Strategies for Assisting English Language Learners

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This workshop will provide participants with strategies on how to best meet the needs of English Language Learners during the 90 minutes of Reading Instruction.
OBJECTIVE

Provide best practices to ensure comprehensible instruction to English Language Learners according to their language level and ability.
AGENDA

- Language Acquisition vs. Language Learning
- Understanding English Language Learners
- Setting up the Learning Environment
- Reading To, With and By Children
- Thematic Planning
- Read Aloud
- Shared Reading
- Guided Reading Groups
- Centers
RESEARCH SAYS…..

♦ Children master a second language best if it is introduced by age 10.

♦ Learning a second language enhances a child's understanding of his or her native language

♦ Second language instruction at an early age improves a child's overall academic performance in school.

♦ Learning a second language improves a child's cognitive ability.
LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

This is a subconscious effortless process that occurs without people actually realizing that it is occurring. It is what children do when learning to speak their first language.

Language acquisition usually occurs in a non-stressful environment with ample visual support and reinforcement. For students learning English as a Second Language, this is what we refer to as BICS, or Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills.

It is the language skills necessary to communicate basic needs and wants. These language skills usually develop within six months to two years.
This is what usually occurs in school. It is an overt and conscious process. When people are learning, they are aware they are learning because they are participating in the process. Therefore, it must be explicitly taught.

This learned academic language, is the kind of language needed for tasks such as comprehension of text, analysis, and synthesis.

For students learning English as a Second Language, this is what we refer to as CALP, or Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency.
STAGE I PRE-PRODUCTION
(NEWCOMER)
0-8 MONTHS

♦ **Student** – No comprehension or speaking abilities in second language.

♦ **What learner can do** - Point to an object, picture or person, Follow commands (stand up, open the door). Gesture or nod (to show agreement or disagreement) Say yes or no.
Teacher Role for Stage I

- **Teacher** – Use of gestures to communicate.
  - Show me….
  - Circle the….
  - Where is…
  - Who has…

Stage II Early Production
(Low Beginner)
2-12 months

- **Student** – Begins to understand/produce simple responses in second language

- **What learner can do** - Answer questions with 1 word (Is the box big or little? – Big) Put 2 or more words together (small square) Use repetitive language patterns (My name is Lucy. I like pizza.)
TEACHER ROLE FOR STAGE II

- **Teacher** – Communicates with simple questions.

- **Teaching Strategies** - Ask yes/no and either/or questions. Accept one or two word responses. Use pictures and realia to support questions. Simplify the content materials to be used focusing on key vocabulary and concepts. Support learning with graphic organizers, charts, and graphs.
Stage III Speech Emergence
(Beginner)
6 months – 2 years

(Student) – Understands more of the second language and communicates in phrases.

What learner can do - Use 3 more words and short phrases (Stand up, We go park.) Use beginning dialog. Use full simple sentence. (There are four pencils.)
TEACHER ROLE FOR STAGE III

- **Teacher** – Models correct language forms.

- **Teaching Strategies** - Read to and allow learner to read short, modified text in content area subjects. Model completing graphic organizers with word banks. Duet, choral and pair reading activities. **Match** vocabulary words to definitions. Two step directions.
Stage IV Intermediate Fluency (Intermediate)  
After about 2 years

♦ **Student** – Understands and produces connected narrative in second language.

♦ **What learner can do** - Use complex language (I want to learn about animals that live in Africa.) State opinions (I think this food is too spicy.) Speak at length. Ask for clarification (What is the difference between a plan and a plateau?) Share original thoughts.
Teacher – Models correct language forms.

Teaching Strategies - Allow learner to use strategies from their native language to learn content in English. For example: using cognates (hospital) same word in Spanish and English. Synthesize what they have learned and make inferences from their learning. Focus on learning strategies.
Stage V Advanced Fluency  
(Advanced)  
After about 5 to 7 years.

- Monitoring Stage (LF) Most ELLs at this stage have been exited from ESOL services. They still need support from classroom teachers especially in content areas and writing.

- Learner is able to produce as long as accommodations are provided as needed.

- Comprehensive use of all the strategies should be implemented to assure comprehensible instruction delivery.
USE PRIMARY LANGUAGE

♦ Provide as many opportunities for them to share. (Ex. Daily News, Morning Buzz, etc.)

♦ Reading – Allow them to write their notes in their native language and then translate into English with the help of a dictionary and any other resource.

♦ Writing – Allow them to write their stories in their native language and then use a dictionary or any other resource to translate.
CREATE A PRINT-RICH, INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

It is important to help every child feel welcome and an important part of the classroom.

Provide children with the opportunity to read and revisit the ideas discussed over and over again.
Print Rich Environment

♦ Word Walls
♦ Charts
♦ Graphic Organizers
♦ Displays of topics/themes being taught
♦ Charts that focus on effective reading strategies, academic vocabulary and language patterns.
♦ Student work display
♦ Extensive libraries and research materials
APPROACHES

- Immersion
- Expectation/Responsibility
- Approximation
- Demonstration
- Feedback
- Employment
IMMERSION

- They need to be surrounded by an environment that is rich in spoken and written language.
  - Oral Language
  - Drama/Role Play
  - Flow Chart
  - Illustrations
  - Concept Mapping
  - Labeling Classroom
EXPECTATION

- Children need opportunities to try reading and writing activities on their own.
- They need to be an environment where adults believe that they will acquire literacy skills.
  - Simplified Directions
  - Chart Progress
  - Discover Learning
  - Modify Assignments
  - Multiple Methods of Evaluation
  - Reading Logs
Approximation

- Learners must be free to approximate desired study, as mistakes are essential for learning to occur.
  - Multiple Methods of Evaluation
  - Modify Assignments
  - Chart Progress
  - Dialogue Journal
  - Repetition/Rephrasing
  - Use of student’s cultural background & experiences
DEMOnstration

- Children need opportunities to observe models of the way written language is used in daily life.
  - Compare/Contrast
  - Dialogue Journal
  - Experiments
  - Flow Chart
  - Maps/Photos
  - Cognates
  - Questionnaires/Interview
  - Thematic Approach
  - Real Literature
  - Realia
FEEDBACK

- Learners must receive relevant, appropriate, timely, nonthreatening feedback from knowledgeable people on their attempts.
EMPLOYMENT

- Learners need time and opportunity to use and practice new learning in realistic ways.
- They need to use reading and writing skills throughout their daily lives.
  - Centers
  - Cooperative Learning
  - Discover Learning
  - Experiments
  - Games
  - Language Experience Approach
  - Problem Solving
  - Peer Tutoring
  - Questionnaires/Interview
  - Researching
SIX STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS
Strategy 1
Vocabulary & Language Development

♦ Content Knowledge
  – Introduce new concepts via essential academic vocabulary.
  – Connect student-accessible synonyms or concepts to these essential vocabulary.
  – Support students to distinguish word meanings, & their uses for subject-specific tasks.
♦ Academic Language

- Engage beginning-level students in using basic social and school vocabulary, phrases, and sentence structures.

- As students progress, continue to contextualize instruction of more complex language forms and uses: subject-specific academic vocabulary, grammatical forms, and sentence structures used in listening, speaking, reading and writing.

- Respectfully distinguish between primary language use and standard academic English.
Sample activities/assessments

- Word analysis: e.g., dissecting words into their parts (prefix, root, suffix)
- Vocabulary journals, A-B-C books, word webs, word walls.
- Interactive editing, Cloze paragraphs, dictations, subject-specific journals.
Strategy 2
Guided Interaction

♦ Content Knowledge:
  – Structure multiple opportunities for peer-to-peer interactions as they learn content and develop their use of academic language in speaking/listening, reading and writing.
  – Clarify expectations, outcomes and procedures related to tasks for flexible group activities.
  – Allow for primary language interactions to clarify concepts.
Academic Language:

- Structure multiple opportunities for peer-to-peer interactions to increase speaking, listening, reading comprehension and writing skills.
- Support language interactions with review/preview of language forms, use of graphic organizers or other types of modeling.
Sample activities/assessments
- Partner interviews. Class surveys, Tea party, Think-Pair-Share, Numbered Heads Together, Four Corners
- Poster projects, group presentations
- Perspective line-ups.
- Readers’ Theater
Strategy 3
Metacognition and Authentic Assessment

♦ Content Knowledge:
  – Teach students processes for metacognition: i.e., pre-reading and pre-writing skills, word analysis, and methods to monitor their reading comprehension.
  – Teach and model ways for students to describe their thinking processes verbally and in writing.
  – Use a variety of activities and tasks to check for understanding.
Academic Language:

- In addition to components previously listed, ensure that assessment tasks are appropriate to students’ assessed language development level.
- Provide enough time to complete tasks, appropriate feedback, rubrics, and models to guide students’ self-assessment.
Sample activities/assessments:

- Guided reading, completing chapter pre-reading guides, reciprocal teaching, Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA), Anticipation Guides, double-entry journals.
- Think-alouds, K-W-L.
- Learning logs/journals, quick-writes
Strategy 4
Explicit Instruction

♦ Content Knowledge:

– Teach essential grade-level concepts and build students’ background knowledge as needed.

– Connect overarching ideas (whole), then examine components or processes (part), culminating with students’ own application or synthesis of ideas (new whole).

– Explicitly teach academic language and cognitive reading skills needed to complete subject-specific tasks, e.g., analyze, interpret, classify, compare, synthesize, persuade, solve.
Academic Language:

- Teach essential language forms and uses per students’ assessed language development level: listening/speaking, reading and writing.
- Follow contextualized introduction and explicit modeling of language use with repeated practice.
Sample activities/assessments:

– Quick-write responses or recording student responses to visuals, current event stories, real-life models, video clips, teacher read-alouds, thematic prompts, role-play, comparing language uses for similar contexts.

– Identifying and analyzing different perspectives and language references re: essential concepts.
Strategy 5
Meaning-Based Context and Universal Themes

♦ Content Knowledge:
  – Introduce new concepts through familiar resources, prompts, visuals, or themes.
  – Use associated types of “realia” meaningful or familiar to students to affirm the appropriate context for using new language.
  – Sustain motivation to learn challenging concepts by linking ideas to resources or contexts that reflect student interests and socio-cultural or linguistic backgrounds.
• **Academic Language:**
  – Use methods previously mentioned for introducing academic vocabulary, sentence structures and language uses.
  – Link ongoing language practice or tasks to both school-based and community-based uses.
  – Respectfully compare and analyze language use, and meanings to other cultures or context, to promote metacognition.
Sample activities/assessments:

- Quick-write responses or recording student responses to visuals, current event stories, real-life models, video clips, teacher read-alouds, thematic prompts, role-play, comparing language uses for similar contexts.
- Identifying and analyzing different perspectives and language references re: essential concepts.
Strategy 6
Modeling, Graphic Organizers, & Visuals

♦ Content knowledge:
  – Model how to complete tasks.
  – Provide graphic organizers and meaningful visuals to support students’ recognition of essential information.
  – Use graphic organizers to support understanding of specific tasks, and specific uses of academic language.
  – Use advanced organizers to support metacognition, and overall comprehension.
Academic Language:
- Use methods listed above with the addition of word banks, word walls, and modeling the use or graphic organizers appropriate to students’ level.
- Appropriately modulate language delivery, i.e., speed and enunciation, when modeling language forms or presenting content; repetition helps.
Sample activities/resources:

- Venn diagrams, story maps, main idea and supporting details schematics, double-entry journals, semantic attribute matrices.
- Jazz chants, read-alouds.
Overall Strategy

♦ Work on word selection with Preproduction students.
♦ Model for Early Production students.
♦ Expand what Speech Emergence students have said or written.
♦ Help Intermediate and Advanced Fluency students “sound like a book.”
Thank You!!