



Teaching Strategies for Secondary English Language Learners EDUO 9301

Doug Fannin Instructor dfannin@dominicancaonline.com

Introduction

English Language Learners (ELL) are students for whom English is not their primary language. Their first language (L1) is generally not used in instruction and the instructor need not know the students' native languages. Instructional methods of teaching language skills vary, depending on the district or school mandates. Some classes focus on literature to better prepare students for the exit exams and their transition into mainstream English Language Arts (ELA), while others require that the ELL teacher collaborate with subject area teachers to reinforce content and concepts. Another effective model is called the sheltered instruction approach, a class structure wherein content mastery and academic language skill are developed concurrently. In this course, participants will learn to identify and understand the needs of English Language Learners; implement strategies for modifying academic content for better understanding; and then put their new skills into practice. Following the principles of Response-To-Intervention (RTI), participants will be able to differentiate instruction to address the diverse needs of learners in the classroom. This course is based on the framework provided by Universal Design for Learning (UDL): the development of adjustable materials, varied instructional approaches, and relevant assessment methods. Participants will learn to recognize potential barriers to learning, and subsequently identify possible solutions.

Materials

Videos:

1. [Project-Based Learning for English Language Learners](#)
 2. [Teaching English Language Using Shakespeare](#)
 3. [Getting Kids to Read](#)
- [20 Curriculum Units and Projects by Teachers, for Teachers](#)

Professional Development Materials

Annotated Content and Essential Questions

Menu of Key Concepts and Related Resources

PDF - Professional Teachers Handbook [Chapter 4 - Meeting the Needs of All Learners](#), pages 94-96

PDF - Professional Teachers Handbook [Chapter 5 - Going Creative with Literacy: Strategies for English](#)

Objectives:

1. **By the end of session 1, participants will be able to:**
 - A. ***Identify and understand the needs of English Language Learners.***
 - i. Assess students proficiency levels
 - ii. Recognize cultural perspectives
 - iii. Address the teaching of language skills
 - iv.
2. **By the end of session 2, participants will be able to *Implement strategies for modifying academic content for English Language Learners.***
3. **By the end of session 3, participants will be able to:**
 - A. ***Put skills into practice.***
 - B. Employ multiple methods of assessment
 - C. Review web-based TeachNet curriculum units designed for English Language Learners

Session 1: Identify and Understand the Needs of English Language Learners

Overview

You may have heard the term LEP, which stands for Limited English Proficient. In recent years this term has been replaced with ELL, English Language Learner. There are three major categories (see chart below) of ELL students. You could have representatives from each group in your class at one time. It is always a good idea to consult with the student's guidance counselor, native language arts teacher (if applicable) and ELL teachers to help you determine specific strengths and weaknesses that will influence the students' performance in your class. Second language acquisition is greatly impacted by proficiency in the native language.

Mainstream teachers need to learn about the language and academic backgrounds of the ELLs in their classes. Without this knowledge, teachers cannot anticipate the aspects of learning that are likely to be too difficult for their ELLs to handle without instructional supports. It is essential to gather data about your students' English language proficiency using assessment tools ranging from standardized formal language assessment testing to ongoing informal assessments made through your observation of everyday activities. Educators should use both standardized scores and ongoing monitoring to help determine which instructional standards to focus on, and also to evaluate students' progress. Instructional plans should include multiple means of expression, to provide learners with alternatives for demonstrating what they know.

Session 2: Implement Strategies for Modifying Academic Content for English Language Learners

Overview

As a teacher with English Language Learners in your class, you need to ensure that you are implementing activities that foster language acquisition at the same time as subject content and

concepts. Using a variety of research-based literacy techniques, you can create a welcoming classroom environment rich in learning activities that are reflective of each student's level of language proficiency and learning style.

1) Simplify spoken language.

- Speak slowly and enunciate clearly.
- Limit use of slang and idiomatic language.
- Paraphrase student comments so other students can understand.
- Recognize that mistakes are part of the language acquisition process, and ask questions to check comprehension rather than asking, "Does everybody understand?"
- Use outlines or notes so students will know what to expect from their listening.

2) Modify written text.

- Use charts and graphs, timelines, maps, illustrations and artifacts to introduce a lesson topic.
- Begin with concrete examples/explanations before moving to abstract concepts.
- Use graphic organizers to present information, to review, and to teach students how to organize their own essays.
- Try to relate material to students' prior knowledge and experience.

3) Provide vocabulary support.

- Create webs or clusters for vocabulary by asking students to brainstorm ideas and vocabulary related to a specific topic.
- Encourage students to carry bilingual dictionaries and to keep vocabulary lists in their notebooks so they can keep track of new words.

4) Vary reading techniques.

- Give readings in advance so that students can prepare for the introduction of new teaching units. Include pre-, during-, and post- reading activities.
- Use reading logs and cloze activities to check comprehension.
- Ask students to summarize or illustrate what they have read.

Session 3: Putting Your New Skills into Practice

Overview

"Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do." - Goethe

In addition to formal testing, teachers must constantly observe their students, making mental notes about their language proficiency through formative assessments. Finding ways to gather these data requires persistence and creativity. Keep in mind that evidence of learning takes many different forms (i.e., reports, projects, exhibitions, and demonstrations). Students can also be taught to participate in the assessment process, by monitoring and evaluating their own progress and growth through charts, logs, and conferencing.

Armed with data about students' language proficiency levels, you will be able to note growth and potential problems, and be prepared to evaluate your students. Educators who modify curriculum enable ELLs to improve language skills by having content delivered on their language level.

Assessment

Briefly describe a unit or topic that is part of your standards-based curriculum. Design a plan for modifying both your instructional delivery and your methods for assessing the language acquisition skills and content mastery of your English Language Learners.