isn't as much text as it initially seems. The hardback version of this book just looks way too daunting until you open it up. We have to think about the appearance of the book and the judgment call our older students are going to immediately make about how difficult the book will be—basically, if it will be a good or bad experience for them. Some students feel demoralized in most of their classes, and we can't blame them for choosing a different route when given the option.

They are also making judgment calls on how boring (or how engaging from a positive standpoint) the book might be. We have to see the book's dust jacket from our students' perspective. Then, we consider the content. Is it something the students would find interesting and engaging? Is it about something in which the students have shown interest? The balance of the content with the scariness of the text (e.g., the amount of text on each page, size of the font, thickness of the book) combine to determine what a student's reaction might be. We know that we need students onboard before we tackle something we know will be an academic challenge—reading an entire novel in the second language. If possible, ask a few students to come by your class during lunch and have a few books out to get their opinion on what might be a good read for the class. We all like it when our voices are considered, and some of your students might have a better pulse of the class than you.

We also understand the cognitive demands placed on students acquiring English. Holly's students go to school all day with four 90-minute blocks of heavy content in all English: math, science, history, and English language arts. Her students in the last class of the day are drained. We need to push them but simultaneously be aware of the broader context. In fact, when Mandy assigns her graduate students to engage in 10 hours of learning a second language over a 1-month period, some have responded that they get headaches. This is only 10 hours over 30 days. They are all well-educated adults who are not being tested in any way over their L2 abilities—they just need to document that they did it. And they get a headache! Some of them write about how they felt overwhelmed, lost, and unintelligent during the process. This is a reminder to them of a fraction of how their students might feel in their classrooms.

Although there is little sympathy for the graduate students, our heart goes out to young people in Holly's classroom learning English. This does not mean we let them play on their phones and chill out the whole class.

By no means! The empathy we feel only drives us to work harder to create better instructional environments. We have to think of the amount of concentrated effort it will take them to listen and read in English while always trying to push them and get the most out of instructional time.

We take all of this into account when choosing shared reading for our students. Sometimes, especially the first few months for newcomers, we choose picture books with more mature themes. From the hallway, it might look as if we are conducting a read-aloud, but come into the classroom and you will see that we are using the digital camera and showing students the text while we read, maybe even pointing to some words as we read them. However, if possible, we like to have multiple copies of the books and allow students to read along with us as they hold their own copy individually or with a partner. We read out loud as if we are vying for an Oscar, providing dramatic pauses, sound effects, tempo changes, and voice intonation, even if it's a little dorky. We constantly gauge our students' understanding by looking at their faces to help us determine when we need to stop and clarify meaning. While reading, we might pause and Google something to show a visual not already in the text. We pause to have students talk with their partners, in any language, about their understanding. (Note that the one thing we never do is attempt to speak in different accents because we don't want the students to think we are making fun of how they, or anyone else, talks. Accents can be a sensitive subject with language learners. We accept that we are not skilled enough to pull this off and want to avoid sending the wrong message.) We read aloud to our adolescent students because they tell us that our reading of the text helps them understand.

We do more than read for comprehension. It is best if we can choose books that privilege one or more students' culturally embedded knowledge or lived experiences. If that student is willing, she can share with the class her special understanding. We also ask students to make connections to the text or write down a prediction before we get to the end. They also know they can use a like-language partner to clarify meaning. Sometimes we ask them to generate their own questions after reading. These could be very thought-provoking, too. For example, after reading the book *I Pledge Allegiance* (Bellamy, Martin, Sampson, & Raschka, 2002), which explains the components of the pledge, the students in Holly's class write questions in their notebooks and then share with the class. Holly writes them down as they share and leaves them on the board to guide their inquiry units. Students might ask questions like these: Do I have freedom in the United States even if I'm not a citizen?

Table 2.2 Our Favorite Picture Book Read-Alouds With Language Learners

Bunting, E., & Peck, B. (1988). <i>How many days to America? A Thanksgiving story</i> . New York, NY: Clarion Books.
de la Peña, M., & Robinson, C. (2018). <i>Carmela full of wishes</i> . New York, NY: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
de la Peña, M., & Long, L. (2018). <i>Love</i> . New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons.
O'Brien, A. S. (2015). <i>I'm new here</i> . Watertown, MA: Charlesbridge.
Paul, M., & Zunon, E. (2015). <i>One plastic bag: Isatou Ceesay and the recycling women of the Gambia</i> . Minneapolis, MN: Millbrook Press.
Pérez, A. I. (2002). <i>My diary from here to there</i> . San Francisco, CA: Children's Book Press.
Tonatiuh, D. (2010). <i>Dear Primo: A letter to my cousin</i> . New York, NY: Abrams Books for Young Readers.
Tonatiuh, D. (2014). <i>Separate is never equal: Sylvia Mendez & her family's fight for desegregation</i> . New York, NY: Abrams Books for Young Readers.
Winter, J. (2010). <i>Biblioburro: A true story from Colombia</i> . New York, NY: Beach Lane Books.

Does everyone have the same justice? What is a republic, and how does that differ from my country? (See Table 2.2 for our favorite picture book read-alouds with shared reading. We use the projector, purchase extra books, make copies, or type the text in a Word document so students can follow along while looking at the pictures we hold up in our book.)

We also use poems, short stories, and news articles (such as the ones from Newsela) to read with students through shared reading. It's usually a lot easier to make enough copies of these texts so that students can even write on their own copy, underlining what is important, circling new words, and/or writing their language in the margins to aid in their understanding.

But we really want to get students to the place where we can read a novel together as a class. There is nothing like the look on a kid's face, even if he is 19 years old and twice your size, when he feels the accomplishment of finishing a whole novel, a chapter book—and in his second language at that! To do this, you need to make sure the class $i + 1$ average is ready for it and you have done your job activating prior knowledge and building background knowledge needed for this read. This knowledge building can happen with shorter shared readings of picture books or articles, and you can also use videos with captions and rich visuals. We show examples of how we do this in the chapters on units.

It seems that for most students, if this is their first year in the United States, you might want to wait until they've been in school at least one semester before you tackle a chapter book with the class. In Holly's high school newcomer class, this is usually something they do in the

spring semester. Because she gets newcomers throughout the year, it is never a perfect time for everybody, but it generally works with making accommodations for various students. For the past 2 years, she has read *Inside Out & Back Again* (Lai, 2011) as the first class novel with her newcomers. The packet she provides students for each section of the book is provided in Appendix D.

Once your students are ready and you've provided them the background knowledge needed, give each student a novel and get to work, using the same comprehensible input strategies mentioned in the picture book section. This will take multiple classes and even weeks. Know your students' limit. For example, shared reading for the full 90 minutes might not be a good idea. (In fact, we feel overwhelmingly exhausted as teachers, and incredibly bored as students, just thinking about it.) You could spend the beginning of class reviewing aspects of the book, the middle part of class reading with appropriate comprehension pauses, and then the final part of class guiding students in activities to respond to the reading. (Table 2.3 has our favorite novels to read with students acquiring English.) Most novels do not have a lot of visuals so have Google and your projector ready to go. (Just make sure the word you want to explain through imagery is appropriate in all its usages and forms. Our advice learned from awkward situations: Google first with the projector on mute, then choose an appropriate image before you share.)

- Imagine you are a language learner in your classroom. What kinds of support might help you the most?
- Have you ever asked your students what they think helps them learn? Try it and see what they say!

Table 2.3 Our Favorite Shared-Reading Novels With Language Learners

Conkling, W. (2011). <i>Sylvia and Aki</i> . Berkeley, CA: Tricycle Press.
Fleischman, P., & Pedersen, J. (2004). <i>Seedfolks</i> (Rev. Harper Trophy ed.). New York, NY: HarperTrophy.
*Lai, T. (2011). <i>Inside out and back again</i> . New York, NY: HarperCollins.
*Lowry, L. (1989). <i>Number the stars</i> . Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
Park, L. S. (2010). <i>A long walk to water: Based on a true story</i> . New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.
Reynolds, J. (2017). <i>Long way down</i> . New York, NY: Atheneum.

* Appendixes C and D contain our curriculum for learning through these novels. Teachers can modify this curriculum for any whole-class or small-group novel study. Use these examples as ways you can write your own curriculum for any book.

Choice

We know that the previous section doesn't provide students a lot of choice, and it might seem that we just deviated far from Reader's Workshop. Don't get us wrong, we highly value our students as individuals. We want them to read what inspires, entertains, or resonates with them. But we need to read together as a class more than in other classrooms with only native English speakers.

For the whole-class reading we mentioned, you might have the class vote on a few texts you preselected based on their accessibility, text complexity, your students' language levels, students' interests, or the theme of what you are learning. Another idea is that within the theme of the whole-class reading, you provide multiple texts that are less complex and easier for students to read independently. This could be in a literature response group approach or through a jigsaw activity. For example, find various texts that fit into the theme for your inquiry unit. Ensure they are at varying levels and might appeal to different students. For literature response groups, you can put students together who choose a particular book. For a jigsaw activity, they can all read their own book. The idea is that all that reading is connected to the theme and students share their learning with the class or small group.

Finally, you always need to encourage independent reading by giving it at least some time in your class. We recognize the need you feel to give your language learners knowledge the entire time they are with you, but we can assure you, even if all students are reading their own text silently, they are gaining content knowledge and language skills. You also want to encourage and expect them to read outside of class. You might have them choose one article from a website such as News in Levels to read each night. (See Table 2.4 for websites to find articles.) They can choose the article and, in many cases, the text complexity and language. Give them access to easy-to-read books that don't look like "baby books." (Try the Who Was/Is? Series.) Provide bilingual texts as well in English and their first language. Tell them they first might want to read in their language and then go back and read in English. And don't forget to give them L1 texts so they can develop literacy skills and an appreciation of reading that will transfer across languages. This is where a lot of the choice will come in.

One way we have found to provide nearly the same support as the teacher with full choice for the student is by using audiobooks. (We still claim that even the best audiobook reader is not as good as we are at reading with our students to provide maximal second-language

Table 2.4 Our Favorite Websites to Find Articles

Newsela	newsela.com	Lexile levels, many articles available in Spanish, text-sets, quizzes
News in Levels: World News for Students of English	www.newsinlevels.com	Levels (Level 1 is great for newcomers), difficult words are identified with explanations, listening available, some article have activities included
DOGO News: ELA–Science–Social Studies	www.dogonews.com	Click on certain words to get a definition; vocabulary list of these words; articles available in Spanish; listen available in English or Spanish; assignments for articles: reading comprehension, critical thinking challenge, vocabulary in context, multiple-choice quiz
Smithsonian Tween Tribune	www.tweentribune.com	Lexile levels, Spanish articles (cannot click from the English article to change to Spanish so it might be hard to find the same article in both languages)
Wonderopolis: Where the Wonders of Learning Never Cease	www.wonderopolis.org	Use the Listen/Immersive Reader button to change the language to many different options; listening available in English; hover over vocabulary for definitions; some articles have videos to go with them

acquisition. We can see frustration in their faces, stop and ask questions, and answer their questions—something a recording can't do.) Many of our students love apps like Sora (<https://meet.soraapp.com>) that allow them to access a book that is too difficult for them to read independently but is comprehensible when they can see the text while it is read aloud to them.

HOLLY'S STUDENTS LOVE SORA!



This year, my (Holly's) students love using Sora. One of their favorite functions is the read-aloud. This section is full of current picture books and nonfiction books that are read aloud by actors or authors. Matt de la Peña (de la Peña & Robinson, 2015) reads *Last Stop on Market Street*. You might think that high school students would feel that these are baby books, but for some reason, through the app, they do not feel this way. I like the app because it allows students to choose a book on their own and hear a fluent reader. I also like it because I often have students who want to read chapter books but become frustrated because the level of English they have acquired is not enough to make reading the text pleasurable. Some of my students choose an audiobook and use it to support reading chapter books in my class. They love it. I love it. It's a win-win for everyone. Score!

- In your current teaching, how are students provided choice in their reading?
- Do you need to give your language learners less choice and more support through small-group or whole-class reading? Or do you need to give them more choice with different kinds of support through individual reading?

Conferencing

Individual reading conferences are a major component of the Reader's Workshop and work well with language learners. The main thing to consider here is students' oral language abilities. In the regular Reader's Workshop, that is not a key issue, but it is with language learners. Some students will have more advanced reading than speaking skills in English. But remember the importance of language integration that we discussed in Chapter 1. Some (or most) students need a little push to use all language domains—reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This is especially true of the productive domains (writing and speaking) for overly self-aware adolescents who think everyone is out to make fun of them. Yet talking with students about what they are reading will be a safe space for them to express to you what they do not understand, what they like, or what they do not like about their reading. You can help students identify when a book is too difficult, and therefore frustrating, usually leading to multiple off-task and disruptive behaviors during silent reading time. Make sure they are able to communicate with you if they do not like the book they are reading or any books you have available to them. Learn about what they would like to read. It might be something authentic such as how to apply for a green card. Even if they are learning to read a job application, that is real reading.

During conferences, you might also find out about students' reading abilities in their home languages. This will help you identify bilingual or LOTE texts that will engage them more as readers. If you have students who only want to read in the first language because they are really into the *Divergent* series or even Paul Coelho novels (we've taught these students), make sure you acknowledge how proud you are that they are reading. If they are extremely reluctant to read anything in English during independent reading time, talk to them to understand why. Maybe you can make a pact with them: If they try to read one small book or online text each day in English, you will do the same in your second language (because we all need to try to put ourselves in their

shoes). You might also tell them that even though you encourage them to read a little something in English, you really, more than anything, want them to read. Make sure you are committed to providing them a large supply of engaging books in their language. Maybe you can read the same books in English and have your own side book club going on.

- Have you ever conferenced with students about their reading or had informal conversations with them? If so, what did you learn that you might not have learned otherwise?
- How can you think of creative solutions to have conferences or informal conversations with students about their reading if you have 100 or more students? Remember, you do not need to conference with every student every day or even every week. A few conferences a year are better than none at all.

HE DRIVES ME CRAZY! (WOO-HOO)



Have you ever had that one student who drives you crazy but also challenges you to be a better teacher? For me (Holly), this was Edwin. Edwin always had a valid argument for almost everything we did in class. For example, I ask my students to read every night in English for 10 minutes on the website News in Levels (www.newsinlevels.com). Then, they need to complete the following sentence stems: "The article was about _____. One detail in the article is _____." The following day in class, students share with each other in English. I said almost every day, "Students, you have to practice reading, writing, and speaking in English. The more you practice, the easier it will become." One day, after I said this for the hundredth time, Edwin said to me, "Miss, ¿Por qué no practica español? You have to practice if you want to get better." The class erupted in "Oooooooooohhh, Miiiiiiiss." Ugh! How could I argue with him? So, I made a deal with my class. I would start reading the news every night in Spanish, and I would share the next day in Spanish what I had read. Yes, I was challenged, but this one thing helped the community in my classroom grow exponentially. My students saw me as a fellow learner, and they were able to see me make mistakes and learn from my mistakes. My students corrected my Spanish pronunciation and sometimes my spelling or verb conjugations. It strengthened the learning community more than I could have ever imagined.

Academic Conversations About Reading

In Chapter 1, we discussed academic language and how all students, but especially language learners and even more so SLIFEs and L-TELEs, need multiple contextually embedded and meaningful experiences with vocabulary, phrases, and discourse patterns that are necessary to be successful in school (Freeman, Freeman, & Mercuri, 2002). In the upper grades, we are often hyperfocused on reading and writing—and rightly so. Our language learners need to pass exams that require academic reading and writing in English in order to graduate from high school and enter a career or university track that can provide them, and their families, social mobility. However, with this narrow view of what our students need, we sometimes get in the way of our own best teaching because we overlook oral language. Somehow, oral language is habitually viewed as “less academic” than reading and writing. Yet we know that language and literacy will more effectively and efficiently develop when we integrate all language domains: reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

But we need to admit the truth. Putting this crucial aspect of language on the back burner is something we (Mandy and Holly) are guilty of in our quest to give our students the best education possible. We’ve noticed how purposeful conversation is left out of our instructional plan if we don’t intentionally make a place for it. In fact, Holly’s new teaching goal this school year is to help her students develop more oral language skills in English, which will help them be more successful not only in her class but other classes as well.

Fortunately, oral language development can seamlessly integrate into the workshop model as we build academic language around reading. Understanding that academic language is more than just vocabulary, our instruction should address the word, sentence, discourse (text) level (Fenner & Snyder, 2017) as we use Reader’s Workshop to model the use of this language. First, we use the time for planned conferencing about students’ reading to reuse academic vocabulary that we taught in a whole-class format. To address sentence-level language, we provide students with sentence frames to help them discuss their reading with us. Through providing these structures, we bring them into a conversation using academic discourse. The goal is that students will eventually not need their sentence frames, will retain the vocabulary, and will be comfortable participating in academic conversations. Throughout this process we consider the affective domain and are vigilant that our

language learners have multiple positive experiences engaging with the language through speaking. For some students, a win is that they read the sentence frame out loud in our conference and insert something about their book, even if it is in their language. (Here's an example: The setting of the book *está en la escuela*.) For others, a win is that the new vocabulary becomes evident in their speaking and writing and that they can discuss school-related concepts in other classes as well.

Because language learners are so diverse, remember that some of your students might have already developed the academic discourse you are teaching, just in another language. This is where your knowledge about their home language competencies and previous educational experiences will help you out. If this is the case, the student does not need to relearn how to use this component of academic language. The student just needs to know the English equivalent for what he already knows. For example, some students might be competent in making predictions, plotting a story, or discussing symbolism in poetry because they have had these experiences in another language or country. You might have them discuss these concepts in a group of like-language speakers, then, have them identify the key words they need to know to have those same conversations in English.

Student Profiles: Meet Multilingual Readers

Although all of my (Holly's) students fall under the identifier of English Learner, each student has a different story. I'd like you to come into my classroom to meet some of my multilingual readers.

Ana: President of ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) Book Club

When I first met Ana in her third year in U.S. schools, she was a very quiet and reserved young woman, and still is. Mandy had taught Ana the summer before I had her in class through a Spanish Literacy Camp where Ana read novels in Spanish and thrived in an environment where her Spanish language skills were on display. Having this information and through our class writing, I learned that Ana loved school, and her love for learning came from her grandfather, who was a college professor in Nicaragua. When Ana was leaving Nicaragua, her grandfather told her the importance of taking her studies seriously in the United States and she would need to learn English quickly. But he also told her to never forget who she was and where she came from. He explained