

## Follow-up Discussion

Professional Development Monthly Advisor and Planner (PDMAP)

# ***Second Language Acquisition and Learning***

February 2011

### Discussion Questions:

1. Catherine Snow and Mary Schleppegrel explain that adults are just as capable as children – in many regards even more capable – of learning a second language. Which of Snow's main points can you use as instructional strategies in your ESL classroom? What new insights did you gain from Schleppegrel?
2. Several articles discuss these two approaches to ESL instruction – a focus on learning the correct forms of English and a focus on conveying meaning in English. Are you able to blend the two – so that grammar forms are presented and practiced in a meaningful context? What kinds of activities do you use that focus on form? What activities do you include to focus on meaning?
3. Every ESL class is multilevel because, as Walqui discusses, learners bring different experiences with their first language to their English language efforts. What have you noticed in your own classrooms regarding how learners' first language experiences impact their progress in learning English?
4. Ellis discusses the effectiveness of explicit (taught) knowledge about a language versus learners' acquiring an implicit understanding of how the language works. What can teachers do to help learners transfer the knowledge they get in the ESL classroom so it becomes a part of their implicit understanding of English?
5. Second language acquisition is facilitated when learners receive extensive oral and written input from the world around them. There are many sources of English language oral input that teachers can provide for adult learners. What sources predominate in your instruction?

6. Two types of output help facilitate language learning. In controlled output (guided practice) learners repeat phrases or structures just as they have learned them, possibly with substitutions. In pushed output (communicative tasks) learners convey meaning in unrehearsed and sustained ways. How do you assure that learners practice both kinds of output in your classroom?
  
7. Several authors discuss the importance of teaching strategies to language learners. Cohen mentions two types of strategies – those that learners apply to *learn* a language and those they apply to *use* the language. What kinds of language learning and/or language use strategies do you teach your ESL learners?