In Lori Olson's seminal report, *Reparable Harm* 2010, she identifies typical characteristics of a Long-term English Learner (LTEL). LTEL's tend to have strong social language both in their home language and English and weak academic language and literacy in both languages.

The lack of understanding of some basic premises of second language acquisition on the part of site and district leadership has resulted in too many programs that either track ELLs in low level classes with simplified curriculum or ignore the language needs of ELLs all together and place them in the sink or swim scenario of the unsupported mainstream classroom (Gwynn, Parja, Ehrlich, & Allensworth, 2012.)

Practitioners need to provide instruction that differs based on the varying typologies of English learners (Olsen, 2010). LTELs and students at risk of becoming an LTEL need: oral language development, student engagement, academic language, reading and writing of expository text, consistent routines, goal setting, empowering pedagogy, rigor, community and relationships, and study skills.

Although many ELLs experience an instructional program which approaches language acquisition is a linear progression of grammar and vocabulary skills with a focus on mastery or correct use, experts in the field understand language acquisition as much more complex and dynamic process one that occurs through experience using language and authentic ways of activating various of modes of communication, such as listening and speaking to others in conversations, interpreting ideas, collaborating, and producing language in order to inform or persuade (Larson-Freeman, 1997, Crashin, 1982).

In one highly referenced study, *Developing Literacy and Second Language Learners* (2006), August and Shanahan found oral language is associated with both comprehension skills and writing proficiency, although it is often overlooked in instruction.

The research explains why academic discussion is beneficial for language acquisition. It allows students to hear more language from students and teachers who serve as language models (Gibbons, 2002) and provides them with an opportunity to produce language in contextualized and purposeful ways as they apply form (e.g. grammar, vocabulary) and function (e.g. to clarify, explain, argue) in order to build ideas (Zwiers & Crawford, 2011).