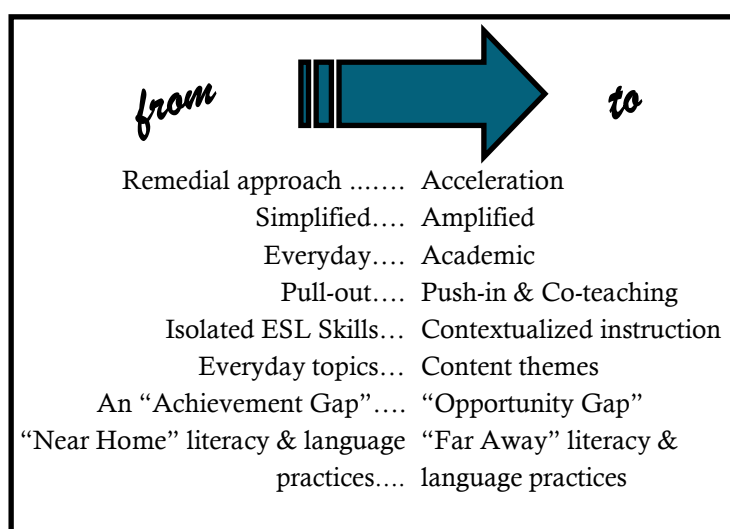


3Ls™ Learning, Language, and Literacy

Maryann Cucchiara

THINKING DIFFERENTLY ABOUT HOW ENGLISH LEARNERS LEARN

The 3Ls™ is a unique approach that places LEARNING grade-level content at the center of the educational experience for English Language Learners (ELLs) integrating in a seamless and purposeful way LANGUAGE, AND LITERACY development. The approach includes newly designed elements and re-envisioned strategies, all integrated into the unique flow of a 3Ls™ lesson and thematic units of study. Based on the research of Dr. Lily Wong Fillmore and the joint work with Maryann Cucchiara, the 3Ls™ approach challenges educators to think differently about how ELLs learn.



To learn more about the 3Ls™ approach or to request on-site professional development services from its author, contact **Maryann Cucchiara** at:
macucchiara@gmail.com

For access to a web-based (with live facilitation), five-series courses on learning and implementing the 3Ls™ approach, contact the **Council of the Great City Schools** at PLP@cgcs.org.

For information about the courses visit: <https://www.cgcs.org/Page/667>.



GREAT CITY SCHOOLS
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ORIGINS OF THE 3Ls™ WORK: ADDRESSING THE L2 STALL

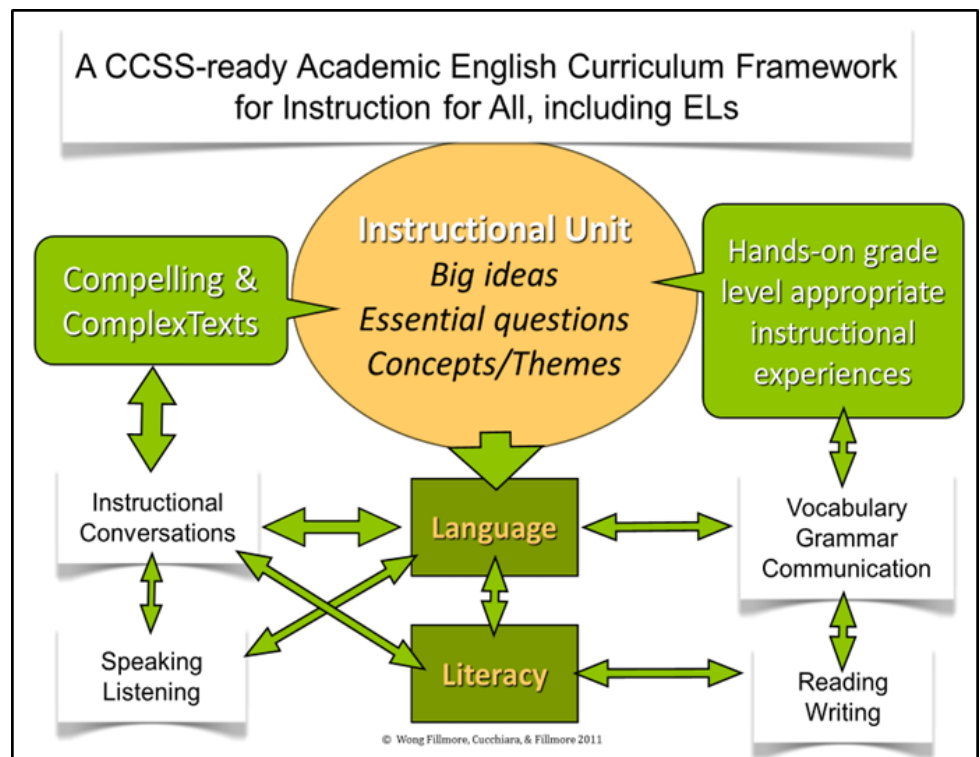
In 2007, Maryann Cucchiara then Director of Research and Development for NYC Schools, began working with Dr. Lily Wong Fillmore to raise the expectations and academic achievement of ELLs in over 365 public schools in NYC. The centerpiece of Dr. Lily Wong Fillmore's work was the notion of "juicy texts." For too long, Dr. Wong Fillmore contended, the prevailing instructional approach used for ELLs consisted of dull, rather de-contextualized texts centered on

everyday topics, rather than centered on grade-level content. Most of the texts were what we called "considerate" texts; that is, they were manipulated to remove all difficult vocabulary and grammatical structures that would add length and depth to the sentences. ELLs were not given access to grade appropriate, complex and compelling texts despite that ELLs **most** need access, attention and active engagement with complex and compelling texts in order to

learn academic English and succeed in school. Not surprisingly, a vast number of schools witness a "L2 stall" in students who do not have regular opportunities to work with complex and compelling texts. These students had stalled in their acquisition of the English language and in the development of literacy needed for higher grade-levels.

COLLEGE AND CAREER-READY STANDARDS: A CATALYST

The adoption of College and Career-Ready standards brought a much needed focus on complex texts and grade appropriate standards for all students. Meeting these standards required that ELLs, as all students, have regular and routine access to what Dr. Wong Fillmore calls "juicy texts" and to active engagement in ways that call attention to the use of academic language in service for content learning. Through instruction that is centered on these "juicy texts" ELLs are able to access the 3Ls they needed: Learning, Language, and Literacy. Dr. Fillmore's groundbreaking research and her instructional centerpiece around attending to academic language inside of "juicy texts" has served



as a catalyst for the shift from *ESL as remediation* to *ESL as an accelerated, standards-aligned instructional approach*, resulting in the *Framework of Academic English Curriculum*. This *Framework of Academic English Curriculum* developed by Lily Wong-Fillmore, Maryann Cucchiara and Dr. Charles Fillmore established a complex system of key interconnected elements to address the three Ls that ELLs need.

THE 3LS™ APPROACH

Operationalizing this *Framework* for teachers to understand and incorporate into their lesson design and instructional practices became the focused work of Maryann Cucchiara, resulting in the development of the 3LS™ approach. The 3LS™ approach aims to ensure that the Learning, Language and Literacy students initially bring dramatically changes as a result of learning experienced in a 3LS™ lesson and unit of study built on the following instructional principles:

A) Text, Talk and Tasks should be cognitively demanding (3Ts)

B) Instruction should provide Access, Attention, and Active Engagement (3As)

C) Students learn from quality texts that are Complex, Compelling, Concise, and Connected (4 Cs)

The 3LS™ approach and principles result in the development of coherent lesson plans and thematic units of study, that highlight *Learning* as the instructional goal while attending to *Language* and *Literacy* as the vehicles to uncover this learning of

grade-level content. The 3 Ls lessons represent a pathway to learning, language and literacy that differs dramatically from how instruction for ELLs and struggling students has been traditionally mapped out and that offers multiple opportunities for students to display what Dr. Lily Wong Fillmore calls “flashes of insight” that go beyond commonly held expectations.

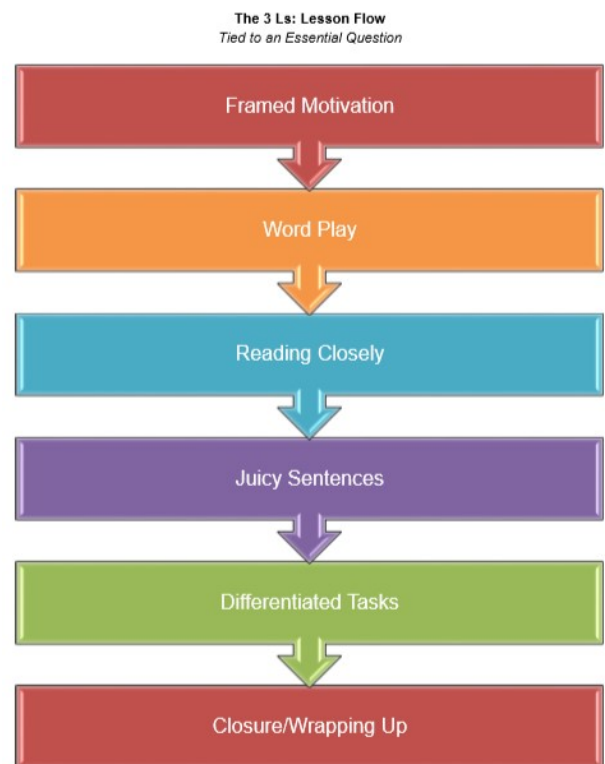
ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

The 3LS™ approach comprises SIX ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS that build on each other, always centered around complex and compelling text and an essential question derived from and anchored in grade-level content. Each of these elements and strategic moves are interconnected and designed to uncover content as well as to augment language and literacy in a contextualized and integrated manner.

Based upon Grant Wiggins work on essential questions and enduring understandings, the overarching ESSENTIAL QUESTION in a 3LS™ lesson serves as a thread connecting these six elements, binding them across lessons in the unit of study. Texts that are complex and compelling are carefully selected by teachers to allow them to attend to Learning, Language, and Literacy gather anchored in an Essen-

tial Question that students will be exploring throughout the lessons and unit of study.

The six ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS of the 3LS™ are: Framed Motivation, Word Play, Reading Closely, Juicy Sentences, Differentiated Tasks, Closure/ Wrap-up. Some elements may be familiar-sounding to educators or appear similar to current instructional practices. However, although some of these elements do draw from existing best practices, they have been re-visioned, refined, and ultimately re-created to deliver the Ls that ELLs need and all AELs (what Jeff Zwiers calls Academic English Learners). The 3LS™ elements incorporate specific features and follow a unique flow, resulting in a powerful and original approach for Learning, Language and Literacy.



ELEMENT ONE: FRAMED MOTIVATION



FRAMED MOTIVATION opens the lesson and creates opportunities to motivate students by connecting to the theme or topic being explored and providing them with a “sneak preview” of the upcoming complex and compelling text. Key to any lesson is the motivation required to engage students, tap into their prior

knowledge, and build the background knowledge needed to explore the essential questions and the upcoming text under discussion. What is *unique* about the FRAMED MOTIVATION is that as it is tapping into or building background knowledge of the upcoming theme or topic, it is also aug-

menting the academic language and literacy skills needed to engage in academic talk and academic writing around the content.

ELEMENT TWO: WORD PLAY

WORD PLAY provides ELLs with access to the academic language and the academic vocabulary embedded within complex and compelling texts. In order for students to comprehend increasingly challenging texts and to use appropriate academic language in their speaking and writing, students need a deep understanding of general academic vocabulary that spreads across all content areas, as well as the domain-specific vocabulary. Unlike prevailing modes of vocabulary instruction that tend to be isolated and decontextualized, WORD PLAY is characterized by strategies and activities that are contextualized and interac-

tive, specifically designed to develop and expand academic vocabulary central to the big ideas in the text under discussion.

Through carefully designed and orchestrated instructional conversation, teachers guide students to uncover and comprehend the shades of meaning and nuances of vocabulary, and involve students in multiple opportunities to comprehend, internalize, and produce new and multi-layered academic language. Cucchiara’s “building from the base” is the starting point for all word play. Starting from the everyday (Tier 1) word, teachers

uncover the new academic words by comparing and contrasting them to their everyday counterpart to develop student understanding of the shades of meaning, the nuances embedded in the new vocabulary. Other WORD PLAY strategies include: purposeful use of newly acquired words in phrases and sentences connected to the context and content of the reading; strategic use of cognates and visuals for domain-specific words; and activities like Talk It Out, Act It Out, Grow It, Draw It, Stretch It, and Feel It.

ROLE OF THE TEACHER

The 3Ls™ approach centers around the ESSENTIAL QUESTION and COMPLEX TEXT but it privileges the role of teachers as learners, creators, and teachers. It is their instructional vision that creates lessons that use texts, talk and tasks to uncover the essential questions, to uncover the learning, the content, the knowledge and, at the same time, uncover rich and complex academic language used in “juicy texts.”

ELEMENT THREE: READING CLOSELY

This third element is related to the instructional practice that many literacy specialists have called “close read” to help readers “linger over words and watch how sentences unfold” as specified in college- and career-ready standards. The **READING CLOSELY** of complex and compelling texts within the 3Ls™ approach is guided by Dr. Wong Fillmore’s work on zooming in on a Juicy Sentence and is *uniquely designed* as a shared literacy event that is modeled and collaborative in nature. In this 3Ls™ shared literacy event, teachers model for and engage students in exploring es-

sential questions that build academic language and literacy skills needed to unpack challenging texts. Carefully planned and executed **READING CLOSELY** helps uncover the secrets that good readers know to understand authors craft and the use specific tools of their trade. Explicit instruction by teachers help students demystify **HOW** and **WHY** authors use words, phrases, figurative language, grammatical structures, and other cohesive literary devices. Text dependent questions are carefully designed to not only retrieve information from the

texts, but to uncover the author’s craft in building arguments and conveying rich relationships among characters and ideas embedded in these compelling texts. The 3Ls™ approach includes a planning tool for teachers to carefully construct learning activities around Text, Talk, and Tasks for this shared literacy event as they model for and lead students in tackling compelling and complex texts. In their planning, teachers carefully examine texts and find key landing places that are oftentimes challenging for ELLs and ALL Learners unfamiliar with both the content and/or the academic language revealed in these texts.

ELEMENT FOUR: JUICY SENTENCE WORK

JUICY SENTENCE work was developed by Dr. Wong Fillmore, who elevated the importance of providing access to ELLs and all students to the features of academic language—rich, long, and embedded sentences that include phrases and grammatical structures used to convey complex ideas and the content of academic disciplines. Academic vocabulary is often nested inside these long and complex sentences, within phrases and unfamiliar grammatical structures. Vocabulary instruction **ALONE** won’t suffice as an effective reading

strategy to demystify the language and structure of such complex texts. Through Juicy Sentence work, teachers help students practice, one juicy sentence at a time, the retrieval of information from a key sentence in a complex text and the noticing of grammatical features in that particular sentence.

Within the **READING CLOSELY** of the text, teachers identify a “juicy sentence” – a sentence that carries weight, contains concepts or big ideas and relationships, and is richly detailed. This is the sentence teachers

mine and use to model how to tease apart long, embedded sentences into manageable chunks, deconstructing it, reconstructing it, and always “mapping meaning” back to the words, clauses, and phrases embedded in the juicy sentence that connect to the **ESSENTIAL QUESTION** established for the unit of study or lesson. Cucchiara makes innovative use of materials like “sentence strips” to create opportunities for students to engage in hands-on activities that help parse the Juicy Sentence into its main and dangling parts.

ELEMENT FIVE: DIFFERENTIATED TASKS

DIFFERENTIATED TASKS, carefully and purposefully designed by teachers, provide students with routine and regular opportunities for active engagement to demonstrate their emerging mastery of the content learning, academic language learning, and literacy skills augmented throughout the lesson and throughout the unit of study. Differentiated Tasks provide substantial time for continued active engagement around the essential questions examined and around the juicy texts explored. Although these tasks are differentiated, they all have similar outcomes and are centered on the themes, grade-level content, and topic at hand. The 3Ls™ approach positions the DIFFER-

ENTIATED TASKS in a unique lesson structure to ensure that it builds on the strategies employed and maintains grade-level content learning for all students during this work period, giving learners an opportunity to apply new and emerging knowledge and the opportunity for continued practice in some aspect of the learning, language and literacy. Stated in terms of Vygotskian learning theory, the work period is a time for students to work as apprentices in becoming critical readers and writers, while employing the academic language they have been learning. The 3Ls™ approach calls for the teacher's role as the "more knowing expert other," a facilitator who pro-

vides feedback, guidance, and evaluation—which are the hallmark of successful work periods. Finally, building upon the work of Grant Wiggins, these tasks serve as assessments of the learning as well as assessments for learning. In other words, this time is not only a golden opportunity for students to reveal their learning, but also an opportunity for teachers to provide the feedback and guidance necessary for the learners to achieve their academic goals.

ELEMENT SIX: CLOSURE

CLOSURE and Wrap-up is the sixth and final element of the 3Ls™ Lesson, during which individual students or groups share their learning and showcase the new academic language and literacy skills gained during the practice time. During CLOSURE, teachers return to the Essential Question and encourage students to share new understandings and perspectives and to reflect

on their own learning within the discipline, propelling them into future lessons and units of study. It's a time to encourage students as they develop a wide array of language and literacy tools and practices that they can ultimately apply across content areas and in progressively independent and critical ways.



MARYANN CUCCHIARA



Maryann is an independent Educational Management Consultant who was formerly with New York City Department of Education. She was the Director of Research and Development for ELLs for Integrated Curriculum and Instruction, of a former NYC DOE cluster of more than 386 K-12 schools. As a former teacher in public schools, staff developer, and the director of Ramp Up to Literacy, Maryann's work has focused on the intersection of language, literacy and learning for speakers of other languages. She has co-authored articles

about struggling adolescent literacy readers and second language learners and developed the Project Freire Literacy Academies especially for these striving readers.

Maryann's work with the 3Ls™ continues to expand working directly with districts, principals, and in lab sites in NYC and the tri-state area, and a growing number of schools districts that are members of the Council of the Great City Schools.

ABOUT THE COUNCIL OF THE GREAT CITY SCHOOLS

The Council is the only national organization exclusively representing the needs of urban public schools. Comprised of 71 of large city school districts, its mission is to promote the cause of urban

schools and to advocate for inner-city students. The Council provides a network of school districts sharing common problems to collectively address new challenges as they emerge and to

deliver the best possible education for urban youth.



PROGRAM OF COURSES: COMPLEX THINKING AND COMMUNICATION ACROSS CONTENT AREAS

The Council teamed up with Maryann Cucchiara and Lily Wong Fillmore to create a program of courses for teachers serving high-needs students to ensure they meet college- and career-

readiness standards by engaging in complex forms of communication and thinking.

The 10-course program includes five courses that walk educators through the six essential elements

of the 3Ls™ approach. The courses include videos by Maryann, explaining the research behind the elements and her explanation on how to plan and implement the instructional approach. The

courses also include videos of teachers implementing the 3Ls™ approach, and guides to carry out these instructional practices.



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