Get Ready! is based on scientifically proven language pedagogy. Children are at the center of every conversation and every component. The curriculum is built on specialized knowledge necessary for working with culturally and linguistically diverse learners. It recognizes the the assets they bring into the classroom, and the unique academic challenges they face. *Get Ready!* was created exclusively for English Learners (ELs) who are identified as Newcomers, as well as children designated at Entering or Emerging levels (per WIDA or other ELD language assessments). Consistent and special attention is devoted to Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE), as well as dually identified students with disabilities. Every lesson contains differentiation and offers scaffolds for children who need additional support, as well as amplification for children who would benefit from additional challenges (including gifted learners). EL instruction is supported and designed specifically to advance ELs' knowledge and use of English—moving from survival language to a level of proficiency that maximizes their capacity to engage successfully in academic studies taught in English.

All components of *Get Ready!* frame the education of English Learners from an assets-based perspective.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Language learning in *Get Ready!*

The foundational research on language indicates that there is a distinction between acquiring a language and learning it (Krashen, 1982). ELs acquire their home language in natural ways through the process of communicating with their families and communities. When children are acquiring language, their parents or caretakers do not pause to explain a grammatical point or overtly note the pronunciation of a word. Instead, they address the linguistic development in authentic and natural ways.

In contrast, when learning a new language, children must learn about structure, pronunciation, and usage. In a classroom setting, complex emotional and motivational factors come into play as children strive to develop language. Krashen (1982) referred to this as the "affective filter." When the affective filter is high, children may experience anxiety, self-consciousness, boredom, annoyance, or even alienation. When the affective filter is low, children experience less anxiety and are actively engaged. *Get Ready!* is structured to create environmental and pedagogical supports that engage ELs in the simultaneous learning of language and content in an engaging and welcoming manner. Meaningful tasks are posed in inviting ways that engage children in learning to speak, listen, read, and write in English— at levels that challenge them while offering support.

Language interaction in the classroom

The work of Vygotsky (1978) has long served as a foundation for much of the research and theory on language development. He strongly believed in the role of social interaction in the development of cognition and language—notably, the importance of multiple exposures and meaningful interactions with language. Children cannot learn a language through rote memorization and have it be preserved or applied in any meaningful way. Instead, repeated exposure is crucial. Further, Bruner's work (1977) also emphasized the importance of revisiting concepts and ideas. He noted that learning requires a continual deepening of understanding in progressively more complex ways. *Get Ready!* contains multiple opportunities for repeated interaction in pairs, small groups, and whole groups. Vocabulary and concepts are revisited and reviewed throughout the book.

Building upon the foundational research and translating it into progressive applications shows that language instruction has evolved. Stanford's *Understanding*

Language initiative (2012), commissioned papers from EL experts on language and instruction with regard to today's standards-driven education. Key findings illustrate that language teaching should be embedded in the discipline with a focus on task, purpose, and audience. Also, instead of exclusively pre-teaching all content, activities that build on children's prior knowledge and that scaffold both content and language development are key.

Scaffolded instruction

Systemic supports are needed in order to support the complex, nonlinear process of language learning (Walqui, 2012). With scaffolded instruction, the educator supports children at a level just beyond what they are able to achieve on their own. Vygotsky (1978) called this the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD). Current research building upon the ZPD emphasizes the importance of scaffolds across the language domains. For example, the Center for English Learners at the American Institutes for Research disseminated research (2018) noting that scaffolding is crucial in language acquisition and literacy. They suggest adding visuals, gestures, examples, graphic organizers, and sentence frames.

Get Ready! incorporates the foundational research and progressive models designed to meet the needs of today's culturally and linguistically diverse learners. The research is translated into strategies that function in a cohesive and consistent manner, focusing on the desired result of increased English language development.

References

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Get Ready! lesson structure

- **Explore and Learn** Each lesson begins with an open exploration. This is an initial engagement where children preview visuals, Essential Questions, activities, and text. Children share what they know (e.g., about the theme, concept, vocabulary, etc.). Vocabulary is cued, but not pre-taught out of context, as the development of schema is necessary for language to be retained and meaningful. After the exploration, there is direct instruction of the standards-based topic.

- **Practice** Children have many opportunities to interact with language across the domains in a guided manner followed by a gradual release.

- **Communicate** Children then have multiple opportunities to reiterate their learning with classmates, in small groups, and independently.

- **Assess** Lessons include formative assessments so that teachers can gauge progress in real-time and then respond to individual student needs.