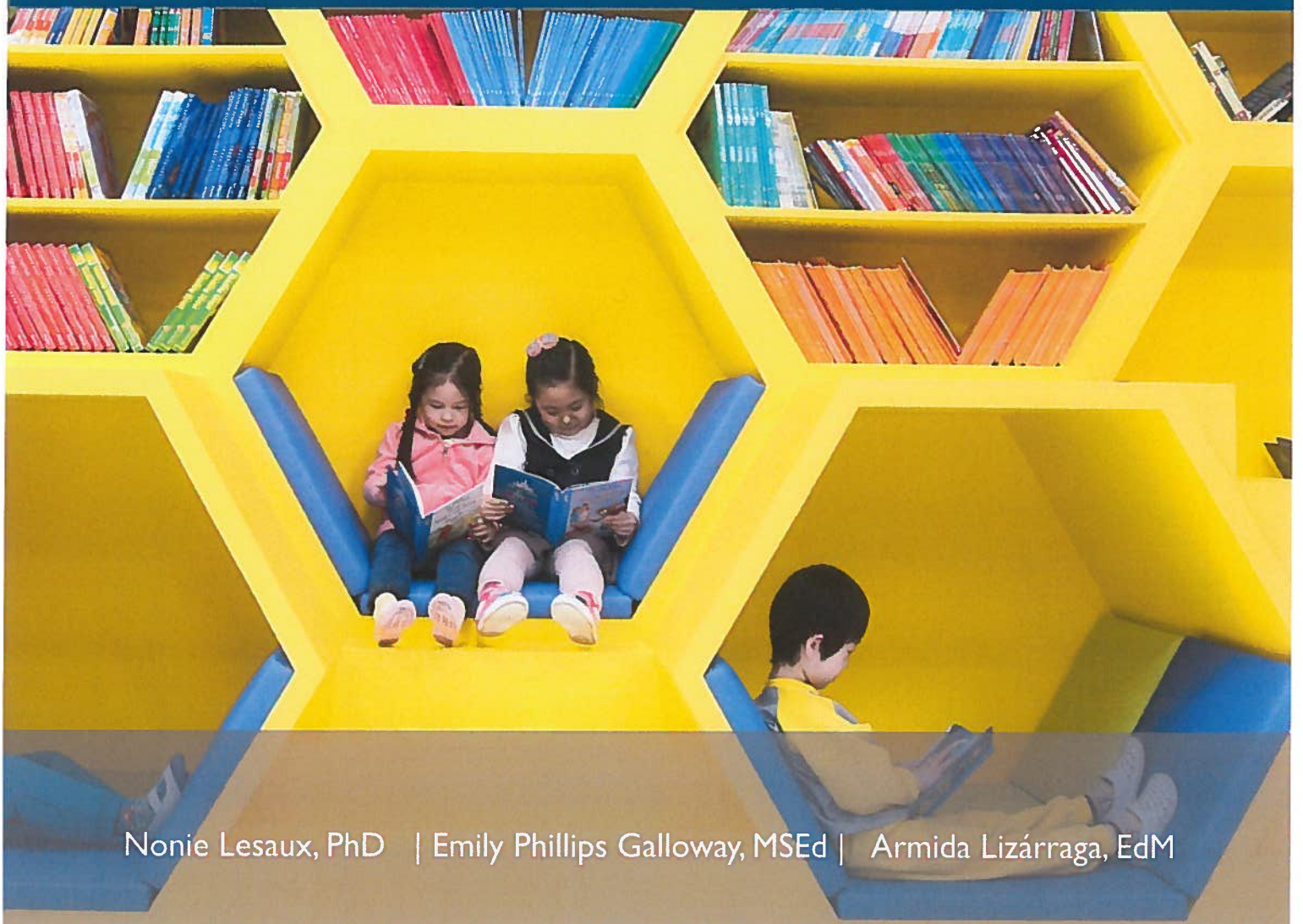


The New Global Actors:

The RISE Approach to Building English Language Learners' 21st Century Skills

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Introduction

We live in a global world and it's important for children to be able to communicate in English.

-RISE educator

Across the world, many of today's parents aspire for their children to achieve English proficiency in order to participate fully in today's global society—one where English is the de facto language of commerce and innovation. Command of English for 21st-century society includes the ability to speak, read and write for a variety of purposes and using different technologies. This provides the opportunity to take part in academic, civic, and professional life. While globalization presents an unprecedented gateway for today's children to become the adults of tomorrow, it also presents a two-tier challenge: Effective innovations to an outmoded teaching model must be developed, because only then will it be possible to teach English in communities worldwide in ways that will leverage parents' aspirations for their young children.

Responding to English Teaching in the Global Educational Context: The RISE Curriculum

To advance children's English skills around the world, the RISE program provides an immersive English Language experience. It is offered in five countries, for children ages 3 to 12. The program has been in operation since, 2008, although in four of those five countries it has been operating for less than 18 months. The backbone of an effective educational program, the curriculum draws on materials used widely in the U.S. in order to promote children's English-language development (reading, writing, listening, speaking), subject-based knowledge (e.g., math, science, social science), and higher-order thinking. The 40-week curriculum includes print-based materials and materials for use with digital and interactive media. The digital elements of the curriculum were recently enhanced to ensure an interactive, 21st-century learning environment. The RISE curriculum is delivered in classrooms with groups of children at the same stage of proficiency; the teacher's role is to follow the structured activities in the curriculum and direct and facilitate learning.

Our Review

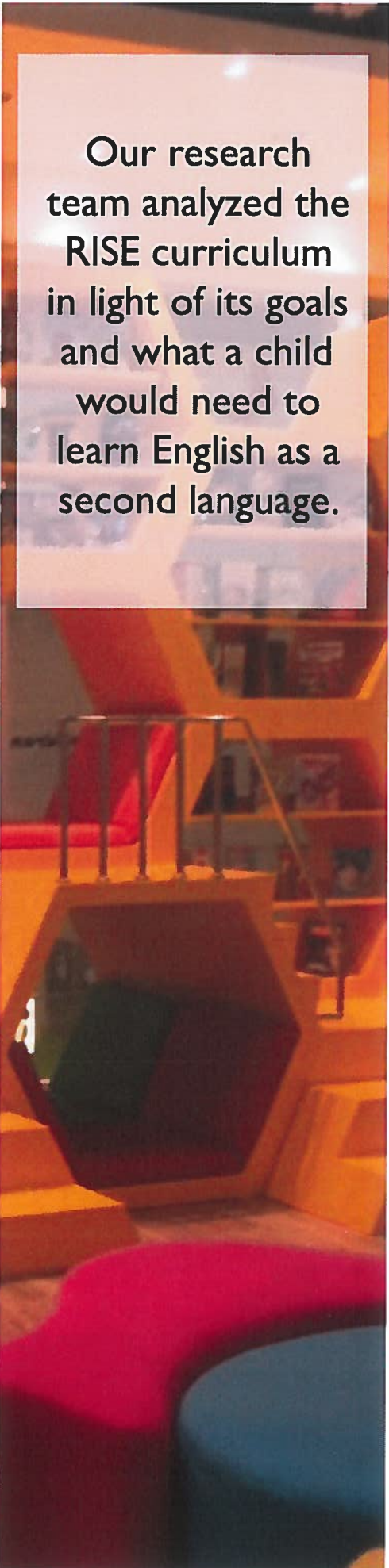
A 360 on the RISE Curriculum

At the request of the RISE Global leadership, our research team analyzed the RISE curriculum in light of its goals and what a child would need to learn English as a second language. While the widespread teaching of English to young children in the international context is a recently emerging phenomenon, young immigrant children learning English as a second language in the U.S., U.K, and other developed countries is a long-standing phenomenon. Therefore, decades of research on best practices to promote dual-language learning informed our review of the curriculum's design and components.

We took a mixed-methods approach to the review. It included interviews with current RISE educators about the curriculum at RISE sites in Indonesia and Korea as well as classroom observations at RISE sites in Indonesia and Korea to see the curriculum enacted. It also included analysis of the *Destination Learning* materials and plans for teachers (i.e., lesson plans and digital materials) and for students (hard copies of student workbooks, short story books, morning circle and homework books). Finally the review looked at components of the digital platform, including lessons designed for the interactive touchscreen boards and the RISE library materials at each site.

RISE has the strongest points among a lot of English institutes [in Korea]. There is an array of activities with different materials to use with children.

-RISE educator



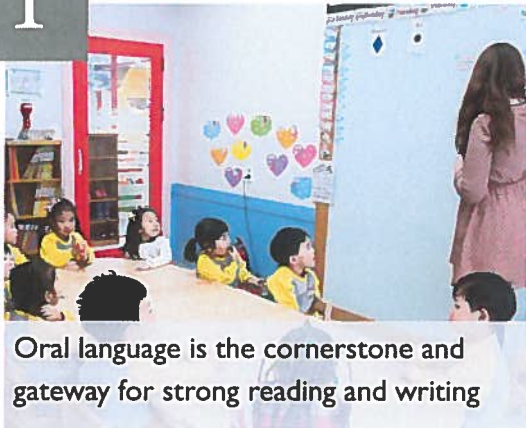
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Key Findings

The RISE Innovation: A Break with Traditional English Teaching

Recognized as a departure from traditional English teaching, the RISE program exemplifies the kind of instructional innovation needed to cultivate English language skills for today's global society. For young children to develop English communication skills for social and academic purposes, four key principles must be part of any instructional curriculum and model—each of which are central to the RISE approach. First, oral language is the cornerstone and gateway for strong reading and writing. Second, strong reading and writing skills require exposure to complex topics and ideas. Third, speaking, listening, reading, and writing all develop through authentic use and practice. Fourth, student engagement is at the core of an effective, 21st-century language-learning environment. Below, we describe in more detail the ways in which these four principles come to life in the RISE curriculum.

1



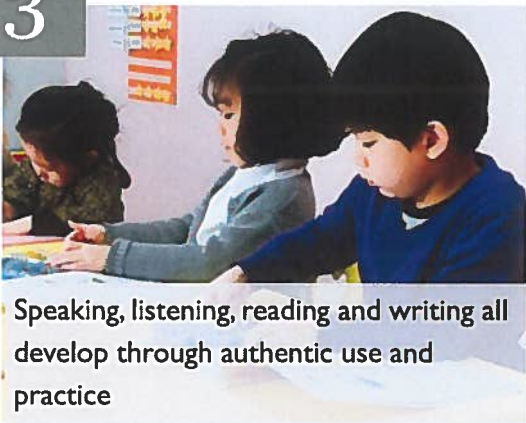
Oral language is the cornerstone and gateway for strong reading and writing

2



Strong reading and writing skills require exposure to complex topics and ideas

3



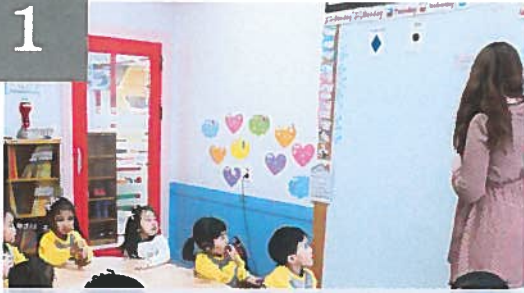
Speaking, listening, reading and writing all develop through authentic use and practice

4



Student engagement is at the core of an effective, 21st-century language-learning environment

1



Oral language is the cornerstone and gateway for strong reading and writing

Getting to strong English reading and writing skills means developing strong oral language skills. While reading text was long thought to be the critical mechanism for promoting language and vocabulary development, we now realize this isn't the case for young learners of English. It is only once learners have well-developed language skills that they really begin to comprehend rich text, and to learn language by reading. In fact, for

children learning English as a second language, oral language knowledge is one of the strongest predictors of later reading skills. This is because knowledge of oral language helps students better match sounds from spoken language to printed letters and understand the meaning of the words on the page.

As young children learning English acquire language orally, they are also beginning to map sounds from spoken language to the written word, and realizing how print works. Therefore, exposure to high-quality spoken English combined with frequent opportunities for students to practice and produce it is the cornerstone of a comprehensive English-language teaching program. Developing students' oral language, through activities that use print and digital text as a platform, is the most effective way to build the foundation they need to develop proficiency as readers and writers of English.

*Teachers should keep talk to a minimum.
Students should talk as much as possible.*

There's a heavy emphasis on speaking within the RISE curriculum...English is essentially the way to communicate.


-RISE educator

As students progress in their literacy development, they are often called upon to discuss their understandings of ideas presented in a text—and the language needed to discuss these ideas—through writing. This progression from using similar vocabulary and language structures for speaking, to reading and finally to writing supports young learners of English to gain competence as speakers.

Consistent with findings that demonstrate the importance of oral language for English reading and writing development, the RISE curriculum regularly offers a variety of opportunities to build oral language:

- ▶ Conversations about students' daily lives and experiences are a natural part of each day's classroom routine
- ▶ The curriculum texts are introduced through teacher-led conversations that ask students to connect their prior knowledge and experience to the themes presented in the text
- ▶ Frequent prompts about the texts ask students to respond orally (see Figure 1)
- ▶ After reading, teachers model the use of language including grammar and vocabulary when posing questions related to the text, and then support students to use this language when responding
- ▶ Across the instructional units, students have the opportunity to practice different ways of speaking (e.g., debates, role playing, narrating a personal event)

Figure 1. RISE lessons use oral language, writing and reading to reinforce learning.



During reading, frequent prompts ask students to respond in writing and orally to the text.

Was triceratops green? Brown? Spotted? Striped?
Nobody knows.
No triceratops skin has ever been found.
But other pieces of triceratops have been found.
These pieces are called fossils.

10. What do you think they looked like?



Strong reading and writing skills require exposure to complex topics and ideas

Cultivating 21st-century literacy skills means anchoring the teaching in rich content—to build knowledge about the world and to provide the kind of cognitive stimulation needed to engage young learners—and developing reading skills in two different domains. While traditional English instruction models work to cultivate basic reading skills, most often using a rote format,

they aren't designed to simultaneously build up children's knowledge and language through rich content. These learners often have the 'mechanics' of reading down, but lack sufficient comprehension and vocabulary skills to derive meaning from text. As a result, they are not fully equipped with the reading skills needed to participate in classrooms where English is the primary language of instruction and therefore the tool required to build knowledge of a subject or topic.

In response to this shortcoming, the RISE curriculum is content-based, with themes that are relatable for students. It features topics from literature/language arts, math, science and social studies. It is also comprehensive in nature, effectively focusing on two different types of reading skills—'**code-based**' skills and '**meaning-based**' skills—within the context of the content-based lessons.

Code-based skills are those skills and competencies needed to read the words on the page—whether in English or another language. For example, to read the word *crack* drawn from the RISE lesson below, the reader has to know the sounds that the different letter combinations make (/cr-/ , /-ack/). The reader must also read (or recognize) this word and all

Code-based instruction should teach that:

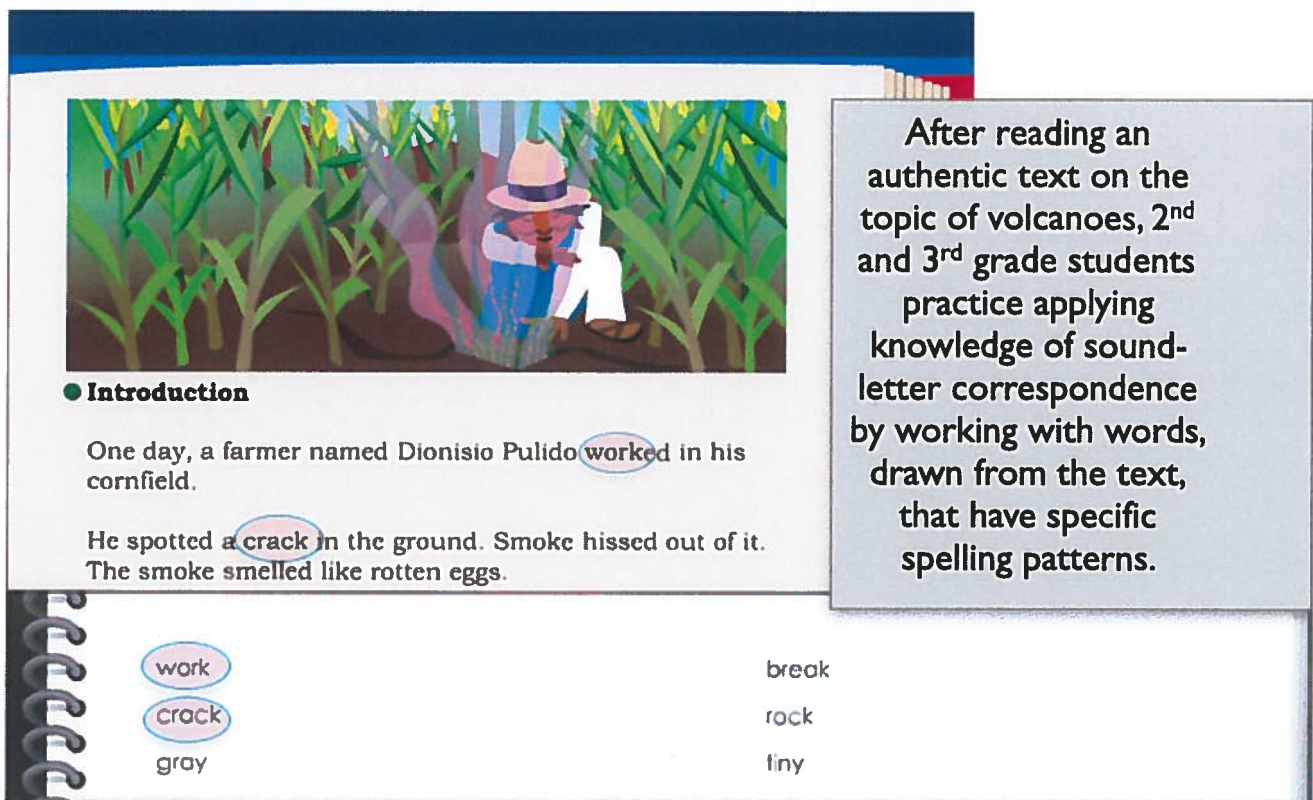
- ▶ There is a systematic relationship between letters and sounds
- ▶ Words are composed of letter patterns that represent sounds
- ▶ They can blend sounds to read words and segment them into sounds
- ▶ They should be able to notice and use patterns in words (how they sound, how they look and what they mean)
- ▶ There are word-solving strategies that support students to identify meaningful word parts (-tion, -er)

others in the text automatically enough to have the cognitive “space” left over to focus on building an understanding of the text’s meaning. Therefore, teaching children the 26 English letters and their 44 different sound combinations—referred to as phonics instruction—and having children practice reading words is central for developing code-based skills.

With adequate instruction, a child, including a child learning English as a second language, can develop these skills in just a few years. In fact, if a child learns these skills in a second language, research finds that they often have a ‘bilingual advantage’—their knowledge of how letters and sounds work together to map to words is heightened by virtue of navigating two languages.

The RISE curriculum provides strong code-based instruction to teach children to read words accurately and efficiently. Consistent with best practice, children learn phonics through reading and working with words embedded in content lessons. For instance, in a RISE unit focused on volcanoes for grades 2 and 3, students read a short text on the topic. Next, students practice sorting words from the text according to spelling pattern and using these words when writing. This focuses students’ attention on words that follow spelling patterns that are challenging to discern for developing readers (words ending in –k or –ck) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. Phonics instruction embedded within RISE content teaching.



● Introduction

One day, a farmer named Dionisio Pulido worked in his cornfield.

He spotted a crack in the ground. Smoke hissed out of it. The smoke smelled like rotten eggs.

work break
crack rock
gray tiny

After reading an authentic text on the topic of volcanoes, 2nd and 3rd grade students practice applying knowledge of sound-letter correspondence by working with words, drawn from the text, that have specific spelling patterns.

We think of code-based skills as necessary but not sufficient for effective reading. In addition to code-based skills (or the “mechanics” of reading), **meaning-based skills** are needed to understand what is being read. The reader needs to be familiar with the concepts and ideas on the page—she draws on her vocabulary and knowledge about the world to make sense of what she’s reading and to learn from the text. Unlike code-based skills, these meaning-based skills can’t be taught in a short period of time and they are never mastered. They are one’s language and knowledge skills that from infancy are always evolving and developing.

For many students acquiring English, there is often a gap between their ability to read the words on the page (code-based skills) and their ability to make meaning from text (meaning-based skills); with adequate

instruction, they often develop code-based skills to average levels but the same is not true for their vocabulary and comprehension skills, especially over time, as the language of text becomes more complex. Yet meaning-based skills are central to success in English school settings, whether that is elementary school or college.

As designed, a typical RISE lesson might contain the components highlighted below drawn from a unit on volcanoes for 2nd and 3rd grade learners (see Figure 3). Each of these components targets a meaning-based skill, as described above.

Compared to other language academies I’ve taught at, RISE is much more active and fun... it’s all about books and interactions and has a strong focus on student oral expression. Lots of discussions around different topics.

-RISE educator

Figure 3. Meaning-based skill instruction embedded within RISE content teaching.

• Table of Contents

Introduction.....1
 Vents.....3
 Lava and Ash.....4
 Eruptions.....6
 Glossary.....8
 Index.....9

Step 1. Before reading, students are introduced to key text features (e.g., table of contents) of informational books. Students are explicitly taught the purpose of these text features.

• Lava and Ash

Lava is very hot, melted rock.

Sometimes it flows slowly out of vents. Sometimes it shoots out in red, glowing fountains. Then it cools and becomes hard rock.

4

Step 2. During reading, students are supported by illustrations and by teacher-posed comprehension question, e.g., ‘Have you ever seen a volcano erupt?’

Step 3. After reading, students work with the information in the text—an important step in mastering new content and vocabulary. For example, in this lesson, students categorize information from the text into three broad buckets: Volcano, Ash, and Lava.

The smoke smells like _____
eggs.

rotten

do

book

say

Step 4. To extend students’ vocabulary learning, additional post-reading activities include using newly acquired vocabulary knowledge to complete sentences previously read in the text.

3



Speaking, listening, reading and writing all develop through authentic use and practice

If the single most important element of language learning in the classroom is the frequency and quality of language ‘inputs’ and ‘outputs’—or opportunities to be exposed to and participate in language interactions—then we must track not only the frequency of interactions but also the caliber of interactions. Traditional English teaching models have long focused on developing students’ oral language skills through oral and written repetition and rote memorization, as well as through pronunciation activities. But we now know that children need to practice and produce English under authentic conditions and for authentic purposes in

order to develop their 21st century speaking, listening, reading and writing skills.

The instruction and activities cannot be rote or formulaic—merely practicing basic English phrases and conversational conventions (reciting everyday greetings, posing a question using a scripted phrase) is insufficient. Instead, children need opportunities for discussion with educators and peers about authentic topics in a format that includes a lot of back and forth. When working with texts, English learners need to discuss the topic and connect it to their prior knowledge or experiences. They need to be able to ask questions about it and then need support to elaborate on their thinking. In sum, 21st century oral language teaching requires that the child be generating language spontaneously, under authentic conditions.

There is a good mix of reading, writing, listening, speaking and tactile learning.

-RISE educator

It is only through un-scripted language production, as favored by the RISE curriculum, that students acquire the language skills needed to participate in classrooms and professional

What is “Authentic” Use and Practice?

The RISE approach focuses on language development in a natural, engaging context, where children have extended discussion about everyday and academic topics, and meaningful communication is encouraged. The curriculum lessons are guided by the principle that language learning is a process of creative construction and therefore depends upon many opportunities for oral and written practice that promotes flexible language use.

contexts where English is spoken. RISE's focus on authentic language production lays the groundwork for students to participate successfully in English school settings.

Reflecting the science of literacy and child development, RISE lessons embed many opportunities for children to engage in authentic conversation and discussion:

- ▶ Through debates, role playing and narrating personal events, students have the opportunity to practice different ways of speaking.
- ▶ At the start of each day, students participate in circle time where they are supported to pose questions to peers that incite engaging peer-to-peer conversations (e.g., What do you like to [do, eat, play] after school?).
- ▶ At the beginning of every reading lesson, teachers model how students can formulate novel responses and they support children to connect the conversation to the lesson topic.
 - ▶ e.g., on a lesson about safety signs and rules, the teacher may start the lesson by asking students if they can think of a time when they were scared or felt unsafe. Using their own personal narrative as a springboard, students share their experiences while the teacher links these to the lesson content.
- ▶ During each reading lesson, there are opportunities to learn and use vocabulary, construct and employ grammatical expressions, and practice new sentence constructions by answering questions related to the text. For instance, Figure 4 shows a pre-reading activity drawn from a RISE unit on the topic of folk and fairy tales. Students are introduced to the language and then asked to write and practice saying their responses.
 - ▶ In contrast to traditional English teaching where students would be repeating scripted responses, RISE learners are asked to generate their own authentic responses.

Figure 4. Authentic oral and written dialogue activities from RISE lessons.

 **“What book are you reading?”**

 **“I’m reading a book about dragons.”**

 **“That’s great! I’m reading a book about pets.”**

What is the girl reading about?

What is the boy reading about?

What do you like to read about?

Let's Practice Dialog

Now that we know some vocabulary, let's learn how we can use these words to talk with our friends.

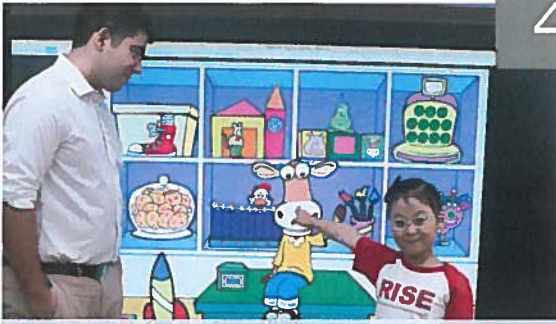


Big John Henry was a giant of a man. He was nearly ten feet tall, and he weighed more than four horses. People said his muscles were made of steel. He was so strong that when he swung his hammer, you could hear it pounding a hundred miles away!

2. Do you think he was really 10 feet tall? Why or why not?

Write your own “tall tale”...

Choose one of the exaggerated sentences you wrote on the last page and write a tall tale about it. Use the lines provided on this page and the next page. Remember to use complete sentences.



Student engagement is at the core of an effective, 21st-century language-learning environment

Developing 21st-century English communication skills depends upon a 21st-century learning environment—one where cognitive rigor and high levels of student engagement go hand-in-hand. Going past the stand-and-deliver teaching scenario, a 21st-century learning environment is one that engages and places the student at the core. This happens through collaborative learning, in partners and small groups, with content-rich activities, anchored in print and digital

platforms. In each classroom, intentional technology use that not only promotes learning but facilitates student engagement through interaction and play.

The RISE environment fosters learning inside and outside the classroom. The RISE centers, through the use of vivid colors, child-friendly architecture, and flexible technology use, are inviting, engaging places. Rich libraries appear in conjunction with the signature RISE “honeycomb,” the focal point of each center, where children and families gather and interact at the beginning and end of their classes, and during breaks, to read books, listen to books on tape, and play together.

Creating a 21st-century classroom learning environment means that educators need clear plans and quality materials—they need a curriculum that has the structures and routines, coupled with the variety in content and format for delivery, that make learning productive and engaging. In any curriculum that supports an engaging, 21st-century learning environment, a core set of learning tasks recurs from unit to unit, so that students gain familiarity and ease with the expectations and processes associated with those activities. But make no mistake—this repetition is not the same as rote learning! Instead, we look for predictable procedures and activities that are designed to help learners engage even more in the kind

The RISE approach includes lots of positive reinforcement and praise—it works so much better with kids than negative reinforcement

-RISE educator

of thinking, talking, and writing that are critical for language and learning. When the learning tasks are familiar, English learners are freed up to focus on the knowledge, skills, and competencies they are developing. Using similar structures for conversations and learning tasks, time and again, makes for deep learning and high levels of engagement. Within the RISE curriculum this repetition is accomplished with a predictable unfolding of activities throughout each unit. Most units begin with learning key vocabulary and letter-sound relationships that will support students in reading the unit's text, then students progress to reading and conclude the unit with a writing activity. *Destination Learning* touchscreen lessons offer activities for mastering letter-sound correspondence that are similar in structure from unit to unit, so as to support engagement and an increased sense of competence.

In subject-based learning classes, students also begin the units with learning key vocabulary and concepts, then progress to solving actual problems and additional practice. *Destination Math* touchscreen lessons offer activities to master problem solving and enhance listening skills.

As children move through the RISE curriculum, there are regular opportunities to engage with one another in structured interactions (including role-play and word play) and discussions. Not only does this classroom talk build language through positive social interactions, it also addresses the social aspects of academic motivation, particularly in a language-learning context. Each day at RISE centers, lessons begin with Circle Time—a time for students to engage peers in conversation on a set topic of interest (e.g., What is your favorite thing to do? What do you like to eat? Do you have a pet?). Often following a game format, these oral language activities, as well as songs, are highly engaging for young learners. In our interviews with RISE educators, they cited frequent opportunities for interactive learning that promote student engagement as a strength of the RISE curriculum.

Another important strategy is positive reinforcement and encouragement.

There is a good mix of in-class, interactive, and out of class learning opportunities, including the library.

-RISE educator

Figure 5. Supporting learner engagement in RISE math.



On this touchscreen frame, the professor asks the students which row has the most jellies. Then he asks which row has the least. (*Destination Math*, Unit 1, Module 4)

Figure 6. Supporting learner engagement in RISE ELA lessons.

Writing Practice

Sometimes when we write, we need to ask a question to find out more information.

We let others know we need an answer by using a question mark as the ending punctuation sign.

Circle the question marks in these two Question and Answer examples:

Q: Do you like cereal?
A: Yes, I do.

Q: Where do you live?
A: I live in the city.

Let's Practice Writing Questions

Follow the three easy steps below to make your own questions. Remember, sentences always begin with a capital letter and end with punctuation.

Step 1: Pick one of the word pairs that begins with a capital letter.

Do you / Would he / Did she

Step 2: Choose middle words.

have / want / take care of / pet

Step 3: Select ending words with a question mark.

a fish? / a dog? / a hamster? / a cat? / a rabbit?

Now write the three selections you made in the same order below to create your very own question. Then, go back and pick new words from each section to make two different sentences.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Let's Write about Pets

How would you take care of a pet? Use the word bank to help you complete the paragraph below, or think of your own words.

On the last line, write your own answer after the word because.

dog / cat / rabbit / hamster / care / food / water
groomed / walked / petted / brushed

If I had a pet _____, I would need to take _____ of it. My pet _____ would need _____ and _____ It would also need to be _____ I would like to get a pet _____ because _____



Conclusion

The exponential growth in global interactions and information sharing means there is much for each of us to process, analyze, and respond to in the everyday often in English as the language used most commonly for international communications. This means that today's children will enter a workforce and economy that demands on critical thinking and advanced literacy skills for full participation in society; and it means that there are significant implications for English language education.

Research tells us that to develop 21st-century English language and literacy skills necessarily means an engaging, content-rich learning curriculum and environment—one that develops specific skills and competencies while also building up children's knowledge of the world. In these environments, children and educators engage in authentic, meaningful dialogue and learning experiences—about complex topics—from a number of angles and perspectives. Student engagement is at the core of effective learning, with classrooms that are hives of English use and practice. The RISE curriculum, for use in combination with print and digital media, offers opportunities for creating these learning environments—spaces where today's children will be prepared to participate as the adults of tomorrow in this global society.

globalization

noun glob al i za tion \glō-bə-lə-'zā-shən

- The concerns of the world's culture and economies;
- A process of international integration arising from the interchange of world views, products, ideas and other aspects of culture;
- A process of interaction and integration among people, different nations, a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information

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Research Team

Nonie K. Lesaux, Ph.D., is Juliana W. and William Foss Thompson Professor of Education and Society at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, where she leads a research program that focuses on increasing opportunities to learn for students from diverse linguistic, cultural, and economic backgrounds. Lesaux's research and teaching focus primarily on the cognitive and linguistic factors that enable children and adolescents to read effectively. Her research has included longitudinal studies investigating reading and language development among English language learners as well as experimental evaluations of academic vocabulary instruction. She is currently principal investigator of a longitudinal study investigating the interrelated dimensions of linguistically diverse children's cognitive, socio-emotional, and literacy development, and co-directs a project



focused on building capacity in the early education workforce. Lesaux authored a state-level literacy report that forms the basis for a Third Grade Reading Proficiency bill passed in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. The legislation established an Early Literacy Expert Panel, which Lesaux co-chairs, charged with developing new policies and policy-based initiatives in a number of domains that influence children's early literacy development. From 2002-2006, Lesaux was senior research associate of the National Literacy Panel on Language Minority Youth and from 2007-2009, she was a member of the Reading First Advisory Committee for the Secretary of Education in the U.S. Department of Education. Lesaux's scholarship has resulted in two prestigious early career awards—the William T. Grant Foundation Faculty Scholars Award and a Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers from the U.S. Government, the highest honor for young, independent researchers. The practical applications of her research are featured in several publications written for education leaders and practitioners, including four books, one of which is forthcoming and co-authored with Emily Phillips Galloway.

Emily Phillips Galloway, Ed.D., is an instructor in education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. This fall, Emily will join Vanderbilt University's Peabody School of Education as an assistant professor. Previously, Emily completed her undergraduate degree in health policy and her Master's in education at the University of Pennsylvania. Before beginning her doctoral studies at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Emily was a Michael Pressley Memorial Fellow at the Benchmark School in Media, PA where she taught adolescent struggling readers in grades 6, 7 and 8 and served as a reading specialist. Currently, Emily's research explores the relationships between academic language development and reading skill in adolescent learners with a particular focus on English Learners. Her work has been featured in *Reading Research Quarterly*, *Applied Psycholinguistics* and *Reading and Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. With a commitment to advancing research-practice partnerships, Emily has also worked with teachers, school leaders and administrators in two of the largest urban districts in the United States. The



fundamentals and lessons learned from this work is featured in a book forthcoming (spring, 2016) with Nonie Lesaux, on leading advanced literacy instruction in linguistically diverse settings.

Armida Lizárraga, Ed.M., is an advisor, consultant, and educational researcher with expertise in curriculum and research design, monitoring and evaluation, and educational material development. Her primary area of specialization is children's language and literacy development, with a focus on multilingual populations, though she has worked in other areas including U.S. and international education policy, IB curriculum design, teacher training, and early childhood education. Armida's career in education began as a teacher in international schools in Spain, Brazil, and Peru, as well as in the U.S. public school system. After receiving her Ed.M. in Language and Literacy in 2008 from the Harvard Graduate School of Education, she worked for four years as a Research Associate and Project Manager for the Language Minority and Literacy Diversity Research Group at Harvard University. Major



subsequent international consulting work has included assignments for RTI/USAID Nicaragua (designing a literacy module and training the national technical team for K-3 teachers as part of a major public-private partnership), FHI360/USAID Peru (lead researcher for a three-regions study in Peru, seeking to understand teacher's literacy practices and knowledge in K-3 classrooms), FHI360/USAID Mozambique (designing an early childhood literacy plan for the government of Mozambique), Innovations for Poverty Action (qualitative analysis for a randomized evaluation of a Math and Science curriculum implemented in rural and urban elementary classrooms in Peru), and World Bank/Government of Peru (designing the country's new professional development program for principals). She is currently a project manager for *Learning for All*, a Harvard University comparative three-country study examining literacy and civic education development in Peru, Colombia, and Botswana. She has also worked as a consultant for the China Talent Education Group and Inter-American Development Bank, among others. She is based in Lima, Peru.