The 6 Principles for Exemplary Teaching of English Learners: Grades K-12

Discussion Questions for Chapter 2 - What Teachers Should Know about English Language Development to Plan Instruction

1. How do you rely on language in your own instruction? Consider what you might take for granted that students understand from your teaching and if you need to make changes. Discuss.

2. What are your students' own resources that you can draw on when you teach them? How can students use their home language to learn in your classroom? What are the advantages of incorporating students' home languages and culture into the school and the classroom environment and the curriculum?

3. What are the most important ways in which social language and academic language differ? Why does this matter?

4. Do you match your teacher language to the cognitive maturity and English language proficiency of your students? How? Or, how might you now?

5. How do students differ in their language use at different levels of English proficiency?

6. How can you tell whether a student is making progress with English language proficiency? What are some indicators that English learners may need additional support or interventions to ensure that they are successfully acquiring English to a high proficiency level?

7. How can you create a learning environment where all of the essential conditions for second language acquisition are met?

8. Compare several English learners in your classes. How are these students the same or different in terms of what research shows to be an advantage for second language learning?

9. Which of the beneficial conditions of second language learning could you incorporate into the learning environment you are creating?

10. In what ways should literacy instruction for English learners differ from teaching reading and writing to students whose home language is English?

11. Which of the "obstructive beliefs" have you encountered before? What were your own reactions? How do your own reactions compare to the suggested "constructive responses"?

12. How does language feature in your own identity?

13. How does a "dynamic bilingual" differ from an "emerging bilingual," or from a "balanced bilingual"? Can you recall examples from your own life of "dynamic bilingual" behavior? What do you value about "dynamic bilingual" behavior?

14. What have you learned about second language development in Chapter 2 that may change the way you approach the instruction of English learners?