

The Language Proficiency-Academic Performance Continuum

Level	Learner Characteristics	How will they gain language?	What do they Understand?	What can they do?
1. NO BICS	Can be silent for an initial period; Recognizes basic vocabulary and high frequency words; May begin to speak with few words or imitate	Multiple repetitions of language; Simple sentences; Practice with partners; Use visual and realia, Model, model, model; Check for understanding and comprehension; Build on cultural and linguistic history	Instructions such as: Listen, Line up, Point to, List, Say, Repeat, Color, Tell, Touch, Circle, Draw, Match, Label	Use gestures; Use other native speakers ; Use high frequency phrases; Use common nouns; Communicate basic needs; Use survival language (i.e., words and phrases needed for basic daily tasks and routines)
2. E. BICS	Understand phrases and short sentences; Beginning to use general vocabulary and everyday expressions; Grammatical forms may include present, present progress and imperative	Multiple repetitions of language; Visual supports for vocabulary; Pre-teach content vocabulary; Link to prior knowledge; Check for understanding and comprehension	Present and past tense; School related topics; Comparatives & superlatives; Routine questions; Imperative tense; Simple sequence words	Routine expressions; Simple phrases; Subject verb agreement; Ask for help
3. I. BICS	Increased comprehension in context; May sound proficient but has social NOT academic language; Inconsistent use of standard grammatical structures	Multiple repetitions of language; Use synonyms and antonyms; Use word banks; Demonstrate simple sentences; Link to prior knowledge	Past progressive tense; Contractions; Auxiliary verbs/verb phrases; Basic idioms; General meaning; Relationship between words	Formulate questions; Compound sentences; Use precise adjectives; Use synonyms; Expanded responses
4. A. BICS	Very good comprehension; More complex speech and with fewer errors; Engages in conversation on a variety of topics and skills; Can manipulate language to represent their thinking but may have difficulty with abstract academic concepts; Continues to need academic language development	Multiple repetitions of language; Authentic practice opportunities to develop fluency and automaticity in communication; Explicit instruction in the use of language; Specific feedback; Continued vocabulary development in all content areas	Present/perfect continuous; General & implied meaning; Varied sentences; Figurative language; Connecting ideas; Tag questions	Range of purposes; Increased cultural competence (USA); Standard conversational grammar; Basic literary grammar; Solicit information
5. A. BICS - E. CALP	Communicates effectively on a wide range of topics; Participates fully in all content areas at grade level but may still require curricular adjustments; Comprehends concrete and abstract concepts; Produces extended interactions to a variety of audiences	May not be fully English proficient in all domains (i.e., reading, writing, speaking, listening); Has mastered formal and informal language conventions; Multiple opportunities to practice complex grammatical forms; Meaningful opportunities to engage in conversations; Explicit instruction in the smaller details of English usage and specific grammatical rules; Focus on “gaps” or areas still needing instruction in English; Focus on comprehension instruction in all language domains	Rudimentary aspects of advanced linguistic functions/pragmatics, such as analysis, defending statements, debate, prediction, evaluation, justification, generating hypotheses, synthesizing, restating, and critiquing. But still possess only a superficial understanding of these functions.	May not yet be fully proficient across all domains; Comprehends concrete and abstract topics; Communicates effectively on a wide range of topics and purposes; Produces extended interactions to a variety of audiences; Participates fully in all content areas at grade level but may still require curricular modifications; Increasing understanding of meaning, including figurative, allegorical, metaphorical, and idiomatic language; Read grade level text with academic language support; Support their own point of view; Use some humor in native-like way

Source: Turner & Brown, (2012) as cited in Brown, J. E. & Ortiz, S. O. (2014). Interventions for English Learners with Learning Difficulties. In J. T. Mascolo, V. C. Alfonso, and D. P. Flanagan (Eds.), *Essentials of Planning, Selecting, and Tailoring Interventions for Unique Learners* (pp. 267-313)., Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons.

PLUSS Framework for Evidence-based Instruction for ELLs

PLUSS Framework	Definition	Evidence
<u>P</u>re-teach critical vocabulary	Presentation of critical vocabulary prior to lessons to ensure later comprehension using direct instruction, modeling, and connections to native language	Beck, McKeown and Kucan (2002); Heibert and Lubliner (2008); Martinez and Lesaux (2011); Nagy, Garcia, Dyrgunoglu and Hancin (1993)
<u>L</u>anguage modeling and opportunities for practice	Teacher models appropriate use of academic language, then provides structured opportunities for students to practice using the language in meaningful contexts	Dutro and Moran (2003); Echevarria, Vogt and Short (2008); Gibbons (2009); Linan-Thompson and Vaughn (2007); Scarcella (2003)
<u>U</u>se visuals and graphic organizers	Strategically use pictures, graphic organizers, gestures, realia, and other visual prompts to help make critical language, concepts, and strategies more comprehensible to learners	Brechtal (2001); Echevarria and Graves (1998); Haager and Klingner (2005); Linan-Thompson and Vaughn (2007); O'Malley and Chamot, (1990)
<u>S</u>ystematic and explicit instruction	Explain, model, provide guided practice with feedback, and opportunities for independent practice in content, strategies, and concepts	Calderón (2007); Flagella-Luby and Deshler (2008); Gibbons (2009); Haager and Klingner (2005); Klingner and Vaughn (2000); Watkins and Slocum (2004)
<u>S</u>trategic use of native language & teaching for transfer	Identify concepts and content students already know in their native language and culture to explicitly explain, define, and help them understand new language and concepts in English	Carlisle, Beeman, Davis and Spharim (1999); Durgunoglu, et al. (1993); Genesee, Geva, Dressler, and Kamil (2006); Odlin (1989); Schecter and Bayley (2002)

Source: Sanford, A., Brown, J.E., & Turner, M. (2012). Enhancing instruction for English learners in Response to Intervention systems: The PLUSS Model. *Multiple Voices for Ethnically Diverse Exceptional Learners*, 13, 56-70

Examples of PLUSS Framework Applied in the Classroom

PLUSS Framework	Example
<u>P</u>re-teach critical vocabulary	Select 3-5 high utility vocabulary words crucial to understanding text (not necessarily content specific words) and explicitly teach student friendly definitions, model using the words, and provide students with repeated opportunities to use the words over time (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2008; Beck, McKeown, Kucan, 2002)
<u>L</u>anguage modeling and opportunities for practicing	Provide language frames and sentence starters to structure language interaction. For example, after having defined the word, “preoccupied,” for instance, ask students to use the word, “preoccupied,” in a sentence, “Think of a time when you were preoccupied.” (pause to give time to think). “Turn to your partners and share, starting your sentence with, ‘I was preoccupied when...’, what will you start your sentence with?” (Have students repeat the sentence starter before turning to their neighbor and sharing).
<u>U</u>se visuals and graphic organizers	Consistently use a Venn diagram to teach concepts, such as compare and contrast, and use realia and pictures to support the teaching of concepts (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2008)
<u>S</u>ystematic and explicit instruction	Teach strategies like summarization, monitoring and clarifying, and decoding strategies through direct explanation, modeling, guided practice with feedback, and opportunities for application (Honig, Diamond, & Gutlohn, 2008).
<u>S</u>trategic use of native language & teaching for transfer	Use native language to teach cognates (e.g., teach that “superior” means the same thing in Spanish) or explain/clarify a concept in the native language before or while teaching it in English.

Source: Brown, J. E. & Ortiz, S. O. (2014). Interventions for English Learners with Learning Difficulties. In J. T. Mascolo, V. C. Alfonso, and D. P. Flanagan (Eds.), *Essentials of Planning, Selecting, and Tailoring Interventions for Unique Learners* (pp. 267-313)., Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons.

1 **Content Objective:**

2 **Language Objective:**

Strategies: **L** – Language modeling & opportunities for practice
U – Use visuals and graphic organizers
S – Strategic use of Native language and teaching for transfer

5
L

6
U

7
S

4 **P**
Pre-teach
critical
vocabulary

3 **S**
Systematic
& explicit
instruction