

Working with English Language Learners and Newcomers

Tips, suggestions and resources for classroom
teachers.

SOURCE: Judie Haynes

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1. Stages of Second Language Acquisition

Judie Haynes

All new learners of English progress through the same stages to acquire language. However, the length of time each student spends at a particular stage may vary greatly.

Stage I: Pre-production

This is the silent period. English language learners may have up to 500 words in their receptive vocabulary but they are not yet speaking. Some students will, however, repeat everything you say. They are not really producing language but are parroting.

These new learners of English will listen attentively and they may even be able to copy words from the board. They will be able to respond to pictures and other visuals. They can understand and duplicate gestures and movements to show comprehension. Total Physical Response methods will work well with them. Teachers should focus attention on listening comprehension activities and on building a receptive vocabulary.

English language learners at this stage will need much repetition of English. They will benefit from a “buddy” who speaks their language. Remember that the school day is exhausting for these newcomers as they are overwhelmed with listening to English language all day long.

Stage II: Early production

This stage may last up to six months and students will develop a receptive and active vocabulary of about 1000 words. During this stage, students can usually speak in one- or two-word phrases. They can use short language chunks that have been memorized although these chunks may not always be used correctly.

Here are some suggestions for working with students in this stage of English language learning:

- Ask yes/no and either/or questions.
- Accept one or two word responses.

- Give students the opportunity to participate in some of the whole class activities.
- Use pictures and realia to support questions.
- Modify content information to the language level of ELLs.
- Build vocabulary using pictures.
- Provide listening activities.
- Simplify the content materials to be used. Focus on key vocabulary and concepts.
- When teaching elementary age ELLs, use simple books with predictable text.
- Support learning with graphic organizers, charts and graphs. Begin to foster writing in English through labeling and short sentences. Use a frame to scaffold writing.

Stage III: Speech emergence

Students have developed a vocabulary of about 3,000 words and can communicate with simple phrases and sentences. They will ask simple questions, that may or may not be grammatically correct, such as “ May I go to bathroom? ” ELLs will also initiate short conversations with classmates. They will understand easy stories read in class with the support of pictures. They will also be able to do some content work with teacher support. Here are some simple tasks they can complete:

- Sound out stories phonetically.
- Read short, modified texts in content area subjects.
- Complete graphic organizers with word banks.
- Understand and answer questions about charts and graphs.
- Match vocabulary words to definitions.
- Study flashcards with content area vocabulary.
- Participate in duet, pair and choral reading activities.
- Write and illustrate riddles.
- Understand teacher explanations and two-step directions.

- Compose brief stories based on personal experience.
- Write in dialogue journals.

Dialogue journals are a conversation between the teacher and the student. They are especially helpful with English language learners. Students can write about topics that interest them and proceed at their own level and pace. They have a place to express their thoughts and ideas.

Stage IV: Intermediate fluency

English language learners at the intermediate fluency stage have a vocabulary of 6000 active words. They are beginning to use more complex sentences when speaking and writing and are willing to express opinions and share their thoughts. They will ask questions to clarify what they are learning in class. These English language learners will be able to work in grade level math and science classes with some teacher support. Comprehension of English literature and social studies content is increasing. At this stage, students will use strategies from their native language to learn content in English.

Student writing at this stage will have many errors as ELLs try to master the complexity of English grammar and sentence structure. Many students may be translating written assignments from native language. They should be expected to synthesize what they have learned and to make inferences from that learning. This is the time for teachers to focus on learning strategies. Students in this stage will also be able to understand more complex concepts.

Stage V: Advanced Fluency

It takes students from 4-10 years to achieve cognitive academic language proficiency in a second language. Student at this stage will be near-native in their ability to perform in content area learning. Most ELLs at this stage have been exited from ESL and other support programs. At the beginning of this stage, however, they will need continued support from classroom teachers especially in content areas such as history/social studies and in writing.

2. Pre-production and the Silent Period

If your new English language learner is not speaking, don't worry. Most newcomers go through a stage during which they do not produce language. This doesn't mean they are not learning.

According to Stephen Krashen, most new learners of English will go through a **“silent period”** which is an interval of time during which they are unable or unwilling to communicate orally in the new language. The silent period may last for a few days or a year depending on a variety of factors. It occurs before ELLs are ready to produce oral language and is generally referred to as the **“Pre-production”** stage of language learning. ELLs should not be forced to speak before they are ready and we don't want to embarrass students by putting them on the spot.

ELLs need time to listen to others talk, to digest what they hear, to develop receptive vocabulary, and to observe their classmates' interactions. When they do speak, we want the speech to be real and purposeful instead of contrived. **This does not mean your students are not learning.** They may understand what is being said, but they are not yet ready to talk about it.

What determines the length of the " silent period?" There are several factors involved. First, personality plays a key role. A normally shy and quiet youngster in native language is usually going to take longer before they feel comfortable speaking. Native culture will also play a role. In many cultures, for example, girls are not expected to speak out. They play a more passive role in family and classroom dynamics.

Teacher instruction is also an important factor in the length of the silent period. If the teacher provides "hands-on" activities and has students interact in small groups, ELLs will be able to participate in the life of the classroom a lot sooner. They will feel more confident in risking oral language. It should not be assumed that young learners of English do not feel embarrassment or shyness when attempting to speak in a second language.

The Pre-production Stage of Language Learning

Your students are learning during this silent, pre-production stage. They are acquiring language every day.

- They may have up to 500 words in their receptive vocabulary.
- New learners of English can listen attentively and they may even be able to copy words from the board.
- They will be able to respond to pictures and other visuals.
- They can understand and duplicate gestures and movements to show comprehension.
- Choral reading and Total Physical Response methods will work well with them.
- English language learners at this stage will need much repetition of English.
- They will benefit from a “buddy” who speaks their language.
- Teachers should focus attention on listening comprehension activities and on building a receptive vocabulary.

3. Challenges for ELLs **in Content Area Learning**

Here some of the challenges ELLs face in content areas.

Challenges for ELLs in Reading

English language learners face many obstacles when reading literature in English. Most literature is culture bound. We expect students to have prior knowledge of literary genres such as fairy tales, myths, legends, and tall tales. If the teacher has not activated prior knowledge or built background information, knowing the vocabulary will not solve the problem. ELLs may be able to read the words but it doesn't mean they will understand the text. They are not aware of information that the author left unsaid; the information that "everyone knows."

Here are some specific challenges that ELLs face when learning to read material in English:

- an abundance of idioms and figurative language in English texts
- density of unfamiliar vocabulary
- use of homonyms and synonyms
- grammar usage especially the "exceptions to the rules"
- word order, sentence structure and syntax
- difficult text structure with a topic sentence, supporting details and conclusion
- unfamiliarity with the connotative and denotative meanings of words
- ELLs may not have practice in expressing an opinion about text.
- use of regional U.S. dialects
- fear of participation and interaction with mainstream students
- story themes and endings can be inexplicable

- literary terms for story development are not understood
- unfamiliarity with drawing conclusions, analyzing characters and predicting outcomes
- imagery and symbolism in text are difficult.

Challenges for ELLs in Mathematics

Mathematics is not just arithmetic. There are considerable challenges for English language learners in math. There are challenges for teachers of mathematics, too. We may find that our ELLs use different processes to arrive at answers. Many teachers do not validate other systems and prior mathematical knowledge. Problem solving is not just language but a thought process. Students from other cultures may be more concerned with getting the correct response than with the process. They may not be able to justify their answers.

Difficulties that ELLs face when learning mathematics:

- formation of numbers varies from culture to culture
- use of decimal point and comma vary from culture to culture
- Students have no experience with our measurement system; it is an abstract to them.
- Math is not spirally taught in many cultures. So students may not know a lot about geometry, for example.
- Many students have never seen or worked with manipulatives. They may not take a lesson using manipulatives seriously.
- Students learn math by rote memory.
- Math curricula in their countries may be primarily calculation.
- Word problems may not be introduced until much later.
- Estimating, rounding, and geometry are not often taught as early in other cultures.
- Mathematical terms do not always translate well.

- Mental math may be the norm. Students may not show work in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division or they may show work in a different way,

Specific Challenges for ELLs in Science

ELLs may lack of background knowledge in science. Our "hands-on" approach is different from what they are used to. Drawing conclusions on their own may be difficult for ELLs. In their own culture students may not have been trained to make guesses.

Challenges that ELLs face when studying science:

- The vocabulary of science presents a huge difficulty. There are a special set of terms for the student to learn. Even simple words that the student may know could have another meaning in science.
- Material is covered very fast
- Directions are often multistep and difficult.
- There are too many concepts explained on each page of a science text.
- Cooperative learning may not fit in with students experiences in learning.
- Visuals may be confusing and difficult to understand.
- Sentence structure is complex and the passive voice is used in textbooks.
- What was taught in class does not always match the assessment.
- ELLs are not used to science labs or equipment
- Students lack background in scientific method
- There is no standard form of delivery of information

Challenges for ELLs in Social Studies

Social studies and U.S. history provide the biggest challenge to ELLs in their content classes. They have very limited background knowledge to activate. ELLs lack prior knowledge of U.S. and U.S. history, geography, and current events needed. Many students will memorize information for a test, but it has no relevance for them so the information is quickly forgotten.

ELLs' difficulties when studying social studies.

- Use of higher level thinking skills for reading and writing.
- Lack of familiarity with historical terms, government processes, and vocabulary.
- Social Studies text contains complex sentences, passive voice, and extensive use of pronouns.
- ELLs may not be used to expressing their personal opinions.
- Nationalistic and cultural focus of maps.
- Concepts which do not exist in all cultures are difficult. This includes privacy, democratic processes, rights of citizens, free will.
- No concept of movement within the structure of a society.
- ELLs are seldom asked to contribute an alternate view that reflects conditions in other countries.
- Use in our schools of "timeline" teaching vs. learning history by "dynasty" or "period."
- Difficulty with understanding what is said by the teacher and being able to take notes.
- Amount of text covered and the ELLs' inability to tell what is important in the text and what is not important.

4. Twenty-Five Quick Tips for Classroom Teachers

Put any five of the following tips into practice and your English language learners will benefit from the improved instruction.

Do you want to create an effective learning environment for your English language learners? Pick five ideas that you have never tried from the list below and implement them in your content area or mainstream classroom. You will be surprised to see how much the learning of ELLs improves.

Before Teaching the Lesson

1. Determine the English language learning level of your ELLs. Be realistic about what you expect ELLs to do.

2. Plan ahead. Think about how you will make the content comprehensible to your ELLs. Consider the following questions.

- How will you link the content to the students' previous knowledge?
- How will you build background information? Show a video or read a book aloud about your topic first.
- Decide what language and concepts need to be pre-taught.
- How can you develop content area vocabulary? What visuals will you need?

3. Reflect on how you can teach to oral, visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning modalities.

4. Prepare teaching aids such as maps, charts, pictures, and flashcards before the lesson is taught.

5. Add vocabulary word banks to student activities.

6. Adapt text so that the concepts are paraphrased in easier English. Eliminate non-essential details.

7. Find non-fiction books in the library written at a lower level about the topic you are teaching.

During the Lesson

8. Build on what ELLs already know.
9. Simplify vocabulary and sentence structure. Pre-teach vocabulary in context.
10. Use embedded or yes/no questions; give ELLs questions you will ask in advance so that they can prepare.
11. Introduce concrete concepts and vocabulary first.
12. Teach students to categorize their information using graphic organizers. Create semantic and story maps.
13. Demonstrate highlighting techniques so that students can highlight important information.
14. Review and repeat important concepts and vocabulary.
15. Provide concrete “real” examples and experiences.
16. Teach ELLs to find definitions for key vocabulary in the text.
17. Help ELLs become acquainted with their textbooks (table of contents, glossary, index, etc.)
18. Model your thinking processes for students using “think-alouds”.
19. Tape record part of your lesson to reinforce learning.

After the lesson

20. Have classmates make copies of their notes for ELLs to use.
21. Have ELLs watch videos or listen to tapes about current lesson using close caption feature.
22. Provide follow-up activities that reinforce vocabulary and concepts.
23. Have students work in small groups or pairs so that language and concepts are reinforced.

24. Adjust homework assignment to your ELLs' English language proficiency.
25. Modify assessment so that your ELLs have an opportunity to show what they have learned.

5. Seven Teaching Strategies **for Classroom Teachers of ELLs**

Learn 7 key strategies classroom teachers must know to provide an effective learning environment for ELLs.

1. **Provide comprehensible input for ELLs.** Language is not “soaked up.” The learner must understand the message that is conveyed. Comprehensible input is a hypothesis first proposed by Stephen Krashen. (Krashen, 1981) He purports that ELLs acquire language by hearing and understanding messages that are slightly above their current English language level. When newcomers are assigned to a mainstream classroom and spend most of their day in this environment it is especially critical for them to receive comprehensible input from their teachers and classmates. If that teacher provides information by lecturing in the front of a classroom, the English language learner will not be receiving this input. Teachers need to speak more slowly, use gestures and body language to get across the meaning to ELLs.

2. **Make lessons visual.** Use visual representations of new vocabulary and use graphs, maps, photographs, drawings and charts to introduce new vocabulary and concepts. Tell a story about information in the textbook using visuals. Create semantic and story maps, graphic organizers to teach students how to organize information.

3. **Link new information to prior knowledge.** Teachers need to consider what schema ELL students brings to the classroom and to link instruction to the students’ personal, cultural, and world experiences. Teachers also need to know what their students do not know. They must understand how culture impacts learning in their classroom.

4. **Determine key concepts for the unit and define language and content objects for each lesson.** Teachers write the key concept for a unit of study in student-friendly language and post it in the room. New learning should be tied to this concept. Additionally, teachers should begin each lesson by writing a content objective on the board. At the end of the lesson, students should be asked if the objective was met. Classroom teachers also need to set language

objectives for the ELLs in their class. A language objective might be to learn new vocabulary, find the nouns in a lesson, or apply a grammar rule.

5. **Modify vocabulary instruction for ELLs.** English language learners require direct instruction of new vocabulary. Teachers should also provide practice in pronouncing new words. ELLs need much more exposure to new terms, words, idioms, and phrases than do English fluent peers. Teachers need to tie new vocabulary to prior learning and use visual to reinforce meaning. Content area teachers should teach new vocabulary words that occur in the text as well as those related to the subject matter. Word wall should be used at all grade levels.

6. **Use cooperative learning strategies.** Lecture style teaching excludes ELLs from the learning in a classroom. We don't want to relegate ELLs to the fringes of the classroom doing a separate lesson with a classroom aide or ESL teacher. Working in small groups is especially beneficial to ELLs who have an authentic reason to use academic vocabulary and real reasons to discuss key concepts. ELLs benefit from cooperative learning structures. Give students a job in a group. Monitor that they are participating.

7. **Modify testing and homework for ELLs.** Content area homework and assessments needs to be differentiated for ELLs. Teachers should allow alternative types of assessment: oral, drawings, physical response (e.g., act-it-out), and manipulatives as well as modification to the test. Homework and assessment should be directly linked to classroom instruction and students should be provided with study guides so that they know what to study. Remember that the ELLs in your class may not be able to take notes.

6. Study Skills for ELLS

English language learners may need help in learning how to study for content area tests. Here are some helpful techniques that you can teach them.

ESL professionals realize that the best way to assess English language learners (ELLs) is to build assessment into instructional activities. We prefer to scaffold assessment in order to provide support for our students. However, ELLs must learn to survive in the real world of the content area class. It is useful, therefore, to teach second language learners study skills.

Study Skills for ELLS

Here are some studying techniques to show students when they are preparing for tests.

- Teach students to study actively. They are more likely to remember material if it is written down or if they say it out loud than if it is only read or heard.
- Make sure your students comprehend the material they are studying. If they understand the material, they will be able to remember it better.
- Assess prior knowledge so that you can connect new material to something your students already know. Teach students to make this connection themselves. You want to foster independent learners.
- Have students create their own examples when trying to understand and remember a general concept. This not only helps students remember the concept better, but also helps them check their own understanding.
- Teach students to visualize what they're trying to learn. Have them create a mental image or organize information on a graphic organizer.
- Show students how to pick out the most important concepts. They will not be able to memorize everything in a social studies unit, for example. ELLS need to learn how to concentrate on the main ideas. They need to learn to pay attention to the information the teacher indicates is important. This is particularly difficult for English

language learners. Demonstrate to them how their teachers signal important information. It could be written on the board, repeated many times or prefaced with words such as "This is important."

- Set reasonable goals for the material your English language learners should be responsible for. Ask content area teachers if you can adapt the test to fairly assess what your students should be able to do. There is no point in their memorizing a list of spelling words, for example, if they do not understand what the words mean.

How to memorize material effectively

ELLs need to learn to space study sessions so that they are not overwhelmed by the language demands and the content material to be mastered at the same time. They will be more apt to remember material if it is studied over several days (or weeks) rather than in a single session. Here are some "tricks" to help memorization.

- Categories: Have students learn how to group items into categories in order to memorize them. If they have a long list of things to memorize, show them how to group similar items together.
- Key words: To learn this list of reasons why an event in history occurred, show students how to pick out a key word for each reason and then learn just the key words.
- Item numbers: Have students learn how many items are on a list. When memorizing the list, have them also learn how many items should be on it.

7. Teach to Students' Learning Styles

It is especially crucial to take your students' learning styles into account when you are teaching English language learners. This article gives a brief description of each style and how you can teach to it.

It is always important for teachers to teach to their students' learning styles but this becomes crucial when teaching English language learners. ELLs may be highly literate in their own language but experience difficulties when acquiring English because they are accustomed to learning through a different style. In any case, most ELLs are visual or kinesthetic learners when they first learn English. Most teachers, especially in the upper grades, teach to students with an auditory learning style. This can be very difficult for the ELLs in your class.

Auditory Learners

Students with this style will be able to recall what they hear and will prefer oral instructions. They learn by listening and speaking. These students enjoy talking and interviewing. They are phonetic readers who enjoy oral reading, choral reading, and listening to recorded books. They learn best by doing the the following:

- interviewing, debating
- participating on a panel
- giving oral reports
- participating in oral discussions of written material

Visual Learners

Visual learners will be able to recall what they see and will prefer written instructions. These students are sight readers who enjoy reading silently. Better yet, present information to them with a video. They will learn by observing and enjoy working with the following:

- computer graphics

- maps, graphs, charts
- cartoons
- posters
- diagrams
- graphic organizers
- text with a lot of pictures

Tactile Learners

Students with this strength learn best by touching. They understand directions that they write and will learn best through manipulatives. Try using the Language Experience Approach (LEA) when teaching these students to read. These students will also benefit from whole language approaches to reading. They'll learn best by :

- drawing
- playing board games
- making dioramas
- making models
- following instructions to make something

Kinesthetic Learners

Kinesthetic learners also learn by touching or manipulating objects. They need to involve their whole body in learning. Total Physical Response is a good ESL method for them. They remember material best if they act it out. These students learn best by:

- playing games that involve their whole body
- movement activities
- making models
- following instructions to make something

- setting up experiments

Global Learners

Global learners are spontaneous and intuitive. They do not like to be bored. Information needs to be presented in an interesting manner using attractive materials. Cooperative learning strategies and holistic reading methods work well with these learners. Global learners learn best through:

- choral reading
- recorded books
- story writing
- computer programs
- games
- group activities

Analytic Learners

Analytic learners plan and organize their work. They focus on details and are logical. They are phonetic readers and prefer to work individually on activity sheets. They learn best when:

- information is presented in sequential steps
- lessons are structured and teacher-directed
- goals are clear
- requirements are spelled out

8. Establishing an Atmosphere of Acceptance

Discover how you can alleviate many newcomers' fears by creating an atmosphere of acceptance and welcome in all of your classes.

ESL and classroom teachers can alleviate many of the newcomers' fears by creating a language-nurturing environment in their classes. The first weeks are crucial.

A good relationship with classroom teacher and classmates will provide a great deal of the help and support newcomers need to cope with the challenges they face. This can't be emphasized enough. The more comfortable newcomers feel in your classroom, the quicker they will be able to learn. The more anxiety students experience, the less language they will comprehend.

Focus on the positive

Give lots of encouragement and praise for what the student *can* do. Don't dwell on all that they can't yet do. Create frequent opportunities for their success in your class. Don't call upon them to perform alone above their level of competence. Prepare mainstream students to welcome them into the class.

Pronounce newcomer's name correctly

Learn the correct pronunciation of the name from the newcomer. Determine which part is the given name and which is the family name. (Asian names are given in reverse order from ours; this may or may not have been reversed in the office.) Two-part first names are common in many cultures, and may appear to be a first name and a middle name. Ask. Use both parts of a two-part name. Hispanic family names may also be two-part. Saying the name right isn't always easy, but it's important. It may take a few tries. Write the newcomer's name on the board (with a phonetic version if necessary to help your students pronounce the name properly).

Ask the newcomer to pronounce the name or correct you. Avoid the temptation to Americanize the name or create a nickname for the student. If the student offers a name or an Americanized version of the name, however, accept it.

Take newcomers on a school tour

If possible, have parent volunteers or older students who speak the newcomers' languages take your new students on a tour of the important places in your school.

Some schools make a video tour for newcomers and their parents. If newcomers can read in their own language, have a welcome letter ready for them.

Have a bilingual student or parent show newcomers immediately where the bathrooms are and explain what the rules are for leaving the classroom. An accident can be a devastating embarrassment.

Before newcomers start school, have a bilingual person explain what a fire drill is. Schools in many countries do not conduct fire drill is and the noise from the alarm can be very frightening to a new arrival.

See additional ideas

Here are some additional ideas to help ESL, bilingual, and mainstream teachers and students create a language nurturing environment in their schools. Enjoy!

BE AWARE OF CULTURE SHOCK

How Culture Shock Affects Newcomers

Don't underestimate the results of culture shock. The emotional upheaval of moving can be devastating to any child. These symptoms are compounded when the child comes from a different culture and does not speak English.

What is Culture Shock?

Newcomers who act out in the classroom are probably suffering from culture shock. This is a term used to describe the feelings people have when they move to an unfamiliar culture. Immigrant children may become withdrawn and passive or they may be aggressive. The more different the new culture is from their own, the greater the shock. Newcomers have left behind family members, friends, teachers, and pets. They have lost their language and culture. Often they do not have the support of their parents who are in shock too.

Four Stages of Culture Shock

It must be emphasized that every child reacts differently to moving to a new place. New arrivals usually go through four stages of culture shock.

1. Euphoric or Honeymoon Stage

During this stage newcomers are excited about their new lives. Everything is wonderful and they are having a great time learning about their environment.

2. Culture Shock Stage.

The differences between the new and the native cultures become more apparent. Students feel overwhelmed at this stage. There is so much they do not understand about their new surroundings. They are frustrated because they can not communicate and are bombarded with unfamiliar surroundings, unreadable social signals and an unrelenting barrage of new sounds. Students suffering from culture shock may seem sleepy, irritable, disinterested or depressed. Some students may become aggressive and act out their frustrations.

Newcomers in this stage of culture shock need time and patience from their teachers.

3. Integration Stage.

Newcomers start to deal with the differences between the old culture and new. They learn to integrate their own beliefs with those of the new culture. Some newcomers will start to replace the old values with new ones. Others will begin to find ways to exist with both cultures. Many immigrant parents start to become alarmed at this stage. They do not want their children to lose their language and culture.

4. Acceptance Stage.

Newcomers are now able to enter and prosper in the mainstream culture. They accept both cultures and combine them into their lives. Some students will adopt the mainstream culture at school and follow the values of the home culture outside of school. During this stage many immigrant parents make it clear to their children that they do not want them to adopt the mainstream culture. This is because many immigrant students forget their native language and reject their culture,

Sensitize Your Mainstream Students

You want your newcomers to be accepted on the playground and on the school bus. Sensitize mainstream students to the challenges that new learners of English face.

You want mainstream students to accept and help the new learners of English in the lunchroom, on the playground, on the bus, in their neighborhoods. ESL and bilingual teachers need to help classroom teachers train their students to become sensitive to the challenges the newcomers face.

Use background information

Using cooperative groups of five or six students, have a group leader discuss the following questions: (This list can also be used in staff development to make adults more aware of the challenges newcomers face.)

- Who has moved and changed schools? Where did you move from? How did you feel the first few days? What was different in your new neighborhood? How did you handle being without your friends? How did you make new friends? What did people do that make you feel welcome in your new school. What did you wish some would have done? What should the teacher do?
- Who came here from another country? What country? When did you come? Could you speak English? How did you feel? How did you make friends? What helped you learn English.
- How many of you speak another language? Can you teach us to say hello? Count to five? Why is it good to know another language?
- How many of you have traveled to a country where English is not the main language? How did you feel when you couldn't communicate? Would you like to learn another language? How long do you think it takes to learn a new language?

Have each group of students present a short summary of what their group discussed and what conclusions they reached?

Reverse Roles

Rearrange the students again in groups of five or six. Have them discuss the following: Imagine that your parents had to move to Japan and took you to live there. You have to go to a Japanese school because there is no American school near your new home.

- Would you want to go? What would you want to take with you? Who are the people you would miss?
- Do you think you would have trouble learning Japanese? Who would you talk to if you were the only one in your class who speaks English? If there were some other American in your school, would you want to be friends with them? How would you make friends with kids who didn't speak English? How would you feel if the other students laughed at you if you made mistakes when you tried to speak Japanese? How would you feel if you couldn't do any of the work?

Ask each group to present a short oral paragraph about their group's discussion. Brainstorm with them how they would feel if they were newcomers in the United States. How would they want the students in their new school to treat them? How would they be able to communicate with their classmates?

Help Your Newcomers Develop Pride in Their Heritage

Do you know how to use the diversity in your classroom to help your newcomers develop pride in their native languages and cultures? Try some of these ideas.

Newcomers offer a rich resource from which mainstream teachers and students can learn about other languages and cultures.

Some simple things you can do to develop pride are:

- Ask bilingual parents to do cultural demonstrations in mainstream classrooms.
- Encourage newcomers to share their language skills by teaching their classmates to pronounce their home-language words on the labels placed around the classroom.
- Display pictures in your classroom from the students' home countries.

- Have newcomers write in a home-language diary, read books in their home language, draw pictures of people and places in their home countries, and listen to native language music (with headphones).

You don't want to discourage the maintenance of home languages. Whatever your students learn in their home-languages will eventually be transferred to English.

Tie Culture to Curriculum

Tie the cultures of your second language learners to your curriculum whenever possible. We know that all children bring to school a wealth of experiences from their families, homes, neighborhoods and communities. Children with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds have stories and experiences that are unique. Teachers should use these experiences and the environment of their classrooms to help children begin to understand other cultures. They should build on the knowledge their students and families have of the countries they come from and the cultures they represent.

The diversity in many classrooms provides a starting point for children to begin to understand and value the many distinct cultures of the world. Teachers should take advantage of this natural resource that is in their classrooms. This helps American children to respect the cultures of other people and, at the same time, it helps children from diverse backgrounds develop pride in their heritage. When students see their home cultures and languages being studied in the classroom, their culture has been validated. This helps to develop positive self-esteem in culturally and linguistically diverse children.

Label Classroom Objects

Label things in your room. Make a separate set of labels of classroom objects for each of the different languages spoken in your classroom. Ask a native speaker of each language to translate the words and write them under the English words on the labels. You may have two or more labels on your door with the word "door" in English and in the different languages of the newcomers in your class.

Although your newcomers may not be literate in their own languages, they will recognize the written form of their language and feel proud that it is displayed in your room. Keep a

collection of pictures from different countries. If they are laminated, these pictures can be shared among a number of teachers.

Ask bilingual students and parents to bring in native-language magazines. Have students cut out pictures and hang them in your room to represent the cultures of your newcomers. This helps them develop pride in their heritage and demonstrates respect for their culture.

HOW TO USE BUDDIES WITH YOUR NEWCOMER LEARNERS

Pair Your Newcomers with Buddies

Assign a buddy or a cross-grade tutor to your English language learner and watch them both blossom. Buddies gain in self esteem and your ELLs will feel welcome in your class

A buddy or cross-grade tutor who speaks the newcomer's language is a wonderful asset at the beginning of the school year.

Buddies are classmates and cross-grade tutors are older students in the same school. The ideal situation would be to pair an older bilingual student with a same-language newcomer. During the adjustment phase, the buddy or cross-grade tutor can explain what's going on. This is a good self-esteem builder for a bilingual buddy and a new friend for the newcomer. You may want to rotate buddies so that students do not become too dependent on one person and the bilingual buddy does not miss too much work.

Use English-speaking buddies, too. You will need to help these buddies learn how to work with non-English speakers and to reward those students who take their job seriously. Teach buddies the importance of patience, repeating, and not overloading. Help them understand that some newcomers might not want to speak at all for several months after arriving, and that that doesn't mean they should give up talking to them.

Ask students to brainstorm the things they can do to make newcomers feel welcome. What ways can they have fun together? How can they learn each others' languages? How can they get their schoolwork done?

Much has been written about using buddies with new learners of English. Keep in mind that peer buddies have a more limited use when students are 5-8 years old. Remember that young bilingual students are not always reliable translators of important information.

Things your peer buddies *can* do with your newcomers:

- Help them learn the classroom routine.
- Take them to ESL class and back again.
- Sit with them in the lunchroom.
- Learn how to communicate with them using gestures and short phrases.
- Teach them the ABCs, numbers and beginning vocabulary.
- Include them in games on the playground.
- Play student-made vocabulary games with them.
- Listen to taped books with them.
- Walk home with them or sit with them on the bus.
- Learn a few words of the newcomer's language.

Provide frequent "time-out" from English periods for newcomers. Allow the newcomer to spend time each day during those first weeks speaking with others of the same native language. He or she needs to ask someone "What's going on here?"

What if there are no students in the newcomer's class who speak his/her language? Keep a list of the people in your building who speak the languages of your students. The classroom teacher will need someone to translate important instructions. This list can include other teachers, custodians, same-language students in other classes, and bilingual parent volunteers. Make sure that the main office and the school nurse have a copy of these lists. Remember, kindergarten and first grade students are not necessarily reliable translators of important information.

9. Activities for Newcomers

When brand new English language learners first enter your school, it can be overwhelming for the teachers responsible for their instruction. It's hard to know what to do first. Here are some activity-based tips to get you started.

You've got brand new students just entering the school. They speak little or no English. You feel a sense of panic. What do you do first?

Determine whether your students know the Roman alphabet. If not, you need to allow time for plenty of practice. Those students who do know the Roman alphabet may not know or be able to read in cursive. In some cultures, however, students are taught to write in cursive first.

2. Ask bilingual parents to help newcomers during those first weeks. Appoint buddies to work with your new students.

3. Make up a packet of beginning activities. Newcomer Programs are a source of reproducible materials. This will help you supply students with plenty of productive work. Introduce colors, numbers, shapes, number words, body parts, and survival vocabulary. Once your students know their color words they can do a variety of activities.

4. Next, start with the school environment. Students make flash cards of the items they see in their classroom. Buddies can provide them with plenty of help.

- To introduce the classroom vocabulary to new students, point to the object or picture and say each word in English.
- Have students repeat each word after you if they are verbal. (It's normal for a student to have a silent period, and this should be respected.)
- Ask students to point to each item as you name it.
- For those students who are ready to speak, indicate an item and ask, "What is this?" Students who are literate in native language can use the school words as a basis for reading and writing activities in English.

- Have students write a sentence for each card using a frame that you provide.
"This is a _____".

- You may wish to provide students with a folder for keeping their work together. Organizing them in this way will enable them to more easily refer to the cards during other activities.

5. Provide students with a second set of cards. Have them use the cards to make flash cards, concentration games and sorting activities.

6. If students are ready to speak, provide a model question /answer conversation starter. For example on the classroom pages, begin with "Is there a chair in the room?" and progress to "Is there a book or a pencil on the desk?"

7. When students know the names of ten small items in your classroom, play this game:

- Put six to ten items on a table and cover them with a cloth. Items may include a pen, pencil, eraser, marker, crayon, rubber band, stapler, ruler, scissors, book, paper, etc.

- Give the students a few minutes to look at the items. (The length of time will depend on the age and ability of the students.)

- Have students cover their eyes while you remove one item.

- Allow students to guess what was removed. The student who guesses correctly gets to remove the next item.

8. For a short time each day, have your students practice their English using a computer program or a book with cassette tape. Do not overdo this as students need to interact with peers in order to learn English.

9. Make a picture dictionary. To make a picture dictionary, staple sheets of construction paper together and have students cut pictures out of magazines. Use categories which complement your curriculum (for example, a Healthy Foods section to go with your health unit on nutrition). Encourage students to add to their Dictionary whenever possible. This is an excellent cooperative learning activity that mainstream students can share in.

10. Make a vocabulary poster. To make a vocabulary poster have students work in cooperative groups. Have each group of students cut pictures from magazines and label them to create large posters of categories of common vocabulary words. Categories might be food, clothing, body parts, colors, animals, playground scenes, family groups, classroom, street scenes, house and furniture, or transportation. Display the posters in your classroom.

11. Read to your newcomers every day. This reading must be accompanied by pictures, gestures, dramatic voice to convey meaning. What great practice this is for mainstream first and second graders who are learning to read themselves.

10. Keys to Effective Communication

The following tips are keys to good communication that all teachers need to keep in mind when teaching new learners of English.

- Newcomers need visual and kinesthetic support to understand academic content material. Use drawings, chalkboard sketches, photographs, and visual materials to provide clues to meaning. Try mime, gestures or acting out the meaning of your message. Exaggerate emotions and vary your voice. Teach your mainstream students to do the same. If necessary, repeat your actions and rephrase the information.
- Speak in a clear, concise manner at a slightly slower pace using short, simple sentences (subject-verb-object) and high-frequency words. Your students will not understand you if you speak too fast or run your words together. Use the names of people rather than pronouns. Pause after phrases or short sentences, not after each word. You do not want to distort the rhythm of the language. Avoid the passive voice, complex sentences, idiomatic speech and slang.
- Smile and speak in a calm, reassuring manner. Raising your voice does not facilitate comprehension. Your voice should not be too loud. Show your patience through your facial expressions and body language. Give full attention to your ELLs and make every effort to understand their attempts to communicate.
- Allow your new learners of English extra time when listening and speaking. Many of your ELLs are translating the language they hear to their native language, formulating a response, and then translating that response into English.
- It is important for you to check comprehension frequently. Don't ask "Do you understand?" This is not a reliable check since many students will answer "yes" when they don't really understand. Teach the phrases "I don't understand," "Slowly, please," and "Please repeat." Write down information so students have visual as well as auditory

input. Print clearly and legibly on the chalkboard. Remember that many of your ELLs and their parents will not understand cursive writing.

- Accept one word answers, drawings and gestures. Do not jump in immediately to supply the words for students or insist that they speak in full sentences. Resist the urge to overcorrect which will inhibit newcomers so that they will be less willing to speak. If students respond in heavily accented or grammatically incorrect English, repeat their answer correctly. Do not ask the student to repeat your corrected response as this can be very embarrassing. Allow new learners of English to use a bilingual dictionary or ask for help from a same language buddy.

- If you have important information to convey, speak to the newcomer individually rather than in front of the class. The anxiety of being in the spotlight interferes with comprehension. Don't insist that students make eye contact with you when you are speaking to them. This is considered rude in many cultures.

- Help students to participate in your class by letting them know which question you are going to ask in advance. This will give your students the time to prepare a response.

- Use choral reading. Your ELLs will want to participate but being the focus of attention can be traumatic. Remember that your ELLs should understand what they are reading chorally.

- Write key words on the chalkboard so students have visual as well as auditory input. Emphasize these key words. Since many of your ELLs will not understand cursive writing, you need to print clearly and legibly. When writing notes home to parents, print your message and use a pen with black or blue ink. In some cultures red is the color of death.

- Knowledge of questioning strategies is essential in differentiating instruction for ELLs. Involving English language learners in the discussions in their content area classes can be frustrating if teachers do not develop strategies for asking questions. Below is a list **of types of questions to ask** from easiest to most difficult.

1. Ask newcomers to point to a picture or word to demonstrate basic knowledge. "Point to the penguin.
2. Using visual cues, ask simple yes/no questions such as "Are penguins mammals?"
3. Embed the response in the question using "either/or". "Is a penguin a mammal or a bird?"
4. Break complex questions into several steps. Simplify your vocabulary. Instead of asking "What characteristics do mammals share?" say "Look at the mammals. Find the bear, the dog and the cat. How are they the same?"
5. Ask simple "how" and "where" questions that can be answered with a phrase or a short sentence. "Where do penguins live?" Do not expect your ELLs to answer broad open-ended questions.
 - o Remember that there will be times when you will not be able to get an idea across to newcomers. Ask the ESL teacher in your school for a list of students who speak the newcomer's language. You will be able to call on these students to act as translators if necessary. Keep in mind that K-2 students do not make good translators.

Bloom's Taxonomy and English Language Learners

Your English language learners should be developing thinking skills as they acquire English. Dust off your copy of Bloom's Taxonomy and ask questions from all levels. There are activities that ELLs can do on every level.

Thinking Skills and English language learners

English language learners should be asked critical thinking questions from all levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. Some of the tasks on the taxonomy are difficult for ELLs because they lack the language and vocabulary to work in English. However, teachers need to ask questions from all levels of the taxonomy that are age appropriate and at the English language level of the English language learners. Even very young children can work at the Synthesis and Evaluation levels.

Examples at each level below come from *Pa Lia's First Day* by Michelle Edwards. This book is written at a late second or early third grade level.

Level 1: Knowledge. This level of questioning is what is most frequently used when teaching ELLs, especially for students in pre-production and beginning production levels of English language acquisition. Responses to some of the questions can be made using yes/no or embedded questions. Pictures, drawings, and realia will help students give the correct answer. Responses to these questions are generally right in the text. Here are some questions and directions you might ask:

- What did Pa Lia's brother do on the way to school?
- Who pushed Pa Lia on the steps?
- What name did Stinky call Pa Lia?
- When did Pa Lia meet Calliope?
- What did Pa Lia do during Math Class?

Level II: Comprehension. This level shows that the student has understood the facts and can interpret them. ESL/bilingual teachers use this level of questioning a lot. We ask students to compare, contrast, illustrate, and classify. We do this oral questions and graphic organizers such as Venn Diagrams and T-charts.

- Why did Pa Lia dawdle on the way to school?
- How will Pa Lia find her classroom?
- Why was Howie mean to Pa Lia?
- Why did Pa Lia get in trouble?
- Compare Calliope with Howie. Use the word bank.
- Make a drawing that shows how Pa Lia felt when she came in the classroom.
- Find a picture in the book that shows "Pa Lia felt like a teeny tiny minnow in a huge giant ocean".

Level III: Application. Students are learning to solve problems by using previously learned facts in a different way. ELLs might need scaffolding and word banks to build, choose, construct, develop, organize, plan, select, solve, and identify.

- Why did Pa Lia send a note?
- How would you do if you needed to find your classroom on the first day of school?
- Can you list the ways you could make a new student feel welcome?
- Write a different ending to the story.
- What questions would you ask Stinky if you could talk to him?

Level 4: Analysis. At this level students may not have enough vocabulary and language to express responses in English. The tasks at this level that English language learners will be able to complete with some teacher scaffolding are: classify, contrast, compare, categorize, sequence.

- How do we know Pa La felt nervous? Find the sentences in the story.

- Compare Pa Lia's feelings at the beginning of the story with her feelings at the end of the story.
- Sequence the following story sentences. What happened first?
- Look at the words in the word bank that describe people. Write the words that describe Pa Lia, Calliope, and Howie in the correct column
- Can you find four different feelings Pa Lia had during the story?
- How do you know that Pa Lia is the hero of the story?
- What do you think will happen next in this story?

Level 5: Synthesis. At this level students are compiling information together in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing alternative solutions. ELLs will need teacher support and scaffolding to answer questions at level 5. Synthesis is particularly difficult for ELLs. Students may be able to choose, combine, create, design, develop, imagine, make up, predict, solve, and change.

- Pa Lia is a new student at school and she has no friends. How would you solve Pa Lia's problem?
- How would you change in this story?
- What happens if you do not tell the truth?
- Can you invent another character for the story?
- How would you change the story to create a different ending?
- How could you change the story? How else could Pa Lia make friends? Plan a party for Mrs. Hennessey's class.

Level VI: Evaluation. Questions at this level of Bloom's taxonomy can be modified so that the language is simplified but the task remains the same. English language learners can learn to give opinions, make judgments about the action in a story and evaluate the work of an author.

The vocabulary usually associated with evaluation may need to be simplified. Here are some questions ELLs would be able to answer with some scaffolding by the teacher.

- What do you think will happen if Pa Lia does not tell the truth.

- What didn't you like about the story? Why?
- Do you think Tou Ger was a good brother? Why or Why not?
- What is part of this book did you like best. Tell why you like it?
- Why did the Pa Lia decide to tell the truth?
- What would you do if you were Pa Lia and the teacher was angry with you?
- Read another story by Michelle Edwards. Do you like it better than “Pa Lia's First Day?”

Explaining BICS and CALP

The difference between social language and academic language acquisition

Here is a simple description of BICS and CALP as theorized by Jim Cummins.

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

Experts such as Jim Cummins differentiate between social and academic language acquisition. Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) are language skills needed in social situations. It is the day-to-day language needed to interact socially with other people. English language learners (ELLs) employ BIC skills when they are on the playground, in the lunch room, on the school bus, at parties, playing sports and talking on the telephone. Social interactions are usually context embedded. They occur in a meaningful social context. They are not very demanding cognitively. The language required is not specialized. These language skills usually develop within six months to two years after arrival in the U.S.

Problems arise when teachers and administrators think that a child is proficient in a language when they demonstrate good social English.

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency

CALP refers to formal academic learning. This includes listening, speaking, reading, and writing about subject area content material. This level of language learning is essential for students to succeed in school. Students need time and support to become proficient in academic areas. This usually takes from five to seven years. Recent research (Thomas & Collier, 1995) has shown that if a child has no prior schooling or has no support in native language development, it may take seven to ten years for ELLs to catch up to their peers.

Academic language acquisition isn't just the understanding of content area vocabulary. It includes skills such as comparing, classifying, synthesizing, evaluating, and inferring. Academic language tasks are context reduced. Information is read from a textbook or presented by the teacher. As a student gets older the context of academic tasks becomes more and more reduced.

The language also becomes more cognitively demanding. New ideas, concepts and language are presented to the students at the same time.

Jim Cummins also advances the theory that there is a common underlying proficiency (CUP) between two languages. Skills, ideas and concepts students learn in their first language will be transferred to the second language.

13. Comprehensible Input and Output

How do newcomers learn English? Can they soak up language by sitting in the mainstream classroom? Learn how Comprehensible Input and Output are important to the acquisition of a second language.

Comprehensible Input

Language is not “soaked up.” The learner must understand the message that is conveyed. *Comprehensible input* is a hypothesis first proposed by Stephen Krashen. (Krashen, 1981) He purports that ELLs acquire language by hearing and understanding messages that are slightly above their current English language level. (Comprehensible Input +1)

An English language learner may understand the message "Put the paper in your desk." By slightly changing the message to “Put the paper in the garbage." the speaker scaffolds new information that increases the learner’s language comprehension. In order to do this, the teacher must provide new material that builds off the learner’s prior knowledge.

When newcomers are assigned to a mainstream classroom and spend most of their day in this environment it is especially critical for them to receive comprehensible input from their teachers and classmates. If that teacher lectures in the front of a classroom, the English language learner will not be receiving this input. Imagine that you and your family were sent to Japan for a year. Would you be able to learn Japanese by simply sitting in a Japanese classroom? You wouldn't unless the teacher made an effort to make the Japanese you were hearing comprehensible.

Comprehensible Output

According to research, learners need opportunities to practice language at their level of English language competency. This practice with English-speaking peers is called *Comprehensible Output*. Many researchers feel that comprehensible output is nearly as important as input. Cooperative learning groups are one way for new learners of English to receive plenty of understandable input and output. Here are some reasons why.

- A small group setting allows for more comprehensible input because the teacher or classmates modify or adapt the message to the listener's needs.
- Speakers can more easily check on the understanding of the listener.
- There is more opportunity for oral practice and for repetition of content information as peers help new learners of English negotiate meaning.
- Student talk in this small group is centered on what is actually happening at the moment as the task is completed.
- Feedback and correction are non-judgmental and immediate.

14. Vocabulary Instruction for **English Language Learners**

Here are some tips on providing effective vocabulary instruction for your English language learners.

Use explicit instruction of vocabulary.

I believe all students need direct instruction of vocabulary, but it is especially imperative for ELLs. They need much more exposure to new vocabulary than their native-English-speaking classmates (August & Shanahan, 2006). ELLs need to learn cognates, prefixes, suffixes, and root words to enhance their ability to make sense of new lexicon. Understanding context clues such as embedded definitions, pictures, and charts builds schema that ELLs need in order to comprehend the text. New vocabulary needs to be explicitly taught, and each new word should be directly linked to an appropriate strategy. ELLs should actively engage in holistic activities to practice new vocabulary because learning words out of context is difficult for these students. Even if they memorize the meanings of the words on a list, they will not be able to use the words in their own writing or verbal production until they really understand the meanings.

Introduce the most essential vocabulary before beginning a new chapter or unit.

Don't overwhelm students with too many words or concepts. Pick what is absolutely essential in each chapter. Pronounce each word for students, and have them repeat after you. Introduce the vocabulary in a familiar and meaningful context and then again in a content-specific setting. For example, in a unit on weather and tornadoes that I taught, the word front needed to be reviewed in a familiar context and then taught in the context of the unit. Provide experiences that help demonstrate the meaning of the vocabulary words. In my unit, diagrams and photographs were particularly helpful.

Build background knowledge.

Explicit links to previously taught text should be emphasized to activate prior knowledge. Review relevant vocabulary that was already introduced, and highlight familiar words that have a new meaning. Access the knowledge that students bring from their native cultures. In learning about tornadoes, for example, my students talked about some extreme weather found in their home countries and used Google in Korean and Japanese to find examples of such weather. They also watched videos of typhoons and a tsunami. Videos from your school library, Internet resources, and carefully selected educational TV programs (e.g., Discovery Channel shows, something from the 60 years of NBC News archives now freely available for teachers) should be used to introduce each unit. Doing so will increase vocabulary and provide ELLs with background knowledge. Key vocabulary can also be introduced through a fictional story before it is taught from the textbook. For example, I read an excerpt from *The Wizard of Oz* before teaching the information about tornadoes from the textbook. My students then gathered around the classroom computer to watch a video of a tornado. “Look at the funnel! It’s twisting! It’s going to touch down!” students exclaimed. They had already learned some of the vocabulary from *The Wizard of Oz*, and I was pleased to hear them use these words as they watched the video.

Use visuals when introducing new words and concepts.

Elementary-aged ELLs are usually visual or kinesthetic learners. When a teacher simply lectures, ELLs have very little understanding of the concepts being taught. It is therefore helpful to use realia, pictures, photographs, graphic organizers, maps, and graphs. Write key words on the board, and add gestures to help students interpret meaning. Have students create their own visuals to aid their learning. In the tornado unit, each student was assigned a few content-specific vocabulary words. They had to write simple definitions and draw pictures to show what the words meant.

Provide a variety of activities to practice new vocabulary.

Research has shown that learning is more effective when students give input into the vocabulary they need to learn (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000). To give students plenty of practice with words, I recommend providing two word walls. On one wall, I write everyday words that students need to learn and practice. These words are removed when students no longer need them. On the second wall, I write unit- or content-specific vocabulary. This wall is

changed to make room for new units. I then ask students to post unfamiliar words from the text. They select key vocabulary by looking at chapter titles, headings, and bolded words. I also have students make a portable word wall which they keep in their binders so that they have their vocabulary handy when they do homework. New vocabulary should be reviewed every day. Students can work together to write a simple sentence for each word or complete a cloze activity. They can also draw pictures to illustrate vocabulary, make flashcards, or compile their own dictionaries in a notebook.

Promote oral language development through cooperative learning groups.

ELLs need ample opportunities to speak English and authentic reasons to use academic language. Working in small groups is especially beneficial because ELLs learn to negotiate the meanings of vocabulary words with their classmates. When students work on the previously mentioned vocabulary activities in pairs or small groups, they can better understand and discuss the key concepts of the content area unit.

References

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15. Culturally Responsive Teaching **and English Language Learners**

Teachers should:

- Recognize and appreciate the legitimacy of the cultural heritages of different ethnic groups. There is no “right” or “wrong” when looking at the cultural beliefs of the families of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.
- Build relationships with the families of English Language Learners. Learn to be engagement parents in their children’s education. This includes communications that are written in the language of the parents. Learn about the backgrounds and cultural beliefs of the students in your classroom.
- Differentiate instruction for the English language learners in your class. Make sure your lessons provide comprehensible input for your students and link new learning to ELLs’ prior knowledge. Your lessons should also include scaffolded instruction, visual supports, and simplified language. Use project based and cooperative learning models to help ELLs learn content area information.
- Teach all students to learn about their own culture and appreciate the cultures of others. A good relationship with classroom teacher and classmates will provide a great deal of the help and support ELLs need to cope with the challenges they face. The more comfortable ELLs feel in your classroom, the quicker they will be able to learn. The more anxiety students experience, the less language they will comprehend. Teachers should strive help their ELLs be accepted on the playground and on the school bus.
- Incorporate multicultural information, resources, and materials in all the subjects and skills routinely taught in schools. Literature in the classroom would reflect multiple ethnic, language and cultural perspectives. Classrooms should display and use pictures, books, labels and other information from different cultures. Teachers should learn a few words in the languages of the students in their classes.

16. Elementary Web Sites for English Language Learners

Attention all elementary ESL and classroom teachers! Do you want to discover great web sites for the English language learners in your class? Here is a painless way to give students English language practice in the classroom or at home.

There are not many websites designed especially for elementary-age English language learners. In order to provide these students with extra practice in English, it is necessary to examine sites intended for English native speakers.

Sites for Grades PreK-2

- [Literacy Center.net](#) - an early childhood language learning site. Includes French, Spanish, and German.
- [Starfall.com](#)- Reading instruction and reading games for students in Pre-K-1. It's hard to believe this site is free.
- [ReadToday](#) Join the reading revolution! Teach a child to read.
- [Continent song](#) Good for students learning the names of the continents.
- [Reading is Fundamental](#). This site has many stories for Pre-K-2 students.*
- [Storyplace.org](#) -a site with online stories and activities. Grades pre-K-Kindergarten.*
- [Kiz Club](#) Stories about a variety of topics for grades 1-3
- [Online Story Time](#)-This site is more for teachers but has many online stories.
- [Martha Speaks](#). This site is good for beginning ELLs in grades k-2. It is advertised as a pre-school site but the stories are suitable for K-1 students.
- [British Council Stories](#) -This site has many stories that are read aloud. Check for spelling and pronunciation differences.
- [Games on PBS Kids](#) - Games for K-2. "WordPlay" can be used for students in grades 3-4.

- [Arthur](#) -Sequencing activity where students hear a story and put pictures in order.
- [Storyline Online](#) -A terrific site with stories read by actors from the ScreenActors' Guild. Grades 1-4.*
- [Reading-A-To-Z](#) - This is a commercial site with free books that you can download and print. Grades 1-4.
- [Raz-kids.com](#)- Reading and listening activities for elementary age students.*
- [Tumblebook Library](#) - Click on "stories." A large collection of stories from the Los Angeles Public Library. All grades.
- [Clifford](#) - Activities pre-K-2.Try the reading and writing section with students in grades 2-3.
- [Videos](#) - Short Clifford videos. Click on "See and Hear." Grades K-2.
- [Berenstain Bears Games and Songs](#) - Great activities for young children including word games, songs and puzzles. Grades K-2.
- [Game Goo - Learning that sticks](#) - Great learning games for young children. Grades K-2.
- [The Reading Lady](#) Includes short plays for students in grades 1-2.*
- [Enchanted learning](#) Printable books and for students in grades K-4.
- [Discover Science Simulations](#) Science content from Houghton Mifflin Science Series.

Sites for Grades 3-5

- [MadLibs](#) for Advanced Beginners in Grades 3-5
- [KidsKnowit Network](#) - Learning videos for students is grades 3-6.
- [Reading is Fundamental](#). Look at the writing activities for students in Grades 2-5.
- [Grammar Gorillas](#) for Advanced Beginners in Grades 3-5
- [Stories for Kids](#) for Advanced Beginners in Grades 3-5
- [Kiz Club](#)Stories about a variety of topics for grades 1-3

- [Bookhive.com](#) -This site has multicultural children's stories told by famous storytellers. Be sure to click on "Listen to a story." For Grades 2-5
- [Songs for Kids](#) - Grammar songs for students in Grades 2-5.
- [Postcards from Buster](#) - See Buster's adventures from various places in the U.S. Each city has video, audio, map skills and games. Grades 3-5.*
- [Arthur](#) -Games from Arthur. Grades 2-5.
- [Captain Underpants](#) - Make a comic. Grades 2-4
- [Scholastic](#) - A program for kids to make flashcards. Grades 3-8.
- [Surfing the Net with Kids](#) Site with games and puzzles in different subject areas.
- [Write a book report](#) - Students make a book report sandwich. Grades 4-8.
- [Literative](#) This site has great oral stories and games for grades 1-12.
- [Spelling Wizard](#) - Use spelling words to make a word search or sentence scramble.

Grades 3-6.

- [The Story Starter, Jr.](#) - Select a story starter for students in grades 4-12.
- [Tumblebook Library](#) - Online stories read from the Los Angeles Public Library. All grades.
- [Poetry](#) - Gives examples of different types of Poetry.
- [Science vocabulary](#) - Label pictures using science vocabulary. Grades 4-8.*
- [Songs and Rhymes](#)- Songs for students in all grades.
- [Songs for ELLs with words.* Grades 3-12.](#)
- [Word Game](#) Intermediate students in grades 5-8.
- [Owl online](#) This is a good grammar site for 6-12
- [FunBrain reading](#) Intermediate students in grades 5-8.

- [Zoom](#) - Games, activities and science experiments from the TV Show Zoom. Grades 4-6.
- [U.S. Symbols](#) - U.S. Government information from Ben's Guide. Grades 3-5.
- [Social Studies Vocabulary Games](#) - Vocabulary from U.S. government. Grades 3-5.
- [Spiders](#). Spider activities for kids. Gr. 3-6.

Sites for Grades 4-8

- [Listening Activities](#) - Designed for older students but pronunciation and listening activities could be used for students grades 4 and up.*
- [iKnowthat](#) This link takes you to map and social studies activities for grades 5-12.
- [BrainPop](#)-This site has some free sections to teach grammar. Look up "nouns" and watch the video. Grades 5-8. Grades 3-8. *
- [Multicultural Stories](#) -Stories from around the world by Nick Jr. Grades 3-8
- [Brainteasers, Puzzles and Riddles](#) - Kids' page from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. Grades 5-8
- [Translation Site](#) - Students can bookmark this site to translate words from English to their native language. Grades 3-12.
- [Interactive games and activities](#)- Social Studies Games from Ben's Guide to the U.S Government. Grades 5-8.
- [Audio Comprehension](#) - An audio concentration game for Grades 4-12.*
- [Homophone game](#) - Match homophones in this concentration game.* Grades 4-8.
- [Wordsearches](#) - Wordsearches on U.S. Presidents. Grades 4-8.
- [Movie Trailers](#) Listening activities using movie trailers for Grades 5-12.
- [Vocabulary](#) Vocabulary games - From Interesting Things for ESL Students, a collection of vocabulary games for Grades 6-12.
- [WordBuilder](#) Great site for phonics practice. Grades 4-12

17. Differentiating Instruction **for English Language Learners**

Attention all elementary ESL and classroom teachers! Do you want to discover great web sites for the English language learners in your class? Here is a painless way to give students English language practice in the classroom or at home.

Sites for Grades 1-2

- Starfall.com- Reading instruction and reading games for students in Pre-K-1. It's hard to believe this site is free.
- Kid's Lab -Great site with tons of terrific activities. Try the reading comprehension section.
- Storyplace.org -a site with online stories and activities. Grades pre-K-Kindergarten.
- Online Story Time-This site is more for teachers but has many online stories. It is advertized as a pre-school site but the stories are suitable forK-1 students.
- British Council Stories -This site has many stories that are read aloud. Check for spelling and pronunciation differences.
- Games on PBS Kids - Games for K-2. "WordPlay" can be used for students in grades 3-4.
- Arthur -Sequencing activity where students hear a story and put pictures in order.
- Printable Games -For readers in Grades 1-2.
- Storyline Online -A terrific site with stories read by actors from the ScreenActors' Guild. Grades 1-4.
- Tumblebook Library - Click on "stories." A large collection of stories from the Los Angeles Public Library. All grades.

- [Clifford](#) - Activities pre-K-2. Try the reading and writing section with students in grades 2-3.
- [Videos](#) - Short Clifford videos. Click on "See and Hear." Grades K-2.
- [Berenstain Bears Games and Songs](#) - Great activities for young children including word games, songs and puzzles. Grades K-2.
- [Enchanted learning](#) Printable books and for students in grades K-4.

Sites for Grades 3-5

- [Stories for Kids](#) - for Advanced Beginners in Grades 3-5
- [Bookhive.com](#) - This site has multicultural children's stories told by famous storytellers. Be sure to click on "Listen to a story." For Grades 2-5
- [Songs for Kids](#) - Grammar songs for students in Grades 2-5.
- [Postcards from Buster](#) - See Buster's adventures from various places in the U.S. Each city has video, audio, map skills and games. Grades 3-5.
- [Kid's Lab](#) - Terrific site with many great activities. Try the Science vocabulary section.
- [Arthur](#) - Games from Arthur. Grades 2-5.
- [Captain Underpants](#) - Make a comic. Grades 2-4
- [Scholastic](#) - A program for kids to make flashcards. Grades 3-8.
- [Surfing the Net with Kids](#) Site with games and puzzles in different subject areas.
- [Write a book report](#) - Students make a book report sandwich. Grades 4-8.
- [Spelling Wizard](#) - Use spelling words to make a word search or sentence scramble. Grades 3-6.
- [Tumblebook Library](#) - Online stories read from the Los Angeles Public Library. All grades.
- [Poetry](#) - Gives examples of different types of Poetry.

- [Science vocabulary](#) - Label pictures using science vocabulary. Grades 4-8.
- [Songs and Rhymes](#)- Songs for students in all grades.
- [Zoom](#) - Games, activities and science experiments from the TV Show Zoom. Grades 4-6.
- [U.S. Symbols](#) - U.S. Government information from Ben's Guide. Grades 3-5.
- [Social Studies Vocabulary Games](#) - Vocabulary from U.S. government. Grades 3-5.
- [Verbs](#)- Practice with verbs for beginners. Grades 3-8.
- [Concentration](#) Games for learning English. Grades 3-5.

Sites for Grades 4-8

- [Listening Activities](#) - Designed for older students but pronunciation and listening activities could be used for students grades 4 and up.
- [ESLbears](#)-A site for beginning students. Exercises in pronunciation, reading and vocabulary. Grades 3-8.
- [Multicultural Stories](#) -Stories from around the world by Nick Jr. Grades 3-8
- [Brainteasers, Puzzles and Riddles](#) - Kids' page from the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. Grades 5-8
- [Translation Site](#) - Students can bookmark this site to translate words from English to their native language. Grades 3-12.
- [Interactive games and activities](#)- Social Studies Games from Ben's Guide to the U.S Government. Grades 5-8.
- [Flashcards](#) - For kids learning English. Grades 4-8.
- [Homophone game](#) - Match homophones in this concentration game. Grades 4-8.
- [Worksheets](#) - A large variety of worksheets for ESL learners. Grades 3-8.
- [Wordsearches](#) – Word searches on U.S. Presidents. Grades 4-8.

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