


8/6/13  
Jess Guckin

# Navigating Content for English Language Learners

Keystones to Opportunity  
Participant's Guide



Pennsylvania's Vision for Sustainable Growth in  
Reading Achievement

# ELL Literacy Action Plan

| Topics                              | What did you learn about literacy development/instruction for English Language Learners? | What are you going to do differently?                                 |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Culturally Responsive Practices     | Simultaneous vs. Sequential (slide 31) Bilingualism                                      | I will use more pictures / labels, in all languages of kids in class. |  |
| First and Second Language Processes | Younger vs. Older children (slide 28)  | Slide 6 - Slide 32 - "Can do" descriptors...                          | * video of Culturally Responsive Teaching + Learning |
| English Language Proficiency Levels | productive vs. receptive lang.   | Levels 1-6 Entering - Reaching  |  |

order of learning  
 1 - listening  
 2 - speaking  
 3 - reading  
 4 - writing





# What Is the Nature of Reading?

Read the text and tell someone sitting next to you what you understood. Together, answer the following questions:

1. What literacy skills did you use to read this text? *context clues*

2. If you are not literate in French, what words do you think you know?

*cognate words*

3. How did you know these words?

*French 1-4  
from MS-HS*

4. What do you think is the message of this text?

*The mom  
is Queen & daughter  
(princess)*



*Culturally Responsive Teaching + Learning*  
**Culturally Responsive Practices (Video Clip Previewing Guide)**

| Teacher Practices | Learner Practices |
|-------------------|-------------------|
|                   |                   |



# FACTORS AFFECTING SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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- **Native Language Proficiency**
- **Knowledge of the Second Language**
- **Language Distance**
- **Language Attitudes and Status**
- \*• **Diverse Needs and Diverse Goals**
- \*• **Personality and Learning Styles**
- **Peers and Role Models**
- **Motivation and Classroom Interaction**



# Contextual Factors in Second Language Acquisition

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4a

While many discussions about learning a second language focus on teaching methodologies, little emphasis is given to the contextual factors—individual, social, and societal—that affect students' learning. These contextual factors can be considered from the perspective of the language, the learner, and the learning process. This digest discusses these perspectives as they relate to learning any second language, with a particular focus on how they affect adolescent learners of English as a second language.

## Language

Several factors related to students' first and second languages shape their second language learning. These factors include the linguistic distance between the two languages, students' level of proficiency in the native language and their knowledge of the second language, the dialect of the native language spoken by the students (i.e., whether it is standard or nonstandard), the relative status of the students' language in the community, and societal attitudes toward the students' native language.

## Language distance

Specific languages can be more or less difficult to learn, depending on how different from or similar they are to the languages the learner already knows. At the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California, for example, languages are placed in four categories depending on their average learning difficulty from the perspective of a native English speaker. The basic intensive language course, which brings a student to an intermediate level, can be as short as 24 weeks for languages such as Dutch or Spanish, which are Indo European languages and use the same writing system as English, or as long as 65 weeks for languages such as Arabic, Korean, or Vietnamese, which are members of other language families and use different writing systems.

## Native language proficiency

The student's level of proficiency in the native language—including not only oral language and literacy, but also metalinguistic development, training in formal and academic features of language use, and knowledge of rhetorical patterns and variations in genre and style—affects acquisition of a second language. The more academically sophisticated the student's native language knowledge and abilities, the easier it will be for that student to learn a second language. This helps explain why foreign exchange students tend to be successful in American high school classes: they already have high-school level proficiency in their native language.

## Knowledge of the second language

Students' prior knowledge of the second language is of course a significant factor in their current learning. High school students learning English as a second language in a U.S. classroom may possess skills ranging from conversational fluency acquired from contacts with

the English-speaking world to formal knowledge obtained in English as a foreign language classes in their countries of origin. The extent and type of prior knowledge is an essential consideration in planning instruction. For example, a student with informal conversational English skills may have little understanding of English grammatical systems and may need specific instruction in English grammar.

## Dialect and register

Learners may need to learn a dialect and a formal register in school that are different from those they encounter in their daily lives. This involves acquiring speech patterns that may differ significantly from those they are familiar with and value as members of a particular social group or speech community.

## Language status

Consideration of dialects and registers of a language and of the relationships between two languages includes the relative prestige of different languages and dialects and of the cultures and ethnic groups associated with them. Students whose first language has a low status vis-à-vis the second may lose their first language, perhaps feeling they have to give up their own linguistic and cultural background to join the more prestigious society associated with the target language.

## Language attitudes

Language attitudes in the learner, the peer group, the school, the neighborhood, and society at large can have an enormous effect on the second language learning process, both positive and negative. It is vital that teachers and students examine and understand these attitudes. In particular, they need to understand that learning a second language does not mean giving up one's first language or dialect. Rather, it involves adding a new language or dialect to one's repertoire.

This is true even for students engaged in formal study of their first language. For example, students in Spanish for native speakers classes may feel bad when teachers tell them that the ways they speak Spanish are not right. Clearly, this is an issue of dialect difference. School (in this case, classroom Spanish) requires formal registers and standard dialects, while conversation with friends and relatives may call for informal registers and nonstandard dialects. If their ways of talking outside of school are valued when used in appropriate contexts, students are more likely to be open to learning a new language or dialect, knowing that the new discourses will expand their communicative repertoires rather than displace their familiar ways of communicating.

## The Learner

Students come from diverse backgrounds and have diverse needs and goals. With adolescent language learners, factors such as peer pressure, the presence of role models, and the level of home support can strongly affect the desire and ability to learn a second language.



## Diverse needs

A basic educational principle is that new learning should be based on prior experiences and existing skills. Although this principle is known and generally agreed upon by educators, in practice it is often overshadowed by the administrative convenience of the linear curriculum and the single textbook. Homogeneous curricula and materials are problematic enough if all learners are from a single language and cultural background, but they are indefensible given the great diversity in today's classrooms. Such diversity requires a different conception of curricula and a different approach to materials. Differentiation and individualization are not a luxury in this context: they are a necessity.

## Diverse goals

Learners' goals may determine how they use the language being learned, how native-like their pronunciation will be, how lexically elaborate and grammatically accurate their utterances will be, and how much energy they will expend to understand messages in the target language. Learners' goals can vary from wholly integrative—the desire to assimilate and become a full member of the English-speaking world—to primarily instrumental—oriented toward specific goals such as academic or professional success (Gardner, 1989). Educators working with English language learners must also consider whether the communities in which their students live, work, and study accept them, support their efforts, and offer them genuine English-learning opportunities.

## Peer groups

Teenagers tend to be heavily influenced by their peer groups. In second language learning, peer pressure often undermines the goals set by parents and teachers. Peer pressure often reduces the desire of the student to work toward native pronunciation, because the sounds of the target language may be regarded as strange. For learners of English as a second language, speaking like a native speaker may unconsciously be regarded as a sign of no longer belonging to their native-language peer group. In working with secondary school students, it is important to keep these peer influences in mind and to foster a positive image for proficiency in a second language.

## Role models

Students need to have positive and realistic role models who demonstrate the value of being proficient in more than one language. It is also helpful for students to read literature about the personal experiences of people from diverse language and dialect backgrounds. Through discussions of the challenges experienced by others, students can develop a better understanding of their own challenges.

## Home support

Support from home is very important for successful second language learning. Some educators believe that parents of English language learners should speak only English in the home (see, e.g., recommendations made in Rodríguez, 1982).

However, far more important than speaking English is that parents value both the native language and English, communicate with their children in whichever language is most comfortable, and show support for and interest in their children's progress.

## The Learning Process

When we think of second language development as a learning process, we need to remember that different students have different learning styles, that intrinsic motivation aids learning, and that the quality of classroom interaction matters a great deal.

## Learning styles

Research has shown that individuals vary greatly in the ways they learn a second language (Skehan, 1989). Some learners are more analytically oriented and thrive on picking apart words and sentences. Others are more globally oriented, needing to experience overall patterns of language in meaningful contexts before making sense of the linguistic parts and forms. Some learners are more visually oriented, others more geared to sounds.

## Motivation

According to Deci and Ryan (1985), intrinsic motivation is related to basic human needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness. Intrinsically motivated activities are those that the learner engages in for their own sake because of their value, interest, and challenge. Such activities present the best possible opportunities for learning.

## Classroom interaction

Language learning does not occur as a result of the transmission of facts about language or from a succession of rote memorization drills. It is the result of opportunities for meaningful interaction with others in the target language. Therefore, lecturing and recitation are not the most appropriate modes of language use in the second language classroom. Teachers need to move toward more richly interactive language use, such as that found in instructional conversations (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988) and collaborative classroom work (Adger, Kalyanpur, Peterson, & Bridger, 1995).

## Conclusion

While this digest has focused on the second language acquisition process from the perspective of the language, the learner, and the learning process, it is important to point out that the larger social and cultural contexts of second language development have a tremendous impact on second language learning, especially for immigrant students. The status of students' ethnic groups in relation to the larger culture can help or hinder the acquisition of the language of mainstream society.

## References

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This digest is drawn from Access and Engagement: Program Design and Instructional Approaches for Immigrant Students in Secondary Schools, by Aida Walqui, the fourth volume in the topics in Immigrant Education series.



# CAN DO Descriptors for the Levels of English Language Proficiency - Activity

Activity: Each column represents characteristics of English language learners at a given level of English proficiency. However, they are not in the correct order of Level 1 Entering, Level 2 Beginning, Level 3 Developing, Level 4 Expanding, and Level 5 Bridging. The task consists in rearranging the columns in the appropriate order. Please read the description provided for each column (or level) and label them appropriately.

The characteristics within each column are target skills. For the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners can...

| Language Domain  | Level 3  | Level 2  | Level 5  | Level 1  | Level 4  |
|------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Listening</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locate, select, order information from oral descriptions</li> <li>Follow multi-step oral directions</li> <li>Categorize or sequence oral information using pictures, objects</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sort pictures, objects according to oral instructions</li> <li>Follow two-step oral directions</li> <li>Match information from oral descriptions to objects, illustrations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draw conclusions from oral information</li> <li>Construct models based on oral discourse</li> <li>Make connections from oral discourse</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Point to stated pictures, words, phrases</li> <li>Follow one-step oral directions</li> <li>Match oral statements to objects, figures, or illustrations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compare and contrast functions, relationships from oral information</li> <li>Analyze and apply oral information</li> <li>Identify cause and effect from oral discourse</li> </ul> |
| <b>Reading</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sequence pictures, events, processes</li> <li>Identify main ideas</li> <li>Use context clues to determine meaning of words</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locate and classify information</li> <li>Identify facts and explicitly stated messages</li> <li>Select language patterns associated with facts</li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct research to glean information from multiple sources</li> <li>Draw conclusions from explicit and implicit text</li> </ul>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Match icons and symbols to words, phrases, or environmental print</li> <li>Identify concepts about print and text features</li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interpret information or data</li> <li>Find details that support main ideas</li> <li>Identify word families, figures of speech</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Speaking</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formulate hypotheses, make predictions</li> <li>Describe processes, procedures</li> <li>Retell stories or events</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask WH-questions</li> <li>Describe pictures, events, objects, people</li> <li>Restate facts</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage in debates</li> <li>Explain phenomena, give examples, and justify responses</li> <li>Express and defend points of view</li> </ul>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name objects, people, pictures</li> <li>Answer WH-questions</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss stories, issues, concepts</li> <li>Give speeches, oral reports</li> <li>Offer creative solutions to issues, problems</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Writing</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce simple expository or narrative texts</li> <li>Compare and contrast information</li> <li>Describe events, people, processes, procedures</li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make lists</li> <li>Produce drawings, phrases, short sentences, notes</li> <li>Give information requested from oral or written directions</li> </ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply information to new contexts</li> <li>React to multiple genres and discourses</li> <li>Author multiple forms of writing</li> </ul>           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Label objects, pictures, diagrams</li> <li>Draw in response to oral directions</li> <li>Produce icons, symbols, words, phrases to convey messages</li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summarize information from graphics or notes</li> <li>Edit or review writing</li> <li>Create original ideas or detailed responses</li> </ul>                                      |





## Language Performance Definitions for the Levels of English Language Proficiency

| Across the curriculum...  |   |   |  |   |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| Level 1<br>Entering   | Level 2<br>Beginning  | Level 3<br>Developing   | Level 4<br>Expanding   | Level 5<br>Bridging   |
| at the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners in Pennsylvania, can process and understand.                              |   |   |  |   |
| Pictorial or graphic representation of the language of the content areas with minimal comprehension.  | General language related to the content areas.  | General and some specific language of the content areas.  | Specific and some technical language of the content areas.   | The technical language of the content areas.  |
| at the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners in Pennsylvania, can use and produce.                                     |   |   |  |   |
| Non-verbal communication, single words or short phrases which may be demonstrated by repeating and copying words and phrases, or use of first language. | Common phrases or short sentences and some general academic language in oral and written communication with errors that may impede meaning. | Familiar oral and written language of expanded sentence length, short paragraphs, and academic language with occasional errors. | Oral and written academic and technical language of varying complexity in context with nominal errors. | Oral or written academic and technical language of varying complexity approaching that of English proficient peers with minimal errors. |



Figure 1: Linguistic characteristics at levels of language proficiency

Pennsylvania English Language Proficiency Standards, p.6

R E C E P T I V E

P R O D U C T I V E

English Language Proficiency Standard 2: English language learners communicate information, ideas, and concepts necessary for academic success in the content area of **LANGUAGE ARTS**.

*Proficiency level*

**Grade Level Cluster: PreK-K**

|                  | Level 1<br>Entering  | Level 2<br>Beginning  | Level 3<br>Developing   | Level 4<br>Expanding  | Level 5<br>Bridging  | Standard or Anchor |
|------------------|--|---|---|---|--|--------------------|
| <b>Listening</b> | Participate in group songs, chants, or recitations that require appropriate physical actions (such as: "Itsy Bitsy Spider"). | Point to pictures of items referred to in songs as they are called out (such as: spider, head or shoulder). | Perform physical actions independently in response to songs or poems that have been previously rehearsed. | Reenact part of a story, poem or scene as a group.  | Reenact or dramatize an illustrated grade level story or poem that has been read aloud.                              | RL 1.6A, 1.6A      |
| <b>Reading</b>   | Match pictures, objects or letters as a group.   | Match pictures or objects to the printed word as a group.   | Match pictures or objects to phrases and sentences working with a partner.                                | Sequence a set of three pictures to create a story working with a partner.                                    | Make predictions and inferences based on a picture book working with a partner.                                      | C1.3A, 1.1B        |
| <b>Speaking</b>  | Answer WH-questions about a visually supported nursery rhyme.  | Ask WH-questions about a visually supported nursery rhyme.  | Retell a nursery rhyme with visual supports.  | Summarize the events in a nursery rhyme using visual supports.  | Express an opinion about the moral of a nursery rhyme working with a partner.  | ELO1.6I, K, 1.6B   |
| <b>Writing</b>   | Depict an experience or event with a drawing as modeled.   | Depict experiences using recognizable drawings and/or scribble writing in a group.                          | Write stories and/or experiences through pictures, letters and words in a group.                          | Write stories and/or experiences through a combination of pictures, words and phrases working with a partner. | Write stories and/or experiences through a combination of words, phrases and short sentences working with a partner. | L1.5A, B, C, F     |

**Level 6- Reaching**

Framework for **FORMATIVE/CLASSROOM** Instruction and Assessment

*all text in boxes are*

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*Model Performance Indicators (MPI)*

Pennsylvania English Language Proficiency Standards  
Classroom/Formative Framework  
08/15/2007 Adapted from the WIDA document 2/2004.  
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State Board Approved March 2005





## Profiles of English Language Learners

In your group, read your assigned profile and discuss the guiding questions:

1. What in this student's background will serve as an asset to academic

progress?

*Strong edu. background (incl. English instr.)  
in India*

2. What in this student's background might hinder academic progress?

*limited exposure to Amer. English  
prior to arrival*

3. What other information would a teacher need to know about this student on order to better meet his/her academic needs?

*home environment / (immediate) family*

Please assign a reporter to highlight your discussion to the whole group!

## Profiles of English Language Learners

| Moises, Level 1 ELL   | Juana, Level 1 ELL   | Hassan, Level 3 ELL   | Amitabh, Level 3 ELL   |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Born:</b> in Mexico</p> <p><b>Home Language:</b> Spanish</p> <p><b>Home Language Skills:</b> can read and write in Spanish, unsure if on grade level or not</p> <p><b>Enrolled in U.S. schools:</b> earlier this year</p> <p><b>Educational background:</b> 3 years of schooling in Mexico</p> <p><b>Background in English:</b> Limited exposure to English outside of school</p> <p><b>Placement test scores:</b><br/>Level 1 Listening<br/>Level 1 Speaking<br/>Level 1 Reading<br/>Level 1 Writing</p> | <p><b>Born:</b> in U.S.</p> <p><b>Home Language:</b> Mexican Spanish</p> <p><b>Home Language Skills:</b> informal listening and speaking in Spanish, unable to read and write in Spanish or English</p> <p><b>Enrolled in U.S. schools:</b> currently in Kindergarten</p> <p><b>Educational background:</b> Born here, no previous preschool experience</p> <p><b>Background in English:</b> lifelong exposure to English inside and outside of school</p> <p><b>Placement test scores:</b><br/>Level 5 Listening<br/>Level 4 Speaking<br/>Level 3 Reading<br/>Level 2 Writing</p> | <p><b>Born:</b> in Sudan but lived several years in a refugee camp prior to his arrival in the U.S.</p> <p><b>Home Language:</b> Arabic</p> <p><b>Home Language Skills:</b> informal listening and speaking in Arabic</p> <p><b>Enrolled in U.S. schools:</b> 2 years</p> <p><b>Educational background:</b> No formal schooling prior to his arrival in the U.S., unable to read or write in Arabic. Placed age-grade appropriately in 5<sup>th</sup> grade, as required by law.</p> <p><b>Background in English:</b> Limited exposure to English outside of school</p> <p><b>Placement test scores:</b><br/>Level 4 Listening<br/>Level 4 Speaking<br/>Level 2 Reading<br/>Level 2 Writing</p> | <p><b>Born:</b> in India</p> <p><b>Home Language:</b> Gujarati</p> <p><b>Home Language Skills:</b> Unknown</p> <p><b>Enrolled in U.S. schools:</b> in the middle of last year. Is now in 9<sup>th</sup> grade</p> <p><b>Educational background:</b> strong educational background (including English instruction) in India</p> <p><b>Background in English:</b> In India, his English instruction gave him little opportunity to speak English at school. Had limited exposure to American English prior to his arrival.</p> <p><b>Placement test scores:</b><br/>Level 1 Listening<br/>Level 1 Speaking<br/>Level 5 Reading<br/>Level 4 Writing</p> |

Adapted from Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2010) *Differentiating Instruction and Assessment for English Language Learners: A Guide for K-12 Classrooms*



|                           |         |                          |                                   |  |              |
|---------------------------|---------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--|--------------|
| District: Sample District |         |                          | Student: Last Name, First Name MI |  |              |
| School: Sample School     |         |                          | State ID: 123456789               |  | District ID: |
| Grade: 4                  | Tier: C | Grade Level Cluster: 3-5 | Birth Date: 10/31/97              |  |              |

**Report Purpose:** This report provides information regarding the levels of social and academic English language proficiency the student has attained. Social language is used to communicate for everyday purposes. Academic language is used to communicate the content of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. This report can be used to monitor progress from year to year and to help determine instructional strategies by content areas and standards. Please refer to the ACCESS for ELLs<sup>®</sup> Interpretive Summary for more information on the meaning and use of these scores. You may also refer to the complete Interpretive Guide for Score Reports at [www.wida.us](http://www.wida.us) for more detailed information.

**Student's level of English proficiency by language domains**

| Language Domain                        | Scale Score<br>(Possible 100 - 600) | Confidence Band<br>See Interpretive Summary for definitions |     |     |               |     | Proficiency Level<br>(Possible 1.0 - 6.0) |
|--|-------------------------------------|---|-----|-----|---------------|-----|---|
|  |                                     | 100   | 200 | 300 | 400           | 500 |   |
| Listening                              | 401                                 |   |     |     | 390   ◆   410 |     | 6.0                                       |
| Speaking                               | 400                                 |   |     |     | 395   ◆   420 |     | 6.0                                       |
| Reading                                | 387                                 |   |     |     | 340   ◆   410 |     | 6.0                                       |
| Writing                                | 331                                 |   |     |     | 310   ◆   380 |     | 3.4                                       |
| Oral Language <sup>A</sup>             | 401                                 |   |     |     | 390   ◆   410 |     | 6.0                                       |
| Literacy <sup>B</sup>                  | 359                                 |   |     |     | 340   ◆   395 |     | 4.4                                       |
| Comprehension <sup>C</sup>             | 391                                 |   |     |     | 370   ◆   400 |     | 6.0                                       |
| Overall Score <sup>D</sup> (Composite) | 371                                 |   |     |     | 347   ◆   392 |     | 5.0                                       |

A - Oral Language = 50% Listening + 50% Speaking

B - Literacy = 50% Reading + 50% Writing

NA - Not Attempted = Student Booklet is marked with a Non-Scoring Code of Absent, Invalidated, Refused or Special Education/504 Exemption

C - Comprehension = 70% Reading + 30% Listening

D - Overall Score = 35% Reading + 35% Writing + 15% Listening + 15% Speaking

Overall Scores are computed when all 4 domains have been completed

**Student's performance by WIDA English language proficiency standards**

These standards do not apply to Kindergarten Students – Sections will appear blank

**COMPREHENSION (Listening and Reading)**

| English Language Proficiency Standards | # of Items Correct | Total # of Items |
|--|--------------------|------------------|
| Social & Instructional Language        | 7                  | 7                |
| Language of Language Arts              | 7                  | 13               |
| Language of Mathematics                | 12                 | 14               |
| Language of Science                    | 10                 | 11               |
| Language of Social Studies             | 5                  | 7                |

**SPEAKING TASKS**

| English Language Proficiency Standards<br>Score based on # of tasks student met or exceeded | Raw Score <sup>E</sup> | Total # of Items |
|---|------------------------|------------------|
| Social & Instructional  | 3                      | 3                |
| Language Arts/Social Studies  | 5                      | 5                |
| Mathematics/Science   | 5                      | 5                |

E - Raw score based on # of tasks for that standard or combination of standards

NA - Not Attempted = Student Booklet is marked with a Non-Scoring Code of Absent, Invalidated, Refused or Special Education/504 Exemption

**WRITING TASKS**

| English Language Proficiency Standards<br>Scores based on writing rubric | Linguistic Complexity |                       | Vocabulary Usage  |                       | Language Control  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
|  | Student Raw Score     | Total Possible Points | Student Raw Score | Total Possible Points | Student Raw Score | Total Possible Points |
| Social & Instructional   | 3                     | 6                     | 3                 | 6                     | 3                 | 6                     |
| Mathematics  | 3                     | 6                     | 2                 | 6                     | 3                 | 6                     |
| Science  | 2                     | 6                     | 2                 | 6                     | 2                 | 6                     |
| Language Arts & Social Studies   | 3                     | 6                     | 3                 | 6                     | 3                 | 6                     |

**Description of Proficiency Levels**

- 1 Entering - Knows and uses minimal social language and minimal academic language with visual and graphic support
- 2 Beginning - Knows and uses some social English and general academic language with visual and graphic support
- 3 Developing - Knows and uses social English and some specific academic language with visual and graphic support
- 4 Expanding - Knows and uses social English and some technical academic language
- 5 Bridging - Knows and uses social English and academic language working with grade level material
- 6 Reaching - Knows and uses social and academic language at the highest level measured by this test

1- single words  
2- short phrases  
3- longer sent.  
4- short ¶ / conv.

1- common  
2-  
3- HFV, gen. vocab.  
4- specialized  
5- tech. vocab.

1- memorized lang.  
2- own lang. w/ errors  
3- meaning = more clear  
4- errors diminishing  
5- at level of peers



### CAN DO Descriptors for the Levels of English Language Proficiency

The characteristics within each box are target skills. For the given level of English language proficiency, English language learners can...

| Language Domain         | Level 1 Entering   | Level 2 Beginning  | Level 3 Developing   | Level 4 Expanding  | Level 5 Bridging   |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Listening<br><i>1st</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Point to stated pictures, words, phrases</li> <li>Follow one-step oral directions</li> <li>Match oral statements to objects, figures, or illustrations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sort pictures, objects according to oral instructions</li> <li>Follow two-step oral directions</li> <li>Match information from oral descriptions to objects, illustrations</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locate, select, order information from oral descriptions</li> <li>Follow multi-step oral directions</li> <li>Categorize or sequence oral information using pictures, objects</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compare and contrast functions, relationships from oral information</li> <li>Analyze and apply oral information</li> <li>Identify cause and effect from oral discourse</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Draw conclusions from oral information</li> <li>Construct models based on oral discourse</li> <li>Make connections from oral discourse</li> </ul> |
| Reading<br><i>3rd</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Match icons and symbols to words, phrases, or environmental print</li> <li>Identify concepts about print and text features</li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Locate and classify information</li> <li>Identify facts and explicitly stated messages</li> <li>Select language patterns associated with facts</li> </ul>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sequence pictures, events, processes</li> <li>Identify main ideas</li> <li>Use context clues to determine meaning of words</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interpret information or data</li> <li>Find details that support main ideas</li> <li>Identify word families, figures of speech</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct research to glean information from multiple sources</li> <li>Draw conclusions from explicit and implicit text</li> </ul>                  |
| Speaking<br><i>2nd</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name objects, people, pictures</li> <li>Answer WH-questions</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ask WH-questions</li> <li>Describe pictures, events, objects, people</li> <li>Restate facts</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formulate hypotheses, make predictions</li> <li>Describe processes, procedures</li> <li>Retell stories or events</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss stories, issues, concepts</li> <li>Give speeches, oral reports</li> <li>Offer creative solutions to issues, problems</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage in debates</li> <li>Explain phenomena, give examples, and justify responses</li> <li>Express and defend points of view</li> </ul>          |
| Writing<br><i>4th</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Label objects, pictures, diagrams</li> <li>Draw in response to oral directions</li> <li>Produce icons, symbols, words, phrases to convey messages</li> </ul>      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make lists</li> <li>Produce drawings, phrases, short sentences, notes</li> <li>Give information requested from oral or written directions</li> </ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce simple expository or narrative texts</li> <li>Compare and contrast information</li> <li>Describe events, people, processes, procedures</li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summarize information from graphics or notes</li> <li>Edit and revise writing</li> <li>Create original ideas or detailed responses</li> </ul>                                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Apply information to new contexts</li> <li>React to multiple genres and discourses</li> <li>Author multiple forms of writing</li> </ul>           |



*\* - Amitabh*

*receptive*

*productive*



## LANGUAGE ACQUISITION CONTEXT AND COGNITIVE LOAD

|                  | Cognitively Undemanding | Cognitively Demanding     |
|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Context Embedded | I.<br>(easiest)         | III. ③<br>*               |
| Context Reduced  | II.<br>②                | ④ IV.<br>(most difficult) |

*Handwritten annotations: A downward arrow from I. to II., a downward arrow from III. to IV., and a diagonal arrow from II. to III. A star symbol is drawn in the III. quadrant.*

Please determine the quadrant in which each of these classroom tasks fall. Place the quadrant number in the blank.

- 3 1. Teaching a text structure using a graphic organizer
- 2, 4 2. Reading a passage "cold" to measure fluency (level of passage)
- 1, 2, 4 3. Taking notes from the white board.
- 3 4. Media-assisted lesson
- 4 5. Circle time weather with no visual support
- 3 6. Texting - social communication
- 4 7. Solving a word math problem
- 4 8. Writing a research report
- 3 9. Video clip to introduce a lesson
- 1-4 10. Finding the main idea and support details in a text - depends

# Reading 101 for English Language Learners

By: Kristina Robertson (2009)

## In this article:

- **Phonemic Awareness**
- **Phonics**
- **Vocabulary**
- **Fluency**
- **Comprehension**

*Teaching reading IS rocket science.*  
~Louisa Moats

Learning to read is a little bit like learning to ride a bike — while you are balancing a person on the handle-bars, holding a pole, spinning plates, and focusing on the destination at the same time!

Reading is a complicated process, which is why so many children **struggle to become strong readers**. The process of learning to read can be particularly challenging for English language learners (ELLs), especially if they have little or no formal schooling and they have not learned to read in their native language.

In this article, I will highlight ELL instructional strategies based on the five components of reading as outlined in **Teaching Children to Read** by the National Reading Panel (2000). This report is a study of research-based best practices in reading instruction and it focuses on the following five instructional areas: **Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Vocabulary, Fluency, Comprehension**.

Each of these topics is explored below, and each section includes:

- a definition
- an explanation of why the component is important when learning to read
- challenges that ELLs may face
- strategies for ELL instruction

You will find references to more in-depth information about ELLs and effective reading instruction from **Colorín Colorado** and **Reading Rockets** throughout the article, as well as in the **Hotlinks**.

## Phonemic Awareness and English Language Learners

**Phonemic awareness** is one of the best predictors of how well children will learn to read during the first two years of school instruction. Sometimes it is nearly impossible, however, for speakers of a second language to "hear" and say sounds in the language they are learning.

Perhaps you have had a student who simply could not master a particular sound in English. Chances are good that that sound was not a part of the student's native language, and so the student didn't have the ability to produce that sound.

I experienced this when learning Sinhala in the Peace Corps. There was a "th" sound that seemed to be a combination "d" and "th," and no matter how hard I tried, I could not hear or produce the sound correctly.

I knew which words it belonged in, but I couldn't say it. The native Sinhala speakers struggled to make sense of my



pronunciation. ELLs may have similar difficulties with sounds that are not a part of their native language.

### Phonemic Awareness: Challenges and Strategies

**What:** The ability to hear and manipulate the different sounds in our language.

**Why it matters:** Phonemic awareness is the foundation for spelling and word recognition skills.

#### Challenges for ELLs

##### Sound recognition and production

Students may not be able to "hear" or produce a new sound in a second language.

Students who cannot hear and work with the phonemes of spoken words will have a difficult time learning how to relate these phonemes to letters when they see them in written words.

#### Strategies for ELLs

##### Model production of the sound

Spend a few minutes at the beginning of class or in small groups demonstrating and reinforcing the correct production of the sound.

Have students practice identifying the sounds in the beginning, middle, and end of these words. You may wish to use words that begin with a consonant, have a short vowel, and end in a consonant (CVC words) such as *mat*, *top*, and *bus*.

##### Help beginning readers learn to identify sounds in short words

One very effective method is having students match pictures of words that have the same beginning, middle, or ending sound.

Be careful to use only words that students know in English!

## Phonics and English Language Learners

**Phonics** instruction aims to help new readers understand that there are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken sounds.

Students will benefit from learning and practicing sounds and symbols, including blended combinations. This is fairly common in the primary grades and ELLs may pick up the code very quickly and appear to be fairly proficient readers. However, it's important to remember that knowledge of phonics and decoding does not ensure good comprehension.

### Phonics: Challenges and Strategies

**What:** The relationship between a sound and its corresponding written letter.

**Why it matters:** Reading development is dependent on the understanding that letters and letter patterns represent the sounds of spoken language.

#### Challenges for ELLs

##### Limited literacy skills in native language

Many educators believe that students only need to learn to read once. Once the concept of matching a symbol with a sound has been learned, it can be applied to new languages.

Students who have learned to read in their native language have a distinct advantage because they were able to learn this concept with familiar sounds and words.

Students who have not learned to read in their native language, however, may struggle to put together the sound/symbol correspondence concept, new words, and new sounds all at once.

It is difficult for students to distinguish phonetic components in new vocabulary words.

##### Unfamiliar vocabulary words

Preteaching vocabulary is an important part of good phonics instruction with ELLs so that students aren't trying to figure out new vocabulary items out of context.

## Strategies for ELLs

Using literature and content material, you can introduce and reinforce:

- letter recognition
- beginning and ending sounds

### Teach phonics in context

- blends
- rhyming words
- silent letters
- homonyms

### Use hands-on activities to help teach letter-sound relationships

This can include using manipulatives such as counters, sound boxes, and magnetic letters.

Say a short sentence that includes one or more words that include the target phonics feature(s). Ask students to listen carefully and then write what they heard.

### Have students write for sound

This activity trains students to listen for the individual sounds in words and represent them phonetically in their writing.

For students with strong native language literacy skills, help them understand that the process of sounding out words is the same across languages.

### Help students make a connection between their first language and English

Explain some letters may make the same or similar sounds in both languages. Knowing this can help Spanish-dominant students, for example, as they learn to decode words in English.

## Vocabulary and English Language Learners

**Vocabulary** plays an important part in learning to read, as well as in understanding what is read.

As students learn to read more advanced texts, they must learn the meaning of new words that are not part of their oral vocabulary. For ELLs, **vocabulary development** is especially important as students' develop academic language.

### Vocabulary: Challenges and Strategies

**What:** Recognizing and understanding words in relation to the context of the reading passage.

**Why:** Understanding vocabulary words is a key step in reading comprehension. The more words a child knows, the better he or she will understand the text.

### Challenges for ELLs

Beginning readers must use the words they hear orally to make sense of the words they sound out. If those words aren't a part of a student's vocabulary, however, it will make it much harder to understand the text.

### Limited comprehension

Consider, for example, what happens when a beginning reader comes to the word *dig* in a book. As she begins to figure out the sounds represented by the letters *d-i-g*, the reader recognizes that the sounds make up a very familiar word that she has heard and said many times.

As a result, it is harder for ELLs figure out words that are not already part of their speaking (oral) vocabulary.



**Limited vocabulary foundation**

The average native English speaker enters kindergarten knowing at least 5,000 words. The average ELL may know 5,000 words in his or her native language, but very few words in English.

While native speakers are continuously learning new words, ELLs are still catching up on their basic vocabulary foundation.

A student's maximum level of reading comprehension is determined by his or her knowledge of words. This word knowledge allows students to comprehend text, including the text found in content-area textbooks, on assessments, and in printed material such as newspapers and magazines. Without a strong foundation of academic vocabulary, ELLs won't be able to access the material they are expected to master.

**Limited academic vocabulary**

**Strategies**

It is important to give students as much exposure and experience with new vocabulary words as possible before asking students to use them in a lesson or activity. Remember that vocabulary lists in textbooks are often created with English speakers in mind.

Select **words that will support the reader's understanding of the story or text**, as well as for other phrases and connectors that affect comprehension (even though, except, etc.). You can pre-teach vocabulary by using English as a second language (ESL) methods such as:

**Pre-teach vocabulary**

- Role playing or pantomiming
- Using gestures
- Showing real objects
- Pointing to pictures
- Doing quick drawings on the board
- Using the Spanish equivalent and then asking students to say the word in English
- Providing a student-friendly definition
- Using graphic organizers

**Cognates** are words in different languages that are derived from the same original word or root. Cognates are related words like family and *familia*, and conversation and *conversación*. False cognates do exist (*embarazada* in Spanish means pregnant, not embarrassed), but they are the exception to the rule.

**Focus on cognates**

About 40% of all English words have cognates in Spanish! This is an obvious bridge to the English language for Spanish speakers if the student is made aware of how to use this resource. Encourage Spanish speakers to connect words in the two languages and try to decipher text, based on this existing knowledge.

As the teacher, you can explicitly teach word meanings to improve comprehension. However, to know a word means knowing it in all of the following dimensions:

- The ability to define a word
- The ability to recognize when to use that word
- Knowledge of its multiple meanings
- The ability to decode and spell that word
- The ability to use different definitions word accurately in different contexts

**Give students an opportunity to practice using new words**

The only way to make sure students understand a new word is to have them produce it themselves either orally or in writing.

I taught a summer school unit on habitats and healthy environments, and every student had to learn the phrase, "Reduce, reuse, recycle." Over the course of four weeks I gave students many opportunities to use those words to describe what we were doing: "We are reusing the grocery bag," or "We reused the scratch paper."

## Fluency and English Language Learners

**Fluency** is a tricky area when it comes to ELL reading instruction. For native English speakers, fluency and reading comprehension often share a strong correlation because fluent readers recognize words and comprehend at the same time.

This is not always the case for ELLs, however. Many ELLs can be deceptively fast and accurate in their reading because they are good readers in their primary language and have strong decoding skills. Yet they may demonstrate little understanding of the text, and hearing the text out loud may not necessarily provide a step towards comprehension as it is likely to do for native speakers.

### Fluency: Challenges and Strategies

**What:** The ability to read a text accurately and quickly.

**Why it matters:** Fluency is important because it provides a bridge between word recognition and comprehension.

#### Challenges for ELLs

**Inaccurate indicator of ELLs' comprehension**

It is not unusual for an ELL student to read a passage beautifully and then not be able answer more than a couple of comprehension questions correctly. Decoding skills (sounding out words) and comprehending the text are two different skills.

**Limited benefit from hearing texts read aloud**

Native speakers who are not strong decoders can often comprehend text that is read to them better than text that they read themselves. That's because when someone else is doing the reading, they can focus on meaning without having to struggle to get the words off the page.

With ELLs, however, comprehension problems tend to be associated with limited vocabulary and limited background knowledge. Thus, listening to text read by someone else won't enhance comprehension.

#### Strategies for ELLs

**Balance fluency and comprehension**

For ELLs, try not to provide instruction in fluency that focuses primarily on developing students' reading rates at the expense of reading with expression, meaning, and comprehension.

Students may read fast, but with insufficient comprehension. Fluency without comprehension will require instructional intervention in vocabulary and comprehension skills.



**Give students a chance to practice reading out loud**

In order to improve fluency in English, provide independent level texts that students can practice again and again, or read a short passage and then have the student immediately read it back to you.

**Allow students to practice reading along with taped text**

Have the student practice reading a passage with a certain emotion or to emphasize expression, intonation, and inflection based on punctuation.

This is an excellent way for them to learn appropriate pronunciation and phrasing.

**Comprehension**

**Comprehension** is the understanding and interpretation of what is read. To be able to accurately understand written material, children need to be able to 1) decode what they read; 2) make connections between what they read and what they already know; and 3) think deeply about what they have read.

Comprehension can be the most difficult skill to master, however. ELLs at all levels of English proficiency, and literacy development, will benefit from explicit instruction in comprehension skills along with other skills because improved comprehension will not only help them in language arts and ESL classes — it will help them in content-area classes and in daily activities. It will also improve the chances of their interest in reading for pleasure.

Learn more from the following articles:

- Reading Comprehension Strategies for Content Learning
- Finding the Main Idea
- Reading Comprehension Strategies for English Language Learners

**Comprehension: Challenges and Strategies**

**What:** Understanding the meaning of the text.

**Why it matters:** Comprehension is the reason for reading. Readers who have strong comprehension are able to draw conclusions about what they read.

**Challenges for ELLs**

**Limited ability to read for meaning**

ELLs who struggle with comprehension may read more slowly, have a hard time following a text or story, have a hard time picking out important events, and feel frustrated. They may also have problems mastering new concepts in their content-area classes or completing assignments and assessments because they cannot comprehend the texts and tests for these subjects.

**Strategies for ELLs**

**Build background knowledge**

One way to build background knowledge is through a book, unit or chapter "walk-through." ELLs can preview the information in the text and begin to **make connections with the knowledge they have.**

If the text is about a fair, the student may note that the pictures are similar to fairs they have attended in the past and they can think of the kinds of experiences a person has in that environment.

**Check comprehension frequently**

If it is a science textbook the student may see visuals of animals or processes that remind them of concepts they may have learned or are somewhat familiar with.

As students read, ask them open-ended questions about what they are reading, and informally test students' ability to sequence material from sentences or a story by printing sentences from a section of the story on paper strips, mixing the strips or word order, and having students put them in order.

After the ELLs and/or whole class have completed the reading, you can test their comprehension with carefully crafted questions, taking care to use simple sentences and key vocabulary from the text they just read.

These questions can be at the:

**Use questions after reading**

- Literal level (Why do the leaves turn red and yellow in the fall?)
- Interpretive level (Why do you think it needs water?)
- Applied level (How much water are you going to give it? Why?)

These strategies for ELLs just scratch the surface. If you'd like to learn more about the five components, be sure to take a look at the resources in the Hotlinks below. Remember: little things can go a long way in providing effective literacy instruction for ELLs!

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# Reading 101 for English Language Learners

| Building Reading Blocks Definition | Challenges for ELLs   | Strategies for ELLs  |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Phonemic Awareness                 |   |  |
| Phonics                            |   |  |
| Vocabulary                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- don't know the word or how it's pronounced</li> <li>- still catching up with basic vocab. (ex: cricket)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- role play</li> <li>- showing objects</li> <li>- drawings</li> <li>- cognates</li> <li>- graphic organizers</li> </ul> |
| Fluency                            |   |  |
| Comprehension                      |   |  |

# ELL Literacy Action Plan

| <b>Topics</b>                             | <b>What did you learn about literacy development/instruction for English Language Learners?</b> | <b>What are you going to do differently?</b> |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Scaffolds to Instruction</b>           |   |  |
| <b>First and Second Language Literacy</b> |   |  |



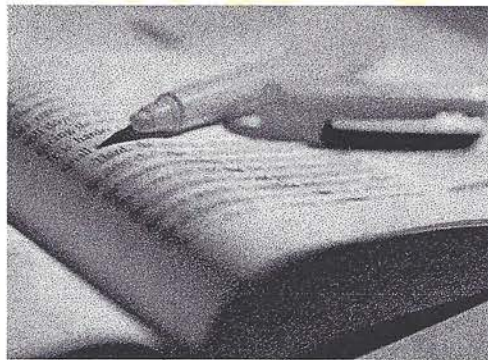


8/6/13  
Jess Guerin

## Helping English Language Learners Understand Content Area Texts

English language learners (ELLs) experience intense problems in content area learning because they have not yet acquired the language proficiency needed to succeed in understanding subject-matter content. Because the language of academic subjects (such as social studies, science, math) requires a high degree of reading and writing ability that English language learners do not have, they experience immense difficulties reading their textbooks and understanding the vocabulary unique to particular subjects. This article reviews practical strategies that content area teachers can use to support English language learners in their classrooms.

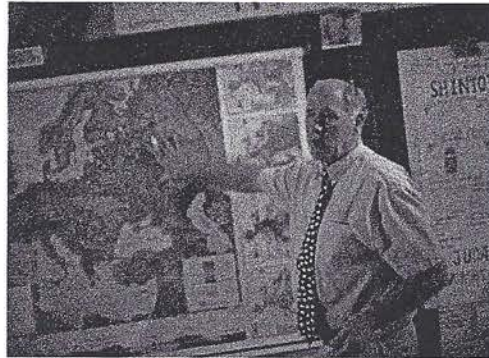
### Teacher Preparation



- Survey the text for difficulty keeping in mind the levels of English language learners in your classroom; determine your standard or objective; select the concepts to teach; eliminate unnecessary information that will be too difficult for ELL students of low English proficiency; choose key specific vocabulary to pre-teach; develop assessments to test that content.
- Identify vocabulary words that you think might be difficult for English language learners to understand when they read the text. Write ELL-friendly definitions for each - that is, simple, brief definitions ELL students can easily understand.
- Determine which visuals, artifacts, gestures, etc. you will need to make the meaning of the words clear to the ELL students. Visuals are powerful tools for comprehension instruction because they offer concrete, memorable representations of abstract content.
- Use highly illustrated books of various levels of difficulty teaching your content.

- Plan a series of questions and interactions that will help you involve your students and determine their levels of understanding of the words.

## **Building Background Knowledge**



Before reading a selection aloud or before students read a text, try taking seven to ten minutes to build word and background knowledge. This will increase all students' comprehension of the text.

English language learners have great difficulty jumping into new texts without any background support. Students should know at least something about the topic before reading. Some topics may be unfamiliar to students (e.g. recycling or fundraising) if they have never done that before. Pictures, drawings, or short skits can help develop relevant background information. On the other hand, if a teacher is talking about the Civil War, perhaps some ELL students have experienced something similar in their home country, and might be able to understand those concepts better if they understand how it connects to the text.

Students need to know essential vocabulary in order to comprehend the text. Therefore, it is important to use several strategies to build the background that leads to better reading comprehension for ELL students. It can be beneficial to review many words we often take for granted - not only for the benefit of ELL students, but also for students who may not come to school with a rich vocabulary background or exposure to certain experiences. For example, the concepts of democracy may be difficult for all young children to understand at first. Think of examples to which your students can relate.

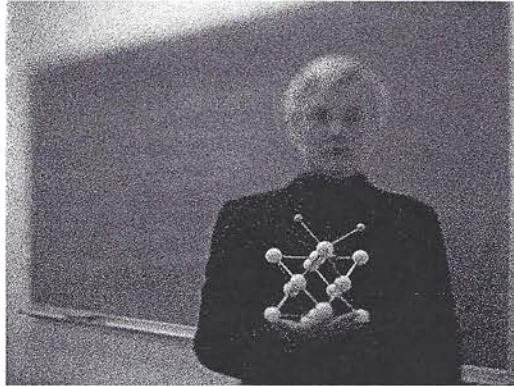
- Create interest in the subject by using pictures, real objects, maps, or personal experiences. Repeat vocabulary words as often as you can so that ELL students can remember them.
- Relate material to students' lives whenever possible.
- Build text-specific knowledge by providing students with information from the text beforehand, particularly if the text is conceptually difficult or has an abundance of important information. For example, if there are six main topics on the animal kingdom, highlight/discuss them beforehand.
- Explain difficult concepts and label them with key words ELL students can remember. Repeat the word several times in different sentences. For example, "This is the Statue of Liberty."



*Liberty* means freedom. The people of France gave us the Statue of *Liberty*..."

- Establish the purpose for reading (i.e. "Today we are going to read to find out: what are the examples of freedom/liberty in our country.").

### **Pre-teaching Vocabulary and Concepts**



Before doing an activity, teaching content, or reading a story in class, pre-teaching vocabulary is always helpful, especially for English language learners. This will allow them to identify words and then to place them in context and remember them. You can pre-teach vocabulary by:

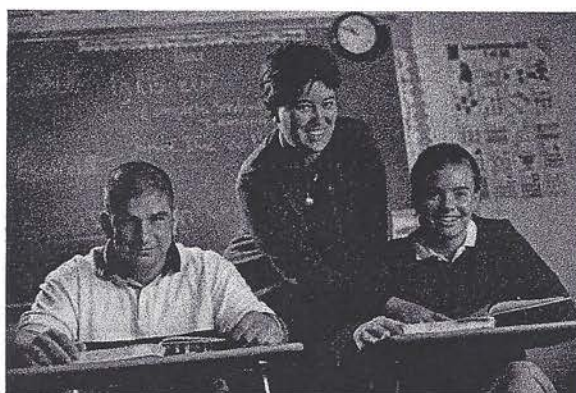
|                                     |                        |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| - Role playing or "acting it out"   | - Using gestures       |
| - Showing real objects              | - Pointing to pictures |
| - Doing quick drawings on the board |                        |

- Introduce the vocabulary and model its use. Dig deeper into vocabulary! Use every trick you can find to help explain its meaning to the ELL students. Give several examples for each term. Teach words in context – this is much more effective than isolated memorization.
- Ask students to give you their examples of how the word can be used.
- Choose different strategies to teach each word. Use different ways of engaging the students to listen for new words and produce each word in context. Remember: ELL students need 8-20 encounters with the new word to remember it!
- Use hands-on activities and demonstrations to teach academic vocabulary. For example, if the students are learning about a cell, the teacher could introduce academic vocabulary while creating a cell model from Play-Doh with students. The students could work in groups to make

their own cell, use the academic vocabulary while doing the activity, present afterwards to the teacher or class, or write a report.

- Post new vocabulary on a word wall, and review the words daily. Swap out old words as necessary.

## **Pre-reading Strategies to Increase Comprehension**

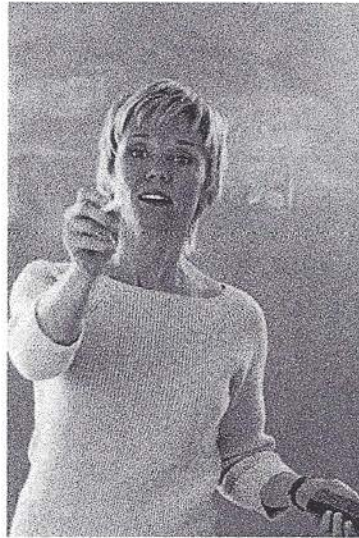


- Explain specific terms of your classroom's interaction to English language learners. Make sure they know instructional words used every day, such as "follow directions", "describe", "start at the top of the page", "read to the bottom of page 4", "highlight the verbs only", "use the steps in your guide", etc.
- Teachers may expect students to understand terms like "caption", "excerpt", "index", "passage", "glossary", "preface", "quotation", "section", "selection", etc., but these terms are unknown to many English language learners. Before working with the text, ELL students need to be explicitly taught all these terms in order to participate in classroom learning activities.
- Explicitly teach and model all learning strategies for ELL students in your classroom. What do we mean when we say "analyze"? How do we do that? What is the language needed to participate in this learning activity? Model the strategy, walk ELL students through the process. Once ELL students have started to develop proficiency in those behaviors, they can concentrate more on the content academic language.
- Review the main concepts from the text you want to teach. Decide how you might best make these concepts relevant and accessible to all of your students including English language learners. This might be through:



- Film on a related topic
- Experiment
- "Show and Tell"
- Text read by the teacher
- Discussion
- Field trip
- Student reading assignment

## Introducing the Text



- Use visuals related to the content (real objects, charts, posters, graphic organizers). Before reading, discuss illustrations, charts, graphs found in the text. *(preview/picture walk)*
- While discussing the text, make the text visible to all students (use an overhead projector); point to the parts of the text, to the sentences and words you are discussing.
- Model thinking aloud about what you are reading, and strategies for figuring out difficult words.
- Model how to summarize what has been read.
- Give ELL students a reason for reading. Before asking the students to read the text, make students aware of what they should look for. If the goal is for them to identify cause and effect, point out several examples of this beforehand. If they are supposed to scan the text and find information filling out the graphic organizer, teach them how to scan. If ELL students don't have the clarity of what they are supposed to do they will end up translating the text word by word and will be able to read only one paragraph instead of scanning ten paragraphs for important information.

- **Graphic organizers** can be used at all grade levels and at all English proficiency levels. Graphic organizers provide a visual for the kinds of abstract thinking that students are doing when they organize text to understand it. Because of their limited English proficiency, English language learners will not be able to absorb the entire amount of content knowledge that their native English-speaking peers are able to absorb. They need to learn essential concepts and vocabulary of the lesson. Using graphic organizers with ELL students is a way to separate large amounts of content information into manageable pieces of essential information for ELL students.

### Reading the Text



- **Assign reading partners:** pair English language learners with fluent readers. After partner reading, ask them to summarize and discuss what they read and learned.
- Instruct the group/pair to create a graphic organizer while studying. Graphic organizers (thinking maps, sequencing information, categorizing information) can be used as a pre-teaching or post-teaching strategy for introducing or reinforcing key concepts and how they are related. The more connections English language learners make to the organization of the content before reading, the easier it will be for them to understand and focus on what is important. When teachers and/or students use graphic organizers at the end of a lesson, this helps to reinforce and bring greater meaning and understanding to what they have read.
- **Develop study guides** to guide ELL students through their content area textbook reading by focusing their attention on the major ideas presented. Study guides can include graphic organizers, key vocabulary, and guiding questions.
- In **cooperative groups**, after silent reading of every paragraph/passage of the text let the groups summarize the gist of the paragraph/passage in one sentence they all agree on and write it down – students will end up with the summary of the difficult text.
- Have **bilingual dictionaries** for all native languages available to students. Teach students how to use dictionaries.
- While students are working in groups, pairs, and individually, circulate around the room. Provide scaffolding by asking appropriate questions that help students proceed with the



task. Model the use of academic language for ELL students and show students concrete examples of how it should be used.

- Keep asking clarifying questions to check understanding. Adjust the format of questions to the English proficiency levels of ELL students. Reword/explain difficult content in different ways, making sure to incorporate non-verbal contextual clues. Instructional conversations are critical to ELL students' learning!
- Encourage students to talk about the text and to use the lesson's vocabulary by giving them appropriate assignments adjusted to the students' levels of English proficiency.

### **Speaking: Production of Oral Academic English**



It is very important for English language learners to talk and think out loud while they are learning from the text. Encourage ELL students to speak in class as much as possible in order to actively practice academic vocabulary. In this way, ELL students will learn and remember the academic English and content area vocabulary they need to succeed. Remember to be sensitive to ELL students who may be afraid to make mistakes.

- Scaffold students' speaking by asking questions appropriate for their level of English proficiency, giving them sentence starters, prompting responses and asking them to say the word/phrase again in different situations.
- Elicit more language. In order to learn academic language, English language learners need to practice content language all the time. Ask them to retell in a group what they read and learned. Ask ELL students to provide more elaborate responses and add more details by saying: "Tell me all you can about...", "Tell me more about..."
- Scaffold their speaking by asking leading questions. Instead of simple "yes or no" questions, ask questions that are interactive and meaningful. For example, "What do you think? What should we change?"

- In cooperative groups, let them prepare questions, conduct interviews and report back.
- Give students the script of an activity and ask them to take turns giving directions to the other members of their cooperative group.
- Use group problem-based and project-based learning strategies (using English for brainstorming, discussing, and presenting). Model solving the problem, then let the groups do that. Let the group work on a project giving appropriate assignments to ELL students.
- Model correct usage of the language. Instead of frequently correcting pronunciation or grammar, reaffirm the student's idea and then restate using correct grammar and in context.

## **Writing: Production of Written Academic English**

Writing is another way for ELL students to demonstrate and extend their understanding of a text and its contents.

- Use modeled writing, guided writing, shared writing, and partner work before assigning independent writing.
- Show a sample of what is expected.
- Relieve ELL students of the “blank page” syndrome – model the task to be done, support, and give students ideas, examples. Provide structure for their writing piece: sentence starters, fill-in the blank exercises, sentence strips, etc.
- Give cooperative learning teams questions to answer together.
- Ask teams to compose questions about the content and use those questions on the test.
- Give students a graphic organizer to complete. Graphic organizers can become prewriting activities that help ELL students organize the information and their thoughts before they write. This will also demonstrate that they understood the concepts and content, even if they only use a symbol or write one or two words for each category.
- Ask students to practice writing short simple summaries of what they read.
- Don't grade the ELL students' work down for grammar and spelling mistakes. Concentrate on the content.



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