

This list of teaching strategies and activities was developed out of a focused brainstorming process conducted with general education, special education and English as a Second Language teachers in Minnesota during the 2001-2002 school year. The list represents strategies and activities that teachers report that they use (or have used) to teach middle school-aged English language learners with disabilities. In most cases, the words that the teachers used to describe a strategy or activity are what is presented here in the glossary. A few of the strategies listed have definitions taken from professional literature. In the 2004-2005 school year NCEO will conduct single-case studies with ELLs who have disabilities that will be based on selected strategies from this list. For more information see <http://education.umn.edu/NCEO/>

Glossary of Teaching Strategies

Accelerated or individualized math: a system of having students work at different levels individually in one classroom. They progress by passing tests for each unit and move at their own pace.

Acting out a story: Having the students act out a part of a story. Using physical movement to demonstrate and improve comprehension of the story. Could also be used on a smaller scale with puppets, etc. but includes physical movement of some sort.

Adjusted speech: teacher changes speech patterns to increase student comprehension. Includes facing the students, paraphrasing often, clearly indicating most important ideas, limiting asides, etc.

Book on tape: Using books on tape to enhance reading development in some way. Having students use the tapes to go over the story after partner reading, to make sure they have not missed a vocabulary word, etc.

Chunking and questioning aloud: The process of reading a story aloud to a group of students and stopping after certain blocks of text to ask the students specific questions about their comprehension of the story and some key features of the text.

Collecting anonymous student generated questions: During, or at the end of a lesson, have students write any questions that they might have on a card. Collect the cards and answer the questions without identifying a student. Students might be more willing to ask questions they have anonymously, instead of in front of their peers.

Combine kinesthetic and phonemic awareness: Associating different movements with phonemes in order to anchor sounds during practice drills in order to build phonemic awareness and remembering of sounds by the students.

Cooperative learning: a range of team based learning approaches where students work together to complete a task.

Cross-disciplinary teaching on themes: Teaching similar vocabulary and themes in different classes (ex: Doing a reading on wolves in reading class while doing a unit on wolves in biology class).

Curriculum based math probes: having students solve 2-3 sheets of problems in a set amount of time assessing the same skill. Teacher counts the number of correctly written digits, finds the median correct digits per minute and then determines whether the student is at frustration, instructional, or mastery level.

Curriculum based oral reading probe: having students read aloud three basal reader passages for 1 minute. Teacher marks the place where the student stops and then asks comprehension questions and continues to give probes until students reach frustration level as defined by reading rate and median score.

Daily re-looping of previously learned material: A process of always bringing in previously learned material to build on each day so that students have a base knowledge to start with and so that learned structures are constantly reinforced.

Decodable text: Using readings that contain only words the students can decode and build on that. Decoding is the ability to translate a word from print to speech, usually by employing knowledge of sound-symbol correspondences; also, the act of deciphering a new word by sounding it out.

Directly teach vocabulary through short time segments: Teach vocabulary directly through listening, speaking, reading, and writing each used in short blocks of time. Students are exposed to vocabulary in different ways and movement of activities helps hold attention.

Ecological approach: involves all aspects of a child's life, including classroom, family, neighborhood, and community, in teaching the child useful life and educational skills.

Explicit timing: timing math seatwork in 30-minute trials that are used to help students become more automatic in math facts and more proficient in solving problems. Teacher compares correct problem per minute rate. Used to recycle materials and concepts.

Explicit teaching of text structure: Teaching the parts of different types of text and making sure students understand the text structure before reading. This would include basics such as text in English is read from left to right, and also more sophisticated structures such as the structure of a fairy tale.

Explicit vocabulary building through random recurrent assessments: Using brief assessments to help students build basic subject-specific vocabulary and also gauge student retention of subject-specific vocabulary.

Fluency building: Helping students build fluency in frequently occurring words through short assessments and exercises that give increased exposure to high-frequency words.

Graphic organizers: visual displays to organize information into things like trees, flowcharts, webs, etc. They help students to consolidate information into meaningful whole and they are used to improve comprehension of stories, organization of writing, and understanding of difficult concepts in word problems.

Hands-on, active participation: Designing activities so that students are actively involved in the project or experiment. Hands-on participation is as important as verbal participation in the activity.

Individual conferencing: Listening to a student read, talking about a book, reading every other paragraph, one-on-one during independent reading time. Time to bond with a student. Opportunity to record informal assessments about a student's progress in reading.

Journal of the senses: Having students write down in an informal way (possibly even a form to fill in) what they imagine the characters in a story would see, smell, hear, taste, and feel at a certain point in the story.

K-W-L: know, want to know, learned, routine. A form of self-monitoring where students are taught to list what they know already about a subject, what they want to know, and later what they learned.

Literature circles/book club/small group guided discussion: Students discuss portions of books in a small group. Sometimes roles are assigned for group interaction. Students at varying levels are able to share different points about the book.

Mnemonics: Association techniques used to help students remember some aspect of reading. Ex: Associating a list of irregular verbs with each of the letters in a familiar name.

Model-lead-test strategy instruction (MLT): 3 stage process for teaching students to independently use learning strategies: 1) teacher models correct use of strategy; 2) teacher leads students to practice correct use; 3) teacher tests' students' independent use of it. Once students attain a score of 80% correct on two consecutive tests, instruction on the strategy stops.

Modeling/teacher demonstration: Teacher demonstrates how to do a lab or experiment before having the students try it on their own.

Monitoring of progress through group and individual achievement awareness charts: Using charts to build awareness and motivation of progress for students. The emphasis here is on progress so even students working at different levels can chart significant gains.

Native language support/instruction: providing auditory or written content input to students in their native language.

Oral sharing on a related topic: Students share their written or prepared responses with the class so that students can share their answers to prompts with the class, but have had time to prepare them.

Paraphrasing: Working on specific skills to orally retell or summarize what happened in a story.

Partner reading: Having students work together in pairs to read a text to each other and discover the main ideas of the story.

Peer tutoring: Having students working pairs with one student tutoring the other student on a particular concept.

Picture word: Replacing key vocabulary words of a text with pictures and then adding the words back in, and also bringing in visuals of key vocabulary words in a text.

Pictures to demonstrate steps: Using a series of pictures to demonstrate the steps in a project or experiment so that students get a visual image of what they need to do.

Prediction: Having students predict what is going to happen in a story based on a title, headline, illustration, or initial sentence/paragraph.

Pre-reading strategies: Giving overview of unit, previewing main ideas, connecting subject to the background knowledge of the students, etc.

Pre-teach vocabulary: teaching key vocabulary words prior to working with the lesson or unit.

Pre-teaching the organization of the text/unit organizers: Pointing out and getting students to discover the different parts of the text that can be used in learning: captions, headings, etc. Also familiarizing the students with the layout of the text, glossary, etc., beforehand.

Problem solving instruction: explicit instruction in the steps to solving a mathematical or science problem including understanding the question, identifying relevant and irrelevant information, choosing a plan to solve the problem, solving it, and checking answers.

Reciprocal peer tutoring (RPT) to improve math achievement: having students pair, choose a team goal to work toward, tutor each other on math problems, and then individually work a sheet of drill problems. Students get points for correct problems and work toward a goal.

Recurrent, random vocabulary assessment: Recycling vocabulary words that have been discussed in class and randomly choosing words from this list to have random assessments on so as to reinforce the already “learned” vocabulary words.

Reference skills: Teaching students how to use reference items, dictionary, glossary, etc. for a certain type of text (like science).

Reinforcing math skills through games: Using games to follow-up a lesson in order to reinforce learned skills and use the skills in another context.

Relate reading to student’s experiences: Having students talk about connections in the reading to their own experiences. Sharing in a large group or small group setting. Using group experiences to better understand reading.

Repeated readings: the method of having students read passages orally three times in a row and each time try to achieve a faster speed and fewer disfluencies. If comprehension is being targeted, students answer some different comprehension questions after each reading or retell the story.

Response cards: having students write brief answers to teacher questions on cards. Teacher asks a question and all students hold up cards. Teacher can scan answers of all students for understanding. Sometimes cards just have “yes” or “no” on them and can also be prepared by the teacher.

Response journal: Students record in a journal what they learned that day or strategies they learned or questions they have. Students can share their ideas in the class, with partners, and with the teacher.

Retelling: students verbally rehearse important story information by retelling a story to a partner, using an outline. The outline guides them to pick out important ideas and back them up with supporting information.

Simplified text: Using science texts that have simplified language for ELL students.

Student developed glossary: Students keep track of key content and concept words and define them in a log or series of worksheets that they keep with their text to refer to.

Students generate word problems: Have students create word problems for a specific math skill. Through the construction of a problem the students learn what to look for when solving word problems they are assigned.

Summarize lesson: Have a summarizing activity as to what was learned in each lesson (Ex: having students summarize in their journals what was learned each day).

Tactile, concrete experiences in math: Using three dimensional objects in math instruction such as geometrical shapes, coins, or blocks used to form various geometrical shapes.

Tactile vocabulary development steps: Using three-dimensional or tactile objects to help in developing students' abilities to write words and letters. Ex: Writing letters in sand or tracing wood block letters.

Teaching pre-, during-, and post- reading strategies: Teaching students reading strategies that they can use on their own when reading a text. Practicing these strategies in class as a group or in small groups.

Teaching Greek and Latin prefixes and suffixes: Teaching prefixes and suffixes since students will encounter them often, especially in with science content vocabulary.

Teaching main idea: Teaching students how to pick out the main idea of a paragraph or reading and explain why it is the main idea. Done as a class or in small groups to build consensus of what the main idea is.

Think-alouds: using explicit explanations of the steps of problem solving through teacher modeling metacognitive thought. Ex: Reading a story aloud and stopping at points to think aloud about reading strategies/processes or, in math, demonstrating the thought process used in problem solving.

Use of diagrams to teach cause and effect: Using diagrams (ex: fishbone diagrams) to demonstrate the relationship of cause and effect.

Use short segments to teach vocabulary: Teaching specific science vocabulary for a short period before a lesson through listening, seeing, reading, and writing.

Using visuals: Bringing two or three dimensional visuals into the classroom to enhance teacher instruction in the content area.

Visualization: Having the students draw a scene of a story, the plot, etc. to demonstrate student comprehension of the story or to have students organize ideas. May encourage students who have strong artistic talent, but emerging reading skills.

Venn Diagram: Use of a Venn diagram (interconnected circles) to demonstrate how different subjects or topics overlap and how they are unique.

Some of the strategies listed in this glossary were taken from the following references, others were suggested in previous Multi-Attribute Consensus Building (MACB) groups.

References:

Celce-Murcia, M. (Ed.). *Teaching English as a second or foreign language*. 3rd Ed. Boston: Heinle & Heinle.

Chamot, A.U. & O'Malley, J.M. (1994). *The CALLA handbook: Implementing the cognitive academic language learning approach*. New York: Addison-Wesley.

ERIC Digest. (1993). *Teaching limited English proficient students to understand and use mathematics*. ERIC DIGEST 70. (EDO-UD-91-0). Document accessed on the web: <http://eric.web.tc.Columbia.edu/digests/dig70.html> on February 23, 2001.

Laternau, J. (2001, June). *Standards-based instruction for English language learners*. PREL Briefing Paper (PB0102). Honolulu, HI: Pacific Resources for Education and Learning.

Meyen, E.L., Vergason, G.A., & Whelan, R.J. (1996). *Strategies for teaching exceptional children in inclusive settings*. Denver: Love Publishing Co.

Rathwon, N. (1999). *Effective school interventions: strategies for enhancing academic achievement and social competence*. New York: The Guilford Press NYC.

Smith, T. et al. (1995). *Teaching children with special needs in inclusive settings*. Allyn and Bacon.