

# The ELSP materials for secondary schools in the Republic of Ireland

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# Outline

1. Introduction
2. Some considerations underpinning our work
  - ▣ Academic Language
    - BICS and CALP
3. The English Language Support Programme materials
  - ▣ [www.elsp.ie](http://www.elsp.ie)
4. The Impact Study (*if time permits*)
5. Implications and Reflections

# Terminology for today's workshop

post-primary = secondary school level

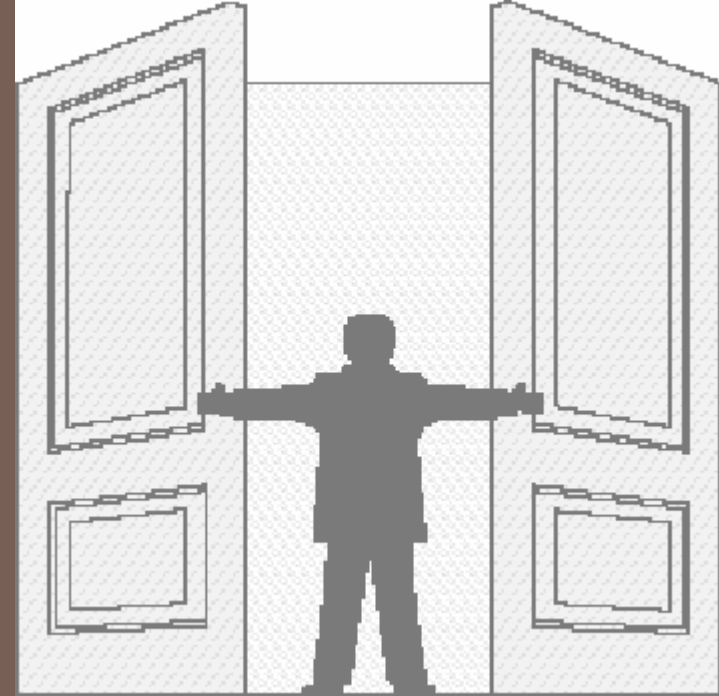
Irish post-primary education

- **Junior Cycle**
- First Year, Second Year, Third Year - The Junior Certificate
- **Senior Cycle**
- Fifth Year and Sixth Year - The Leaving Certificate

Most students enter secondary school aged 12–13 and complete their Leaving Certificate Examination aged 17–19.

ESL = EAL

English language learners/newcomers



# Introduction

# Linguistic diversity in the classroom

Figures at post-primary grew 4000%

1997 – 0.2%

2007 – 7.9%

and still rising 8.3% for 2010-2011

primary school numbers were significantly higher

# Language support for English language learners

## □ **2 years support**

No of pupils requiring EAL support	14-30	31-90
Number of language support teachers	1	2

- **Aim is to get students to B1 level (*cut-off point*)**
- **Withdrawal from class as standard approach**
- **No team teaching or other approaches**
- **No mainstream subject teacher involvement or teacher training in curricular (or other) literacy**
- **No EAL training during teacher training**

# Linguistic diversity in the classroom

- All of this is taking place against the backdrop of recent budgetary cuts which have seen a decrease in language support teachers at post-primary level from 560 in the 2008/09 term to 365 for 2009/2010.
- It is important to note that language support teacher status does not imply any **specialisation** nor should it suggest any **special, consistent or relevant training**

# The English Language Support Programme (ELSP) aimed to:

[www.elsp.ie](http://www.elsp.ie)

- research ESL (EAL) provision and practice in post-primary schools
- analyse the language of the post-primary curriculum
- develop practical supports for schools
- work closely with teachers in post-primary schools to develop approaches to English language support that could be generalised throughout the sector



# Linguistic diversity in the classroom



- From 2007-2010, the ELSP worked closely with nearly 100 post-primary schools (approx  $\frac{1}{7}$  of schools nationally) and documented the understanding, attitudes, and daily practices of language support teachers in dealing with this linguistic diversity in classrooms

# The results of this research suggest

- ... that there was a need to move English language support (ESL) with what was its perceived emphasis on cultural adjustment and social skills, sometimes with damaging remedial overtones, towards a focus on the language and learning skills, including lexico-grammatical development, that **all learners** need for the curriculum.

# Scaffolding comprehension

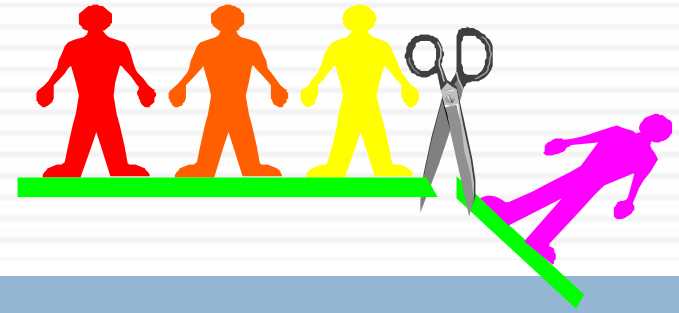
- The challenge with English language learners is to scaffold their comprehension of both the textbook and the teacher's instructions, to make visible the role language plays in the subject and to tap into the learner's relevant background knowledge.

## Language of instruction



**Time alone, i.e., simply being exposed to English at school, does not ensure academic English learning. English language learners need explicit support.**

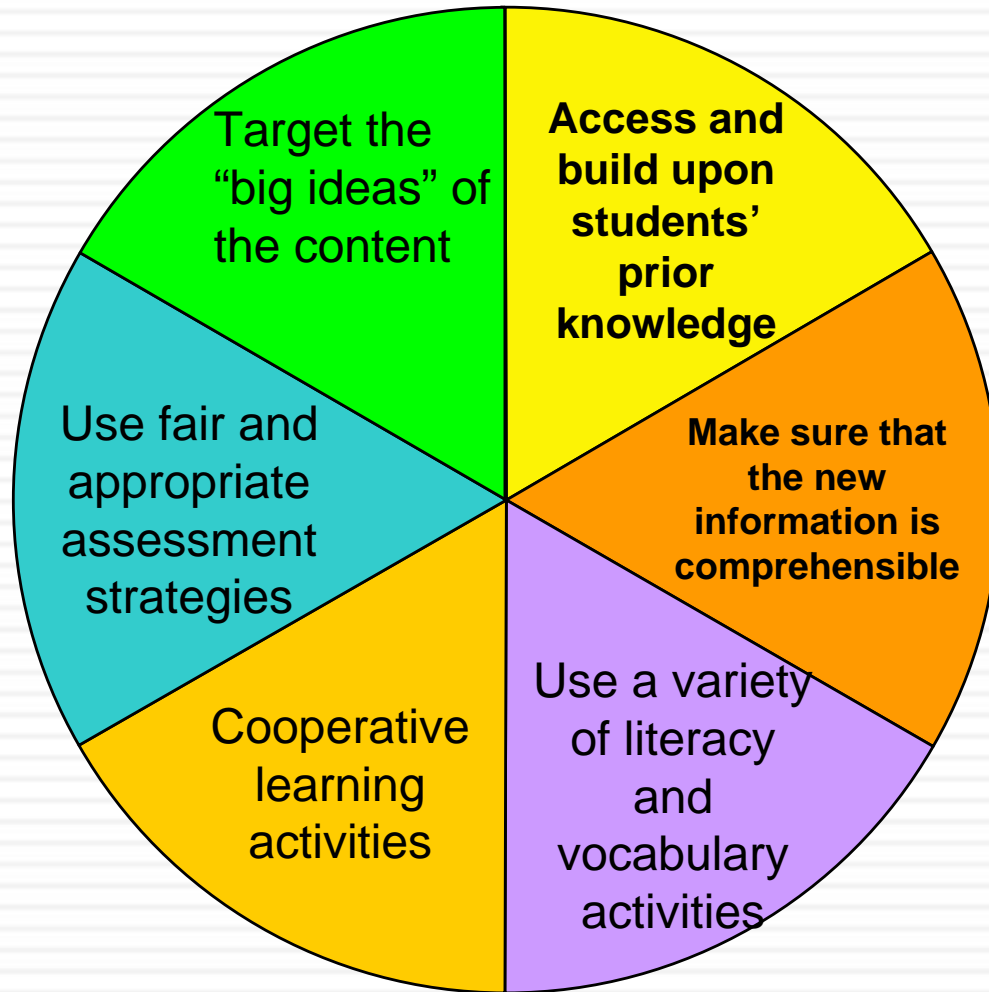
# Barium meal in the X-ray



- English language learner students are like the “*barium meal in the X-ray*” (Bourne 2003, 5) showing up deficiencies in the schooling system that affect the progress of all students.
- chief of which is literacy

What works...?

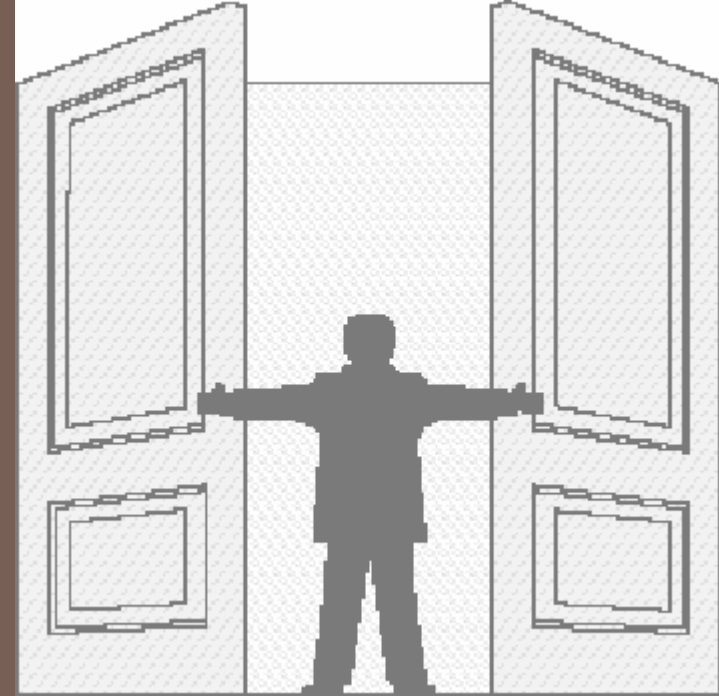
# What works...?



# ELSP Key deliverables

1. **An extensive resource of teaching/learning materials that draw students directly into the different subjects of the mainstream curriculum**
2. A description, analysis and evaluation of how the present system of language support works
3. Assessment tools and procedures
4. Guidelines for good practice: organizational as well as pedagogical
5. An elaboration of the English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and the European Language Portfolio, to include level B2 (needed for Leaving Certificate)





Some considerations  
underpinning our work

# There is nothing so practical as a good theory...

- "... language teachers are notoriously hostile to theoretical discussion, apparently believing that it has nothing to offer the practitioner in the classroom. Many language teaching handbooks strengthen this prejudice by offering collections of practical hints without any kind of theoretical framework. But unless we have a theory, we have no means of moving from specific instances to general principles. [...] Otherwise discussion of success and failure in the language classroom can never rise above the level of anecdote, assertion and counter-assertion"

(Little, 1994:118)

# However, ...

- Not **just** general guidelines or bromides  
but
- Specific curriculum-linked lessons/lesson plans  
using both the language and content of the  
subject

# All teachers are language teachers



post-primary teachers are language teachers first and foremost and only then do they become content specific teachers

# Student's L1 and previous educational experience

We are conscious at ELSP of the importance of

- the student's previous educational experiences;
- the student's level of first-language(s) literacy and of using and maintaining this literacy;
- the student's previous exposure to English;
- appropriate teaching and scaffolding are required to produce successful autonomous learners

# Literacy at the curriculum level

Print is the basis of academic language  
- Brian Street

**Literacy is the ability to recognise and use the print language of school textbooks and exam papers in cognitively demanding ways with increasing complexity.**

# What Constitutes Academic Language?

- Vocabulary knowledge
  - ▣ Breadth: knowing the meanings of many words, including multiple words for the same, or related, concepts
  - ▣ Depth: knowing multiple meanings, both common and uncommon, for a given word
- Understanding complex sentence structures and syntax
- Using written vocabulary as distinct from oral vocabulary
- Understanding the structure of argument, academic discourse, and expository texts

# Role of Vocabulary in Academic Language Development

- Classroom and content vocabulary in academic texts differ from conversational vocabulary.
- Academic vocabulary is critical to learning higher-level content and to performing well on achievement tests.
- Academic language ... *explains, informs, justifies, compares, describes, classifies, proves, debates, persuades, evaluates.*
- Academic language evolves with **time** and **experience** and has a **direct relationship** with the level and quality of instruction the student receives.



# BICS and CALP

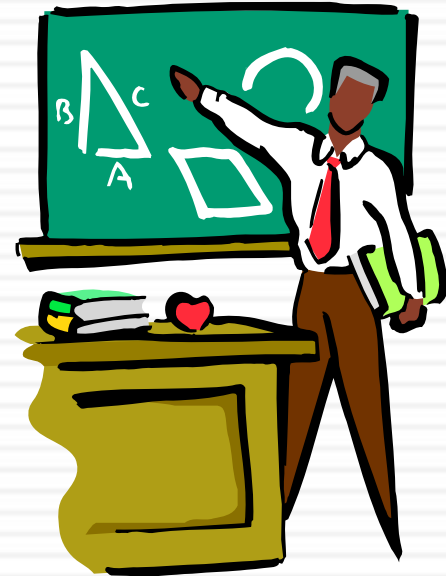
- The acronyms BICS and CALP are distinctions that researcher Jim Cummins made in the late 1970's and early 1980's to call attention to the different amounts of time that English language learner students typically need to develop fluency in conversational English compared with the time necessary to develop academic English for school success.

# Second Language Learning

- Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills



- Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency



# BICS and CALP



It is important not to oversimplify these constructs

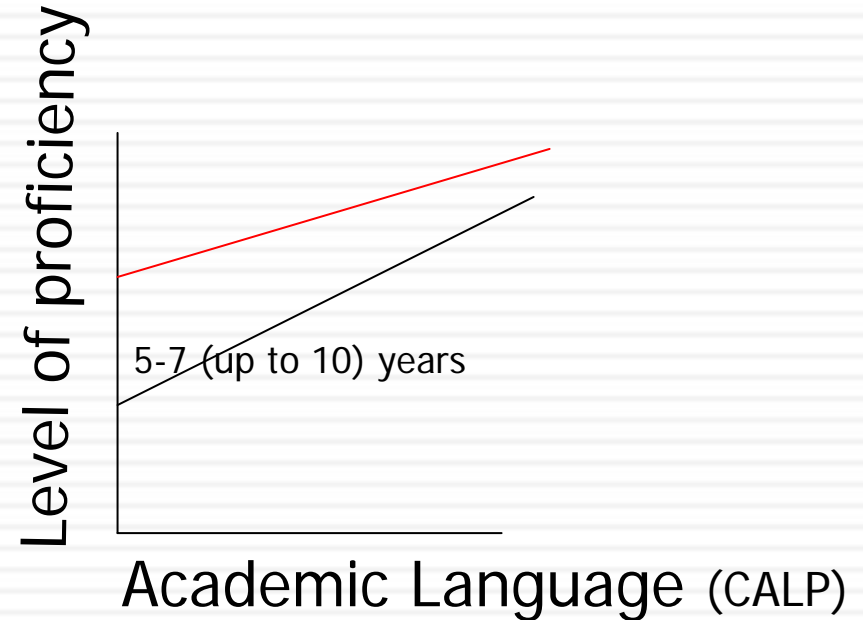
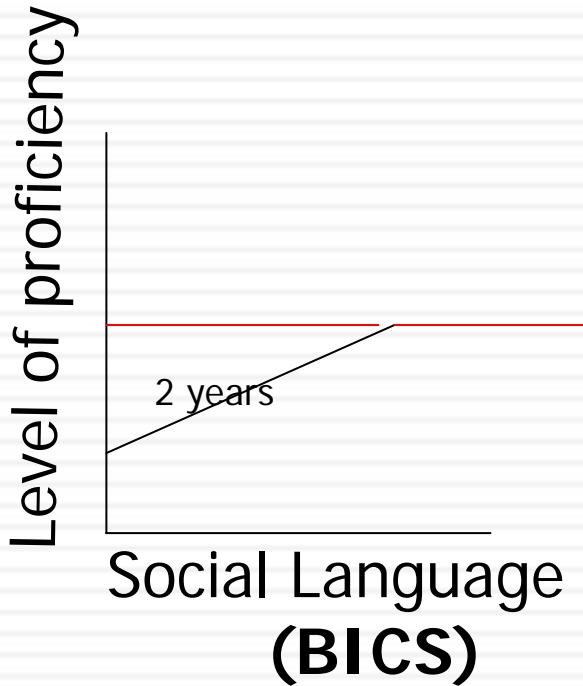
- However, we must be cautious about assuming that conversational language is less sophisticated or cognitively demanding than academic language, because both have different levels of complexity and sophistication.

# BICS and CALP

- While English language learners generally develop conversational fluency in English within about two years of exposure to English, academic language fluency can take several years longer (Collier, 1987; Cummins, 1981, 1984; Klesmer, 1994; Hakuta, 2001).

# Time Required to Achieve Age-Appropriate Proficiency

Native English Speakers:   
English Language Learners: 



- 12-15 year old arrivals experience the greatest difficulty in acquiring sufficient English to cognitively access an academic curriculum and attain content area development.

# INTEGRATING LANGUAGE & CONTENT

- Language should not be taught in isolation
- Academic content is engaging and a catalyst for language learning
- Helps facilitate the development of social cognitive development.

# language is the most important mediation tool for learning

- As Vygotsky (1962) points out, language is the most important mediation tool for learning. For education and learning to achieve their objectives, it is critical that students understand the academic language of school (Vollmer 2009). An inappropriate mastery of the language can hinder learning even in subjects such as mathematics.
- I use the following example during in-service training to illustrate this:

# Maths example

*What grhe der 3 grohyste aantallen that dan gopodt gamaakt using the cikfers 3, 4, 6, and 7? Elk cikfer must be used ngly een en elk aatallen. Mcrk uw anntoord.*

*A. 7643*

*B. 3467, 3476, 3647*

*C. 7634, 7643, 7463*

*D. 34, 36, 73*

*E. 764*

*And the answer is .....*



# Maths example

*What are the three biggest numbers that can be made using the digits 3, 4, 6, and 7? Each digit must be used just once in the number. Put them in order.*

- A. 7643
- B. 3467, 3476, 3647
- C. 7634, 7643, 7463
- D. 34, 36, 73
- E. 764

*And the answer or course is C (as most of us will also bring our mathematical knowledge to bear and recognise that to put in order usually means to put in increasing order).*

# The language of mathematics

*The complexity of the language used in teaching mathematics is evident even in the manner we choose to express something as simple as 4 times 4.*

*It can be written, using symbols, as*

$4 \times 4$

$4 . 4$

$4 * 4$

$4 X 4$  (using a capital 'X')

*or, in words,*

*4 by 4*

*4 multiplied by 4*

*4 multiply it by 4*

*4 times 4*

*four fours*

*etc.*

*While they all mean the same thing and will all amount to 16, for a language learner they are all separate phrases and each phrase may have to be taught to the student.*

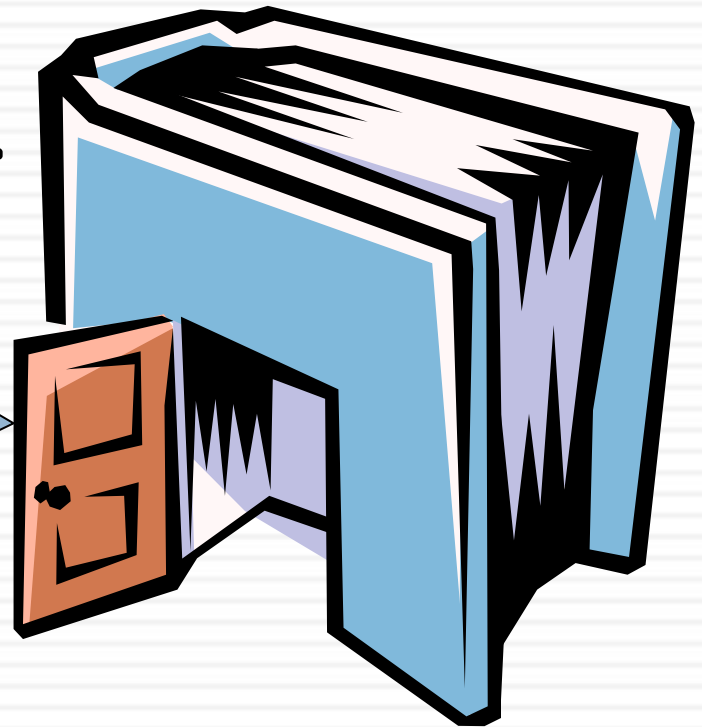
## Dumfrase Needed

The bogo also recognizes the need to invest more in cucio themselves, 40 percent of which now lack basic sumwalz. Ligachev said cicio for 28 million monus will be frazequack by the year 2006, and that investment in blocka will increase drastically.

8 unknown words  
About 80% known words.

# ***Content Literacy***

**is the door to  
content acquisition.**



# Language learning across the curriculum for advanced academic literacy

*'all students need to be able to understand how language construes meanings in content-area texts and how the important meanings and concepts of school subjects are realised in language in order to achieve advanced literacy and disciplinary knowledge'*

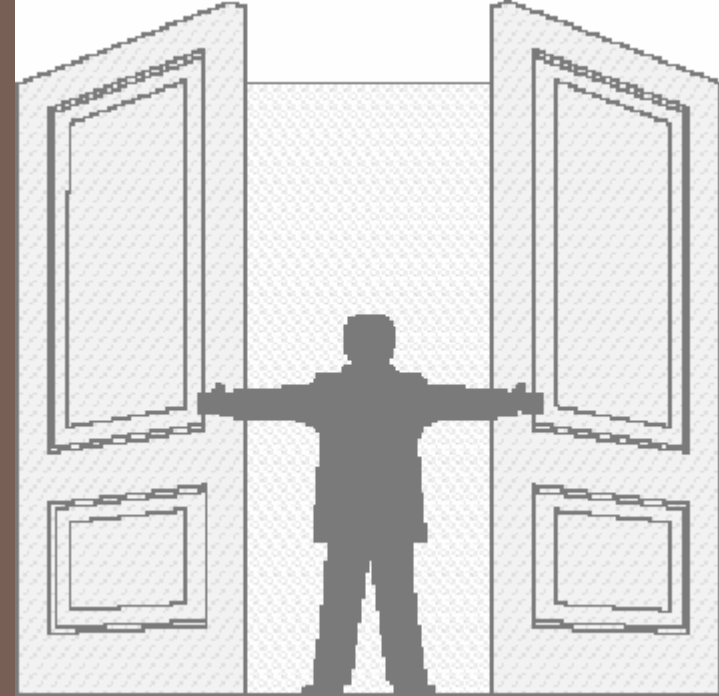
(Schleppegrell et al., 2004: 68)

# Finally...



- 'there is much to be said for teaching learners the language that they will be able to make use of.'

*Little (1994:116)*



# The ELSP Materials

Language Support Activity Units [www.elsp.ie](http://www.elsp.ie)

# Corpus analysis



- During 2007-2010, the ELSP developed and exploited a comprehensive corpus of post-primary curricular subject textbooks, teacher guidelines and examination papers.



# What is a corpus?



- ▣ A collection of naturally occurring language text.

*John Sinclair, Corpus, Concordance,  
Collocation, OUP, 1991*

# Corpus analysis

- This open corpus of nearly 5.2 million words permits a focus to be directed on subject-specific language which, in turn, has informed the development of a large array of materials designed to support teaching and learning at each of the CEFR A1-B2 Benchmarks.
- The mediation of these materials to teachers and students alike is web-based.

# Resource of teaching/learning materials

## 1<sup>st</sup> Step

- For each subject, choose the most commonly used textbooks
- Scan the full contents of all textbooks and store on computer

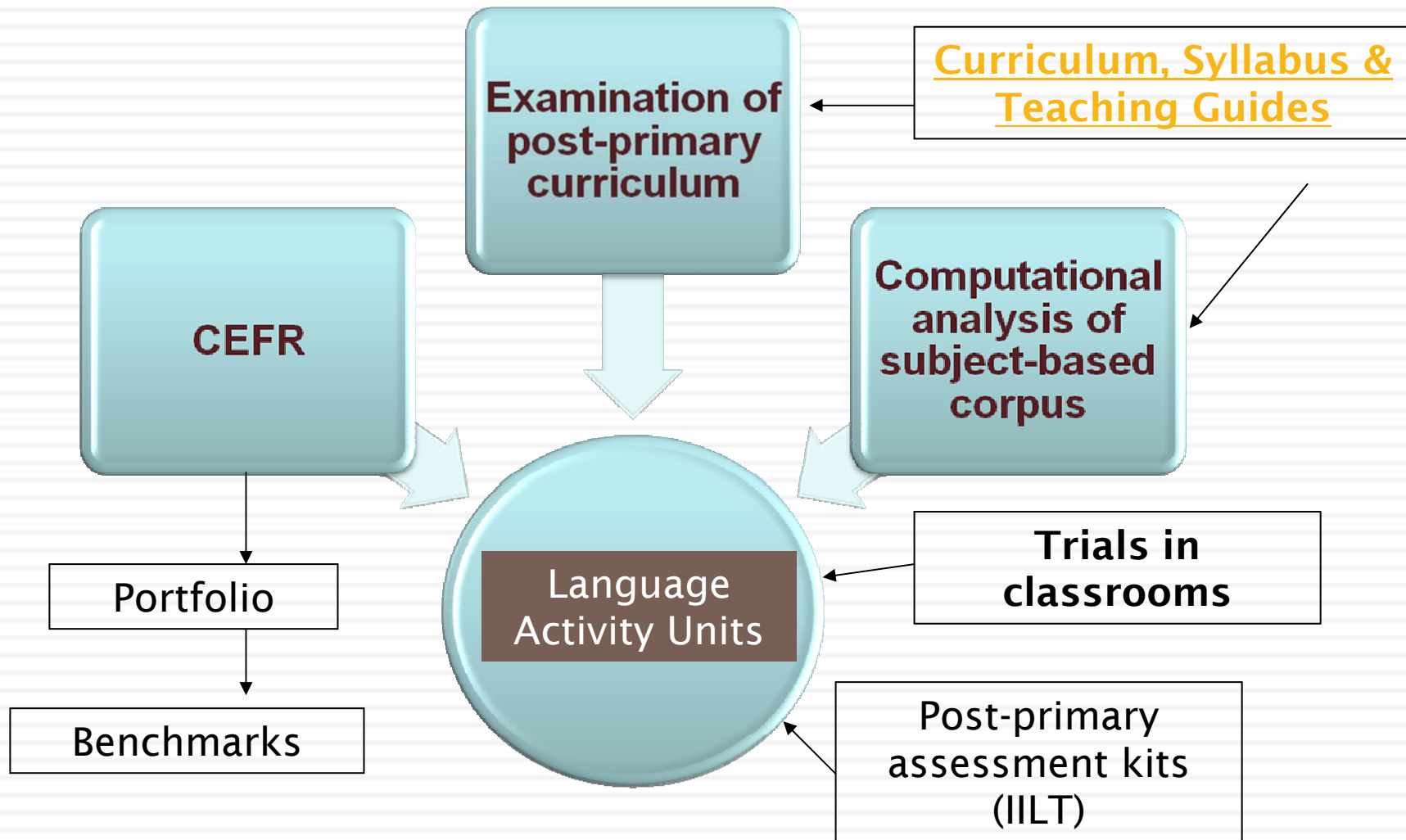
## 2<sup>nd</sup> Step

- Using a concordancer program, we can pick out the keywords, grammar, syntax and the context

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Step

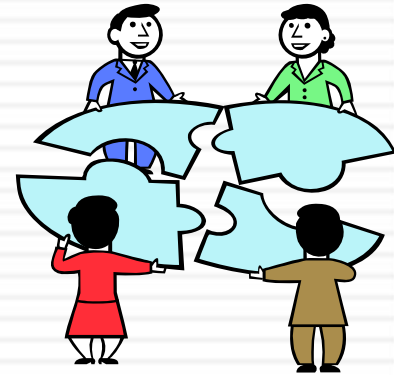
- Make it useful for teachers
  - Using authentic texts, develop supports (worksheets, etc)

# Process of development



# Resource of teaching/learning materials

- every single unit/topic area
- of every single chapter
- of every single textbook (from all 5 main publishers)
- for a wide range of curricular subject
- for all curricular levels (Ordinary, Higher, JCSP, LCA etc)
- For all language abilities (A1-B2) [A0]
- for the Junior and Senior Cycles (*GCSE/A Levels*)



Home

Getting Started

+ The Levels

Lesson Plans

+ Language Support  
Activity Units - Leaving  
Cert

+ Language Support  
Activity Units - Junior  
Cert

English Language  
Support in Irish  
Post-Primary Schools -  
Policy, challenges and  
deficits (Report)

Teachers' Notes

Lab, Workshop and  
Safety Language

Additional Resources

Short Activities

Advising Students and  
Record of Learning

+ Background to the

art	english
modern languages	history
p.e.	business studies
maths	science
music	geography
technology	home economics
... and more	cspe
	religion

## Welcome to the website of the English Language Support Programme.

Over 6,100 pages of activities in PDF format linked to curricular subjects and examinations ... and growing

[Learning support](#)  
[Language support](#)  
[Subject classroom](#)

This website has been designed for use in post-primary schools by [learning support](#), [language support](#) and [mainstream subject teachers](#), and [their students](#). The resources and activities have been designed to help all students access post-primary curriculum subjects, both junior and senior cycles. There are also resources to help teachers prepare their students for public examination.

All resources and classroom activities may be downloaded and printed. Activities are suitable for classroom use, homework and self-study.

Though primarily designed for newcomer learners of English, the Language Support Activity Units and other activities on this site are equally suited to the needs of all students as they encourage both subject and language learning. The Activity Units are designed to help students achieve by

## What's new?



Please help us to understand how you use our materials - take 5 mins to fill in our questionnaire on how you use the Language Support Activity Units.



We are delighted to announce that we have included Lesson Plans for Junior Certificate subjects



The ELSP won the 2009 European Award for Languages - [click here for details](#)

Jury's comments *"Feedback from involved teachers very positive about motivation of students and this is motivating for teachers... Very impressed with project... Valuable idea transferable to e.g. Gaelscoileanna."*



Over 10,000 pages of activities  
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This website has been designed  
for use in post-primary schools  
by learning support, language  
support and mainstream subject  
teachers, and their students.



English Language Support Programme, Trinity  
College Dublin, Dublin 2, Ireland

The English Language Support Programme is  
part of the Trinity Immigration Initiative  
(funded by AIB)

art	english
modern languages	history
p.e.	business studies
maths	science
music	geography
technology	home economics
... and more	cspe
	religion

Welcome to the website of the English  
Language Support Programme.

Please choose from the links below if you are involved in

- Language Support
- Learning Support
- Mainstream Classroom Teacher
- Whole School Approaches

What's new?

We are delighted to host the Toolkit for  
Diversity in Post Primary Schools which  
aims to help schools create and sustain a  
welcoming and inclusive environment for  
students and parents from all backgrounds  
and ensure equal success for all.

Please click on the link below

[Whole School Approaches](#)



The ELSP won the 2009  
European Award for Languages - click here  
for details

Jury's comments: "Feedback from involved  
teachers very positive about motivation of  
students and this is motivating for  
teachers... Very impressed with  
project... Valuable idea transferable to  
e.g. Gaelic/Scottish."



Copies of our free CD

This screenshot shows the website's navigation menu on the left, including links for Home, Learning Centres, Learning Centres in The Curator, Learning Centres in Dublin City Area, Learning Centres in Galway City Area, Learning Centres in Kerry City Area, Learning Centres in Limerick City Area, Learning Centres in Wick City Area, English Language Support in Post Primary Schools, Primary, Post-Primary and Adults' Learning, Teacher Tools, LAL, Mainstream and Early Language, Additional Resources, Book Reviews, Learning Outcomes and Record of Learning, and Engagement by the Project.

The main content area features a 'What's new?' section with a 'New! Whole School Approaches' button. Below this is a 'Welcome to the website of the English Language Support Programme' section with a 'Language Support Support Information' link.

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Together towards inclusion

**TOOLKIT**

FOR DIVERSITY  
IN THE  
POST PRIMARY  
SCHOOL

There are **200** Language Support Activity Units for Junior and Senior Cycle subjects and examination papers of which **140 are for Junior Cert and 60 are Leaving Cert**

Each unit is approximately 25-28 pages in length with full answers sheets at the end.

+ Junior Cert Units	+ Leaving Cert Units
Language of Examinations	Language of Examinations
Business Studies	Agricultural Science
CSPE	Art (History of Art)
English	Biology
Geography	Business Studies
History	English
Home Economics	Geography
Maths (Higher Level)	History
Maths (Ordinary Level)	Home Economics
Music	LCA English
Religion	LCVP
Science	Music
Wood Technology	Religion
Junior Cert Lesson Plans	



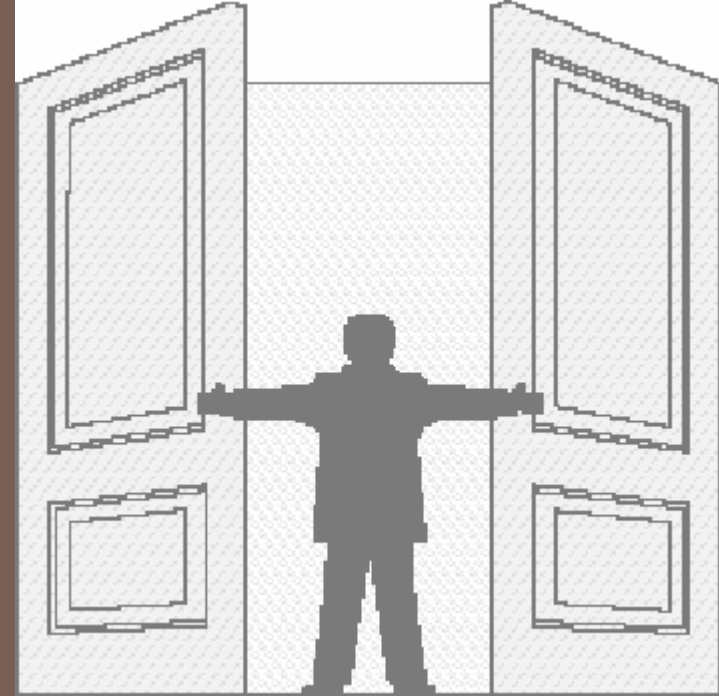
There are **158** Learning Support and Mainstream subject teacher Activity Units for Junior and Senior Cycle subjects and examination papers of which: **112 are for Junior Cert and 46 are Leaving Cert**

**These are reduced versions of the larger Language Support Activity Units. Each unit is approximately 15-22 pages in length with full answers sheets at the end.**

+ Junior Cert Units	+ Leaving Cert Units
Language of Examinations	Language of Examinations
CSPE	Agricultural Science
English	Art (History of Art)
Geography	Biology
History	Business Studies
Home Economics	English
Maths (Higher Level)	Geography
Maths (Ordinary Level)	History
Music	Home Economics
Religion	LCVP
Science	Music
Wood Technology	
Junior Cert Lesson Plans	

# *Classroom observation (N=28 teachers)*

- Classroom observations of 18 language support teachers, 2 learning support and 8 mainstream subject teachers in 14 schools to gather data related to classroom practices and use of the materials. Teachers were encouraged to follow their instructional plan without special alteration during the observations, which were generally 30–50 minutes in duration. Data interpretation involved a theme analysis of observable behaviours.



## Some findings

Language Support Activity Units [www.elsp.ie](http://www.elsp.ie)

# Vocabulary

- Teachers have been using these materials in language support classrooms and in SEN and mainstream subject classrooms since January 2009 and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. As well as encouraging students to activate their previous curricular and language knowledge (and, in particular, their first language), the materials allow the teacher to focus on the language required to convey the content.

# Vocabulary

- The utility of this approach can be seen in the example which follows showing how teaching the keywords can form an initial bridge between the '*inaccessible*' text and the content of the topic (in this case, the Water Cycle) with the student's previous knowledge of the topic being activated as certain words are recognised in the text.

물은 지구에 일반적인 물질이다. 그것은 '의 70% 이상 덮는다; s 표면. 그것은 태양, 강 및 호수를 채우고 지상에 있고 공기에서 우리는 호흡한다. 물은 어디에나 있다. 물 없이는 아무 생활도 있을 수 있다. 각 살아있는 것, 식물, 동물 및 사람들은 살 것이다 물이 있어야 한다. 실제로 각 살아있는 것은 물로 주로 되어 있다. 당신 몸은 물 대략 2/3이다. 닭은 대략 3/4 급수한다이고 파인애플은 대략 5분의 4의 물이다. 대부분의 과학자는 생활 자체가 - 바다의 짠 물에서 - 물에서 시작되었다고 믿는다. 우리의 혈액, 땀 및 눈물의 짠 맛은 이것이 진실할 지도 모르다는 것을 거의한다. 물은 태양, 대기권 및 지상 사이에서 증발되고 있다. 그것은 증발, 수송 및 공술서

Water 일반적인 substance 그것은 seventy 다; s 표면. 그것은 있고 공기에서 우리는 호흡한다. 물은 surface. 대부분의 과학자는 생활 자체가 - 바다의 짠 물에서 - 물에서 시작되었다고 믿는다. 우리의 혈액, 땀 및 눈물의 짠 맛은 이것이 oceans, rivers and lakes 대부분의 과학자는 생활 자체가 - 바다의 짠 물에서 - 물에서 시작되었다고 믿는다. 우리의 혈액, 땀 및 눈물의 짠 맛은 이것이 water 대부분의 과학자는 생활 자체가 - 바다의 짠 물에서 - 물에서 시작되었다고 믿는다. 우리의 혈액, 땀 및 눈물의 짠 맛은 이것이 life. 대부분의 과학자는 생활 자체가 - 바다의 짠 물에서 - 물에서 시작되었다고 믿는다. 우리의 혈액, 땀 및 눈물의 짠 맛은 이것이 evaporation, transportation 것은 deposition.

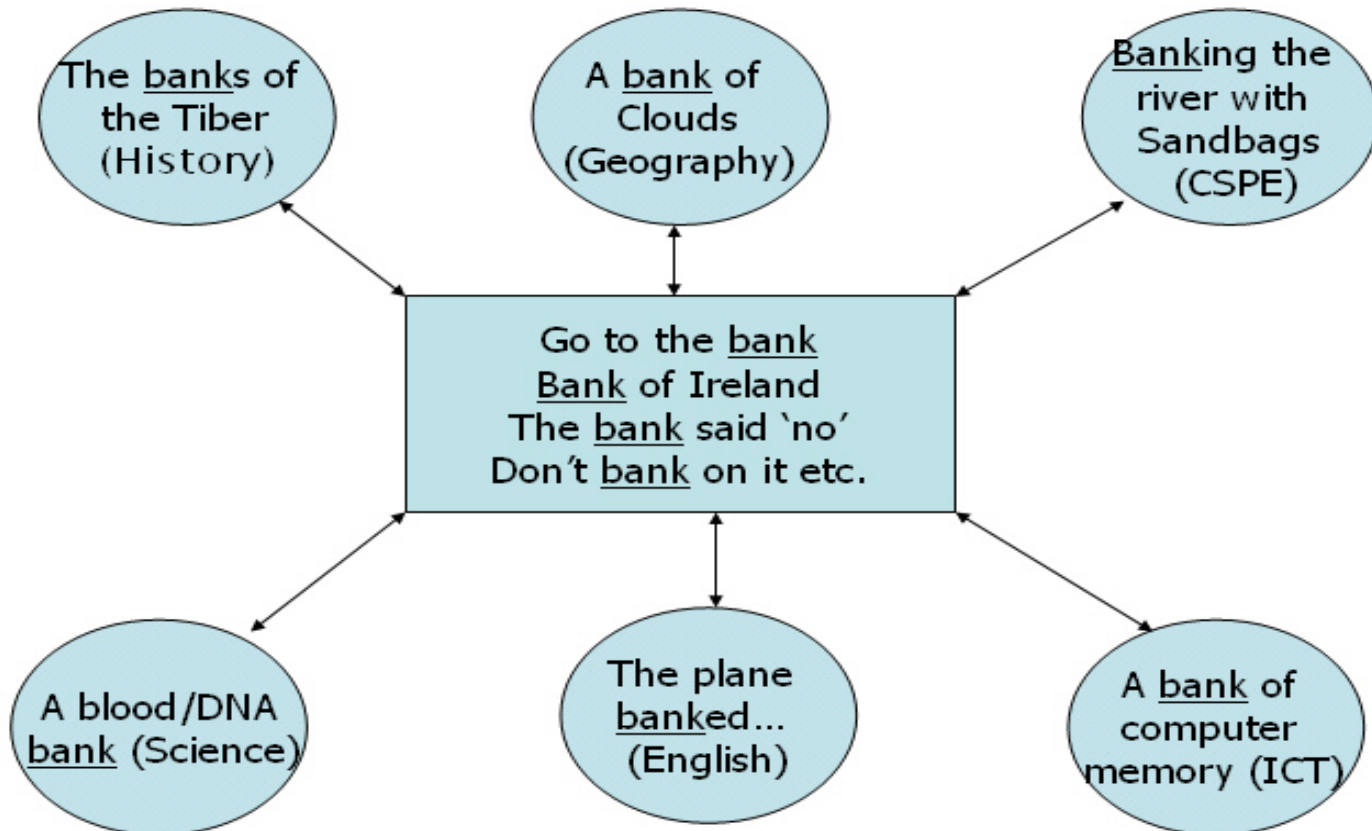
**Keywords in the Water Cycle text.**

# to exam level

- Water is the most common substance on earth. It covers more than seventy per cent of the earth's surface. It fills the oceans, rivers and lakes and is in the ground and in the air we breathe. Water is everywhere. Without water there can be no life. Every living thing, plants, animals and people must have water to live. In fact every living thing consists mostly of water. Your body is about two-thirds water. A chicken is about three-quarters water and a pineapple is about four-fifths water. Most scientists believe that life itself began in water - in the salty water of the sea. The salty taste of our blood, sweat and tears suggests that this might be true. Water is constantly being processed between the oceans, the atmosphere and the ground. It involves evaporation, transportation and deposition.

# Vocabulary

- Use of the ESLP materials also permits key vocabulary to be emphasised across all content areas (to take one example, the word 'bank' below)





# Comparing Content and Language Objectives

## Content Objectives

- Identify what students know and must be able to do
- Based on content standards
- Differentiated by grade levels

## Language Objectives

- Identify both the receptive and productive language demands of a lesson
- Based on the language required in a lesson
- Differentiated by proficiency levels
- Includes all domains – listening, speaking, reading and writing

# Determining the language objective

- Language objectives evolve from the lesson topic
- Include vocabulary and sentence or text structures
- Key question is:

**What language will students need to be able to understand and produce in order to fully participate in the lesson?**

## Verbs for Content Objectives

- Identify
- Solve
- Investigate
- Distinguish
- Create
- Select
- Draw conclusions

## Verbs for Language Objectives

- Listen for
- Retell
- Define
- Compare
- Explain
- Sequence
- Summarise
- Describe

# Findings

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- The greater overall length of time that teachers were using the materials the more advanced were their levels of use of the materials as revealed by teacher interviews and the rating scale, “Levels of Use of the Innovation.”

# Findings

Teachers became more aware of learners' needs

- Understand meanings as expressed in texts (aural/written)
- Express meanings
- Access key grammatical categories e.g. noun, verb, preposition, adverb, etc.
- Relating language meaning with grammatical structure and form in context.

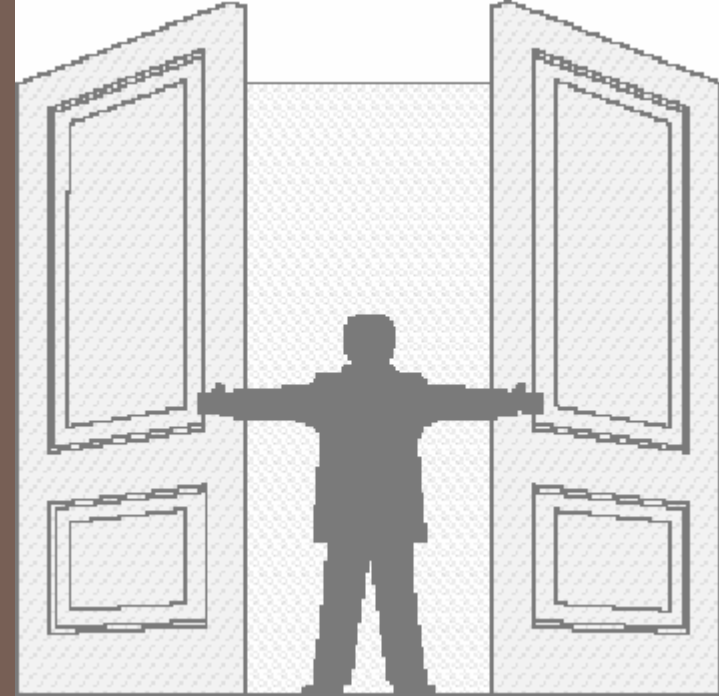
# The materials provide



- exposure to a range of authentic texts (R.W.L.S.) with a range of purposes/functions
- activities that involve planning; exchanging meanings e.g. through aural/oral pair work; information gap activities; problem solving; reading/listening comprehension activities e.g. skimming, scanning; writing to an anticipated reader to convey meaning
- activities relating form and function
- activities that allow learners restructure their language towards target language
- Inductive and/or deductive teaching of grammar and vocabulary IN context

# Teachers felt that the materials

- were learner-centred and would encourage reflective teaching and learning in context of syllabus
- would develop student motivation
- provide awareness raising activities with respect to: planning aims; goal and objective setting, and thinking about learning e.g. purpose of activities, anticipated outcomes; how one solves communication problems/challenges
- fitted in well with the Post-Primary Assessment Kits and with the CEF scales
- would help develop learning strategies
- would encourage writing to support thinking and speaking
- would support social interaction and negotiation in language content learning activities
- help in keeping dossier of work
- encourage use of target language as much as possible as part of teaching, learning and reflecting on learning processes



## Implications and reflections





# Teachers play a pivotal role as pedagogical agents of change

- The materials had the greatest impact when used by teachers who were willing and motivated to bring about change and incorporate new tools into the teaching and learning process

# Adequate and appropriate teacher training

- The materials will have little effect unless teachers are adequately and appropriately trained. This research suggests that teachers who receive formal training use the materials more frequently for instruction, and this use can lead to significant improvements in student achievement.

# Adequate and appropriate teacher training

- when teachers are learning to integrate the materials into their classrooms, the most important staff-development features include opportunities to explore, reflect, collaborate with peers, work on authentic learning tasks, and engage in hands-on, active learning.
- In essence, the principles for creating successful learning environments for children apply to teachers as well

# The units as one piece of the puzzle

- Language learning *deficits* cannot be viewed in isolation
- Although the units can support educational change, they will have little impact without accompanying reform at the classroom, school, and DES level



# Implications and reflections

## □ Whole school buy-in



# Appendices



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