



Thank you

FOR YOUR
INTEREST IN
CORWIN

Please enjoy this complimentary excerpt from *Small Group Reading With Multilingual Learners*.

[LEARN MORE](#) about this title!

ASSET LENS



Speaking more slowly is a powerful strategy! Check to make sure you aren't talking too fast by inviting another teacher to watch a lesson or by videoing a lesson.

Students Learn Language When They Belong

Another important theory of Krashen (1982) is the idea that students acquire language when they are comfortable and supported. Called the *affective filter*, the premise of the theory is that when a student is emotionally distraught or socio-emotionally not supported in the classroom and in their learning environments, it will be difficult to acquire language. The fear of making mistakes in front of peers impedes their ability to learn. It can be hard for students to take risks when speaking or writing in English.

By contrast, in low-anxiety learning settings, student motivation, esteem, and self-confidence remain high, making it more likely that students will be able to focus on the lesson and the language being used in the lesson (Peregoy & Boyle, 2016). Safety and security come first for students, and they need to feel safe and secure at the reading table as well. Admonishment or “holding students responsible” for some point in learning in a negative way will not help students acquire English.

The teaching take-away: In order to keep negative emotions low and positive emotions high, do an audit of your routines at the small group reading table. Following are some fairly simple solutions that ease students' anxiety and allow you to stay true to instructional goals.

Common triggers for negative emotions

Composition of reading group

Pressure to speak

Pressure to read aloud

Errors

Composition of the group at the table

Presentation of language

Solutions to Ease Students' Anxiety

Have flexible grouping.

Sometimes group students with other students who are language learners so that the focus can be on discussing and using language in ways that are comfortable for the multilingual learners.

Always group students with buddies who make them feel comfortable or who can help them.

Sometimes group students by reading acquisition level in order to support the reading level or reading strategy being worked with.

When students are beginning to learn English, keep pressure low.

As students acquire language, encourage them to speak, but never demand that they speak. If they don't want to speak, find other ways that they can express themselves, perhaps whisper talking only with you or with a friend or writing their thinking down.

Focus on having them reading aloud only to themselves (when others are simultaneously reading aloud so the students realize no one will be listening to them), and/or invite them to read aloud to you or whisper read (perhaps using a whisper phone), or do not have them read aloud at all if they are becoming fairly fluent readers and need to work on pronunciation and vocabulary "in their head" before saying it out loud.

Be accepting of errors and encourage students to talk. They don't need to say things perfectly. Instead of correcting orally, model by restating what the student said, but say it the correct way. In writing one-on-one, pick one or two points and teach the correct way of writing the word or sentence, but don't pick on everything. Be positive about errors; the more students talk and write, the more their errors will naturally decrease!

Supportive groups are best. It doesn't matter if they are homogenous or heterogenous; what matters is you develop a classroom culture of respect of all students, not only students learning English.

Focus on comprehension + just a little bit more. Use realia—pictures, diagrams, videos, and so forth, ensure language is understandable. Using hands-on manipulatives, whiteboards, virtual whiteboards, flashcards, sentence strips, writing journals, laptops (for multimedia), magnetic letters, magnetic word tiles, and other tactile tools supports students as they learn language.