

**Talking to Learn,
Learning to Talk:
Jumpstarting English Language
Learning in Literacy**

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Conversations with children are at the heart of language development. English language learners (ELL's) need more talk than children who control English well. Explore how to use their strengths by engaging them in meaningful talk around writing and reading in the Reading Recovery lesson.

- **Children learn language through listening and speaking.**
- **Oral language, reading and writing are reciprocal and inform each other.**
- **Children who are learning a second language have already learned a great deal about how language works from their first language.**

Acquisition of literacy for [English language learners] takes

- **Time**
- **Good instruction**
- **Access to interesting books in a variety of levels and genres**
- **Opportunities for practice**

“...But they will succeed.”

--Pat Johnson, 2006, p. 128.

English language learners need many opportunities daily to:

- **Talk**
- **Be listened to**
- **Listen**
- **Respond**
- **Be responded to**

Conversation shapes the environment.



Interrogation:

- **Initiate**
- **Respond**
- **Evaluate**

Inquiry:

- **Invite**
- **Take turns**
- **Co-construct**

Common Features of Conversation and Teaching Interactions

Both speaker and listener:

- **Cooperate.**
- **Check for understanding.**
- **Reformulate the message if necessary.**
- **Are active and co-construct meaning.**

--Marie Clay, 1998, p 14.

Teacher / Child co-construct:

- Takes on child's interests and language.
- Reformulates.
- Expands.
- Adjusts language to child's understanding.
- Appropriates language.
- Constructs new utterances.
- Makes new connections.

Total Physical Response

- **Listen.**
- **Imitate.**
- **Innovate.**
- **Invent.**

--Dr. James Asher

Start up a conversation...

Guided by all you know about this child...

- **From a classroom theme or event,**
- **From something that captures his attention,**
- **From something you have brought along to spark his interest,**
- **From a discussion of one of his books,**
- **Or from some other source.**

--Clay, 2005, p. 55.

- **If the child's language development seems to be lagging, it is misplaced sympathy to do his talking for him. Instead, put your ear closer, concentrate more sharply, smile more rewardingly, and spend more time in genuine conversation, difficult though it is.**

--Clay, 1991, p. 69.

Conversational Roles

- **Listen actively.**
- **Respond to the intended message.**
- **Reformulate.**
- **Extend.**
- **Negotiate meanings.**
- **Uncover confusions.**
- **Support.**

--Clay, from talk, 2002.

- **Book introductions are an authentic social interaction about the new book; but when they provide an orientation to novel features of stories and of texts, they are also a kind of teaching.**

--Clay, 1998, p. 175.

“...a social interaction”

- **Title**
- **Brief summary**
- **Conversation**

