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| **Myth** | **Fact** |
| Second language learners will acquire academic English faster if their parents speak English at home. | Research shows it is better for parents to speak in their native language to their children. Their language will be richer and more complex. If a child is being read to in their native language, parents will spend more time discussing the story, and asking questions. Children will eventually translate that learning to English. Never instruct a parent to speak only English at home. |
| Once students can converse socially in English, they are then capable of succeeding academically. | Children can speak and socialize way before they can use language for academic purposes. BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) are acquired first. This is social language needed to interact on the playground and in the classroom. It usually takes students 1-3 years to completely develop this social language. Then children develop CALP (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) skills. This is the language needed to undertake academic tasks in the mainstream classroom. It includes content-specific vocabulary. It usually takes students 3-7 years to develop CALP. |
| Parents of ELLs aren’t involved in their children’s education. | ELL parents value their children’s education, but their active involvement may vary. Active parental involvement in the schools is not acceptable in some cultures. Some parents may not have the time to attend school functions as they may hold more than one job. Parents may also feel intimidated by their own language barriers. |
| The more time students spend soaking up English in the mainstream classroom, the more quickly they will learn English. | Children need comprehensible input. Imagine that you are sitting in a room of Japanese speakers. You have no idea what they are talking about. You could sit there for a long time and learn very little unless someone helped make that input comprehensible. Language is not “soaked up”. |
| The culture of students doesn’t affect how long it takes them to acquire English. All students learn in the same way. | Culture can affect how long it takes children to learn English. Do your students come from modern industrialized countries or rural agricultural societies? Do your students come from language backgrounds using a different writing system? Previous schooling and school expectations will also affect language learning.  |
| If the ESL teacher could take the students more often and just focus on teaching the English language to ESL students, learning in all areas would occur faster. | Language is a process that takes time. Consistent, cognitive development in all subject areas is important. Students can learn language and content simultaneously. Classroom teachers providing comprehensible input are important to academic success and language learning. The ESL teacher can provide an opportunity for the student to be immersed in language at the appropriate level and can help students develop language skills and strategies efficiently. |

**A Few Myths About ELL Students**