TEACHING VOCABULARY AND ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

Margarita Calderón, PhD
Professor Emerita, Johns Hopkins University
✓ CCSS shifts in vocabulary, rich discussions and implications for ELS/ELLS
✓ How to integrate academic language with literacy and content
✓ How a whole-school approach has turned around schools and enabled students to succeed academically
Vocabulary is referred to about 200 times in CCSS

• **Academic vocabulary**: tier 1, 2, 3 words

• **Language**: rich discourse, discussions, questions

• **Reading**: text complexity, informational, literary, text structures, comprehension skills

• **Writing from sources**: from texts they are reading

• **Building knowledge in the disciplines**: by teaching reading, vocabulary and writing in science, social studies, math, **not just** language arts.
Studies and Professional Development Projects

- 4-year Carnegie Corporation of New York study in 6th-12th general education teachers, ESL, SEI, SIFE, and bilingual teachers.
- 2-year NYCDOE Study of SIFE in 17 schools.
- New PD model in elementary, middle and high schools in Charlotte, NC – thanks to Winterfield Elementary
- Analyses of our PD and the follow-up implementation in many schools in TX, NC, WI, NYC, FL, CT, DC
• Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher led) with diverse partners.

• Present claims and findings (e.g., argument, narrative, summary presentations)… Pose questions, explain ideas and details, acknowledge new information expressed by others, etc. etc.

DISCOURSE DISCOURSE DISCOURSE DISCOURSE!
VOCABULARY PREVALENT IN COMPLEX TEXTS

• Some students will have smaller tier 1, 2, 3 vocabularies when they enter the classroom. Instruction must address this vocabulary gap early and aggressively.

• Provide more instruction for students with weaker vocabularies rather than offering them fewer words.

• Focus on tier 2 vocabulary instruction to help students access grade level texts.
**TIER 1 --** Basic words ELLs need to communicate, read, and write (e.g., *smart, toothache, shy*).

**TIER 2 --** Information processing words and phrases that nest Tier 3 words in long sentences -- polysemous words (*power, trunk*), transition words, connectors (*therefore, moreover, over the course of*), more sophisticated words for rich discussions, and for specificity in descriptions (*declare, precise, ire*).

**TIER 3 --** Subject-specific words or clusters that label concepts, subjects, and topics. Infrequently used academic words (*osmosis, fractional, ebb*).
Why is Vocabulary Important?

• Command of a large vocabulary frequently sets high-achieving students apart from less successful ones (Montgomery, 2000).

• The average 6-year-old has a vocabulary of approximately 8000 words, and learns 3000-5000 more per year (Senechal & Cornell, 1993).

• Vocabulary in kindergarten and first grade is a significant predictor of reading comprehension in the middle and secondary grades (Cunningham, 2005; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997) or reading difficulties (Chall & Dale, 1995; Denton et al. 2011).
How many words are your ELs learning per year?
Per subject area?
Words are not learned in isolation.

Teacher PRE-TEACHES word or phrase

Students read it in their text

Students use it in their oral summaries and peer discussions

Students use it in their writing
• **Vocabulary knowledge** correlates with reading comprehension.

• **Reading comprehension** correlates with procedural and content knowledge.

• **Text-based Writing** correlates with content knowledge.

• **Content knowledge** correlates with academic success.
Explicit Instruction of Vocabulary

Step 1
Select vocabulary from a text to preteach before presenting standard, topic, content, teacher read aloud, or student reading of any text.

Step 2
Pre-teach vocabulary using seven steps.

Step 3
Students read, summarize, discuss, using the word/phrase, learn more words and sentence structures.

Step 4
Students do standards-based writing using the new vocabulary.
STEP 1 – Selecting Words To Teach ELs And Struggling Readers
Criteria for Selecting Words/Clusters to Teach

• It is critically important to the discipline (math, science, social studies, literature)
• It is critically important to this unit.
• It is important to the understanding of the concept.
• You want to see it in their writing.
• It is in the test for this unit or state assessments.
Concentrate on what meets CC standards and what you plan to test.

Begin by chunking the text into manageable portions.

Eliminate any pages, paragraphs, and sections that do not have critical information.

Pre-teach 5 – 6 words/clusters, teach other words during reading, teach 5 – 6 more before writing, and more during revising and editing.
Tier 3 words are subject-specific words. They tell us immediately what discipline is being studied, as we can see under each category here. **Language arts, technology, physical education, music, and other electives** have their own jargon, discourse, and Tier 3 words.

In most textbooks, Tier 3 words are usually in **bold letters** and are defined in the glossary.
## Tier 3—Content Specific

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Square root</th>
<th>Photosynthesis</th>
<th>Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rectangle</td>
<td>Germ</td>
<td>Bylaws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radical numbers</td>
<td>Atom</td>
<td>Bailout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circumference</td>
<td>Matter</td>
<td>Congressional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pi square</td>
<td>Osmosis</td>
<td>Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>Power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. Polysemous words
2. Words for specificity
3. Sophisticated words
4. Connectors, transition words
5. Phrasal clusters
6. Information processing words
7. Cognates & false cognates when possible
8. Sentence & question starters & frames
9. Idioms, metaphors, similes, puns
**Polysemous words** (homonyms or homographs) across academic content areas:

- solution
- table
- divide
- prime
- round
- trunk
- state
- power
- cell
- right
- radical
- leg
- left
- light
- fall
- check
- court
- hand
- long
- pin
- rest
- roll
- sense
Find the multiple meanings across subject areas, or used by the media, or used in phrases/idioms:

GROUP 1 – solution, power, fall
GROUP 2 – cell, check, sense
GROUP 3 – divide, right, court
GROUP 4 – prime, radical, hand
GROUP 5 – round, leg, pin
GROUP 6 – left, rest, state
TIER 2 – PHRASAL CLUSTERS AND IDIOMS

- Run off
- Run away
- Break a leg
- Once in a while
- Complete sentence

- Long noun phrases
- Relatively easier
- Stored Energy
- Stimulus package
TIER 2 – SOPHISTICATED WORDS FOR SPECIFICITY FOR “SAY” OR “TALK”

- Whisper
- Argue
- Specify
- Announce
- Request
- Reveal
- Remark
- Declare
- Describe
- Pontificate

- Discuss
- Proclaim
- Shout
- Scream
- Converse
- Communicate
- Verbalize
- Debate
- Articulate
- Question
**TIER 2 – Sophisticated and Specificity**

**TIER 1 – TALK, SAY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 2</th>
<th>Tier 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHISPER</td>
<td>CONVERSATION [conversación]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARGUE</td>
<td>CONVERSE [conversar]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPECIFY [especificar]</td>
<td>COMMENT [comentar]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANNOUNCE [anunciar]</td>
<td>MENTION [mencionar]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REQUEST</td>
<td>COMMUNICATE [comunicar]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REVEAL [revelar]</td>
<td>DIALOGUE [diálogo]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REMARK</td>
<td>VERBALIZE [verbalizar]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECLARE [declarar]</td>
<td>PRONUNCE [pronunciar]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DESCRIBE [describir]</td>
<td>DEBATE [debate]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISCUSS [discutir]</td>
<td>VOCALIZE [vocalizar]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROCLAIM [proclamar]</td>
<td>ARTICULATE [articular]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHOUT</td>
<td>QUESTION [cuestionar]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCREAM</td>
<td>PONTIFICATE [pontificar]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
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<td>----------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fácil</td>
<td>Edificio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•Facile</td>
<td>•Edifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•Facilitate</td>
<td>•Edify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•Facilitator</td>
<td>•Edification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>•Facilitation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Tier 1 Words for ELs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1 Problem Words</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>Tough, toothache, phrase, highlight, because</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pronunciation or confusion with homophones</td>
<td>Weather/whether, sum/some, blue/blew, whole/hole, access/exes/axis, sell/cell, ship/chip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background knowledge</td>
<td>Lawnmower, blender, parka, skyscraper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False cognates</td>
<td>Exit, character, embarrassed, success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Words</td>
<td>Tier 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polysemous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phrases (bundled up words, idioms)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cognates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connectors &amp; transition</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homophones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
A Change in Climate

From one day to the next, weather can have a big effect on your life. When it rains, you have to stay indoors or carry an umbrella. When it's cold, you have to bundle up.

Over the course of hundreds, thousands, and millions of years, weather trends affect life on Earth in more dramatic ways. Ice ages or long droughts, for example, can wipe out certain types of plants and animals. Although many species manage to survive such extreme, long-term climate shifts, their living conditions also change.
STEP 2 – Pre-teaching Vocabulary Using The Evidence-based 7 Steps
Preteaching Vocabulary: An Example for 2nd–5th Grades

1. Teacher says the word and asks students to repeat the word three times.
2. Teacher states the word in context from the text.
3. Teacher provides the dictionary definition(s).
4. Teacher explains meaning with student-friendly definitions.
5. Teacher highlights grammar, spelling, polysemy, and so on.
6. Teacher engages students in activities to develop word/concept knowledge.
7. Teacher reminds students how/when to use the word.
Example for 5th Grade

1. Say *Effect* with me 3 times.
2. *Weather can have a big effect on your life.*
3. The result or consequence of something. Influence, or the power to make something happen.
4. Two cups of coffee in the morning have a big effect on me—I can’t sleep at night!
5. How do we spell *effect*? What other word is similar?
6. What has had a big effect on your life recently? TTYP and Ping-Pong 5 or 6 examples.
7. Be sure to use *effect* in your Exit pass today.
1. In the pretend or play area, the teacher has the students pack small bags, write their name or draw a picture on a tag, and tie the tag to their luggage.

2. Students are asked to say luggage three times.

3. Students are asked to say to a buddy, “I have . . . in my luggage. I am taking my luggage to . . .”

4. The teacher gives the student a sticker or teacher-made luggage tag to put on his or her suitcase every time the student uses the word luggage.
5. The teacher tells the students to ask their parents what *luggage* they take on their trips, how many pieces of *luggage* they take on trips, and what happens if they lose their *luggage*. The next day, students are asked to share the answers to these questions.

6. The teacher reads a story about a trip during which the characters take *luggage*, and children retell the story and add their own make-believe adventures.

7. They share their stories with their parents at home.
More Examples for Step 6

Question, Reasons, Examples

• If you are studying for a test, you need to do it **persistently**. What else do you need to do **persistently**?

• Say might be faithful/might be unfaithful if it applies:
  – A cat who always comes home before dark
  – A brother who takes care of his sister
  – A girl who has three boyfriends

Make Choices and Review

• Would you have **iron will** if you:
  – Were afraid of cats?
  – Were tired but kept running until you reached the finish line?
  – Worked very hard to get an A on your report card?

• Applaud if you’d like to be described by the word: **faithful, stubborn, awesome, awkward, impish, stern, illuminated.**
Come up with a long, sophisticated, complete sentence using the word

__________________
Un sólo contexto para todas las palabras
• Enséñame como sería un **inmenso** plato de espagueti?
• Si te lo comes todo y te sientes **incomodo**, ¿cómo te verías?
• Enséñame como te verías comiéndolo **lentamente**.
• Enséñame como te verías comiéndolo **prudentemente**.

Mismo formato
• Si un perro estuviera portándose **amenazador**, ¿lo acariciaría usted o se alejaría de él? ¿por qué?
• Si usted quisiera ver algo **exquisito**, ¿iría a un museo o a una tienda de alimentos? ¿por qué?
• ¿Cuál animal puede hacer un **gruñido**, un pez o un león? ¿por qué?
1. Write some key words on the board with simple definitions or a drawing before the experiment.

2. When demonstrating/presenting each step, emphasize key Tier 3 (osmosis, diffuse) and Tier 2 (intervals, has occurred, flows, as a result) words.

3. After each step demonstrated ask pairs to summarize what just occurred using the Tier 2 and 3 words on the board.

4. After the experiment, students draw the process, labeling each part of the graphic organizer, and writing a summary using Tier 2 and 3 words.
SUMMARIZE:

4 MESSAGES FROM WHAT HAS BEEN PRESENTED SO FAR. Use these transition words:

Initially,
Following that,
Additionally,
Finally,
ORACY

• The ability to express oneself fluently and grammatically in speech.

DISCOURSE

• A formal discussion of a topic in speech or writing;
• Engage in conversation.
## Examples of Language Functions/Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prediction</td>
<td>Enumeration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identification</td>
<td>Classification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation</td>
<td>Comparison/contrast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>Definition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization</td>
<td>Inference/hypothesis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retelling</td>
<td>Summarization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Some examples of transition words and connectors include:

- **Cause and Effect**—because, due to, as a result, since, for this reason, therefore, in order to, so that, thus . . .
- **Contrast**—or, but, although, however, in contrast, nevertheless, on the other hand, while . . .
- **Addition or comparison**—and, also, as well as, in addition, likewise, moreover, by the way . . .
- **Giving examples**—for example, for instance, in particular, such as . . .
After Reading a Text: Numbered Heads Together

- Number off in your team from 1 to 4.
- Listen to the question I’m going to ask.
- Put your heads together and find the answer in the text.
- Make sure everyone in your team knows the answer.
- Be prepared to answer when your number is called.
**Summarizing**—Students create a new oral text that stands for an existing text. The summary contains the important information or big ideas.

- This story tells about a . . .
- This section is about the . . .
- One important fact here is that . . .

**Determining important information**—Students tell the most important idea in a section of text, distinguishing it from details.

- The main idea is . . .
- The key details that support that are . . .
- The purpose of this text is to . . .
**Sequencing**—Students make sense of the order in which ideas are presented to enhance comprehension.

- The first step in this experiment is . . .
- The sequence for answering this math problem is . . .
- The first thing the character did was . . . Next, the character . . .

**Making connections, visualizing, or creating schema**—Students practice relating new information to prior knowledge from their own culture or schooling.

- This reminds me of the time when I . . .
- My parents told me a story about . . .
- I read in another book that . . .
Clock Partners

• Write your name at the top of your clock, mill around, and find a partner for each of the four hours.

• Ask your partners to write their names next to the appropriate hour. Write your name on their clocks at the same hour.
With your buddy (or in your head) summarize 3 main points from what I just presented.

Discuss (reflect on) one implication for (e.g., your school, the paper you are writing, your forthcoming exam, forthcoming promotion).
• Go to your 3 o’clock partner.
• Go to your 12 o’clock partner.
• Turn to your elbow partner.
• Talk with your face-to-face partner.
• Talk with your right-elbow partner.
• Talk with your left-elbow partner.
• Talk with your crisscross partner.
Writing Center—Students can practice vocabulary starting from letter formation to completing sentences by writing lists, stories, summaries, and cooperative stories.

Experiment Center—ELs benefit from hands-on experiments in science and math. Discovery develops critical thinking even if the language skills are limited. ELs can team up with an English speaker, conduct experiments or solve math problems, and do a collaborative summary of what they learned.

Conversation Center—Students practice conversations with adults (teachers, teacher assistants, or parents/volunteers).
Vocabulary in Centers

**Reader’s Theater Center**—Reader’s Theater books that contain lines for different readability levels can be used at these centers. Students can practice fluency and pronunciation, learn new words, build listening skills, learn to take turns, and perform in front of an audience.

**Listening/Reading Center**—Many programs for ELs have been developed such as online books or books on CDs. Ask students to summarize their book.

**Computer Center**—ELs and other students can practice phonemic awareness, pronunciation, vocabulary, math, science, sequencing, following directions, and technology skills on the computer.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Explanation (Definition)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The palm tree swayed in the wind.</td>
<td>An evergreen tree that grows in hot places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The fortune teller will read your palm and tell your fortune.</td>
<td>The flat inside part of your hand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Drawing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>palm trees on Palm Blvd.</td>
<td>![palm tree drawing]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sweaty palms</td>
<td>![hand with arrow]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>palm reader</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Polysemous S.E.E.D. activity as a “DO NOW” the following day
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sentences</th>
<th>Explanation (Definition)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The light is bright.</td>
<td>illumination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The feather is light.</td>
<td>not heavy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Drawing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sun, lamp, star</td>
<td>dandelion seeds, dust particles, empty bags, kits, paper airplanes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A light bulb is a light.</td>
<td>A light bulb is a light.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Why is vocabulary important?
• Name the seven steps for teaching words.
• Define Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 words.
• When do we teach vocabulary?
• Mystery question . . .
STEP 3 – During And After Reading
Students Use The New Words/Phrases In Their Oral Summaries & Peer Discussions, As They Learn New Words And Sentence Structures
One gray winter day the elderly queen summoned all her grandchildren to the castle. “I have been fortunate to have lived a long life,” she said. “But in time your generation will rule the country. You must work persistently to help the people and take care of the land.

“We will always work hard,” the children replied.

“You must also be faithful to your brothers and sisters, no matter what,” the queen said.
## Vocabulary Tiers for ELs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 1 (Simple Words)</th>
<th>Tier 2 (Process, Idioms, Sophisticated)</th>
<th>Tier 3 (Content Words, Key Vocabulary)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>wish</td>
<td>rule</td>
<td>summoned</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gray</td>
<td>take care</td>
<td>fortunate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>queen</td>
<td>replied</td>
<td>generation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>castle</td>
<td>no matter what</td>
<td>persistently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>elderly</td>
<td>faithful</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
READING COMPREHENSION:

1. READ ALOUD WITH PEER ALTERNATING SENTENCES

2. SUMMARIZE WITH PEER AFTER EACH PARAGRAPH USING TIER 2 AND 3 WORDS
These Await Your Students in 6th- and 7th-Grade Tests!

vary, underlying, albeit, solely, successive, denote, crucial, oddly, analogous, compiled, whereby, notwithstanding, forthcoming, coincide, widespread, implicit . . .
STEP 4 – Applying Academic Vocabulary To Standards-Based Writing
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Text Structure</th>
<th>Writing Strategy</th>
<th>Signal Words</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem-solutions</td>
<td>• Problems are identified, and solutions are provided.</td>
<td>accordingly, answer, as a result, over the course of, the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Supporting details describe the problem and solution.</td>
<td>trouble with that is challenges, decide, fortunately, if ____ then, issue, one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>reason is, outcome is, problem, so that, solution, the problem is solved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>by, therefore, thus, unfortunately</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TRAINING EXAMPLE

Workshops on vocabulary, reading, writing

• Reading and discussing research in TLCs

• Modeling / demos and observations on teaching vocabulary, reading, writing to ELLs

TEACHER TRANSFER EXAMPLE

• Cites sources & summarizes publications

• Uses 5-10 strategies to teach V, R, W.

  • Invites teachers to observe

  • Invites to video tape

STUDENT IMPACT EXAMPLES

• Masters 5-10 words daily

• Uses new words in daily speech, in summaries, etc.

  • Increased reading fluency, comprehension

  • Uses new words in writing
Semantic Awareness

• Semantic awareness is a cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and linguistic stance toward words.
• It is a mindset that involves motivating students and showing them how important learning words is.
• Word-conscious students are aware of the power of words they read, hear, write, and speak.
• Semantic awareness helps students become more skillful and precise in word usage at many levels of complexity and sophistication.
FOCUS ON SEMANTIC AWARENESS

If only ESL/ELD teachers teach 500 words a year, how will their students catch up with students who are learning 3000 words a year?

What if it becomes:
• ESL/ELD = 500
• Math = 500
• Language arts = 500
• Science = 500
• Social studies = 500
• Electives = 500

Approximate total: 2500 per year

Step 1 for PLCs
Winner of the 2013 Publishers Bronze Award

SOLUTION TREE

breaking through

Effective Instruction & Assessment for Reaching English Learners

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PREVENTING Long-Term ELs
Transforming Schools to Meet Core Standards

Margarita Espino Calderón, Liliana Minaya-Rowe

10 keys to keeping English learners from falling through the cracks

Students who struggle with English are likely to struggle with academic content throughout their school years. Many drop out. This practical guidebook’s 10 components for success will help educators at all levels close this achievement gap. Included are step-by-step instructions for integrating language, literacy, and subject matter to improve student learning. Key features include:

- A clearly articulated, evidence-based professional development program for effectively teaching English language learners
- Research-based coaching practices for improving instruction
- Ways to implement the program while concurrently meeting core standards and content objectives

Table of Contents

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Como una opción constructivista de la educación, el libro es útil a los profesores de preescolar, primaria y secundaria, así como a quienes trabajan en los niveles medio, superior y superior. También se recomienda como texto en cursos de capacitación en escuelas públicas y privadas. Esta obra, junto con Estrategias didácticas del aprendizaje cooperativo y Nuevas alternativas de aprender y enseñar, también de Editorial Trillas, constituyen una trilogía dedicada a la teoría y la práctica del aprendizaje cooperativo.

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