

## ESL STRATEGIES

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## A. Methodologies / Approaches

### A1. Total Physical Response (TPR)

In TPR, teachers interact with students by delivering commands, and students demonstrate comprehension through physical response. Students are not expected to respond orally until they feel ready. This strategy involves little or no pressure to speak. (*Asher, 1992*).

### A2. The Natural Approach

In this approach (*Krashen and Terrell, 1983*), students acquire new vocabulary through experiences and associations with the words, as such words are employed in a meaningful context. Extended listening experiences include physical response activities, use of vivid pictures to illustrate concepts, and active involvement of the students through physical contact with the pictures and objects being discussed-by means of choice-making, yes-no questions, and game situations.

### A3. The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach

The Cognitive / Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) (*Chamot & O'Malley, 1994*) assists in the transition from a language arts program in which content is made comprehensible through the use of ESOL strategies to the “mainstream” language arts curriculum by teaching students how to handle content area material with success. CALLA can help intermediate and advanced students in understanding and retaining content area material while they are increasing their English language skills.

### A4. Whole Language Approach

In a Whole Language Approach, linguistic, cognitive, and early literacy skills are developed in an integrated fashion. Instructional strategies for a Whole Language Approach include the four language skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing (*Goodman, Goodman & Hood, 1989*).

### A5. Language Experience Approach

The goal of the Language Experience Approach (LEA) is to have students produce language in response to first-hand, multi-sensorial experiences. The LEA uses the students’ ideas and their language to develop reading and writing skills.

Steps for using the Language Experience Approach in the classroom (*Dixon & Nessel, 1983*).

#### **Step 1: Providing the Experience / Motivation**

An experience story is based on an experience the teacher and students share.

**Step 2: Facilitation Language Production**

Immediately following an experience students need to interact with each other to discuss the experience and what it meant to them.

**Step 3: Creating a Personal View Representation**

The teacher has the students draw or paint a picture about something interesting about the activity.

**Step 4: Retelling Events / Reactions**

A volunteer is selected to share his or her picture with the group.

**Step 5: Writing Students' Statements**

The teacher asks each student a question and records his / her answer, writing on the chalkboard exactly what the student says, using large manuscript letters. After writing each statement, the teacher reads it back to the group for confirmation. When four or five statements are on the board, the students decide their sequential ordering. The statements are then numbered and transferred to a sentence strip, and the students correctly arrange the strips on a chart holder.

**Step 6: Reading**

After the chart or individual statements have been completed, students read their statements to each other and to the teacher.

**Step 7: Writing**

As students develop writing skills, they copy the story into their notebooks or on lined paper.

**Step 8: Follow Up with Activities**

The story may be reread on several subsequent days either by the teacher, the students, or both. Students can also save the story with other language experience class stories to form their own class book for later reading.

**A6. Retelling a Story**

Storytelling is an important method for providing natural language experiences even during very early states of language acquisition. Stories should be highly predictable or familiar to the students from their native culture. They should be repetitive, making regular use of patterns. The story line should lend itself to dramatization and pantomime.

## **A7. Activating Prior Knowledge**

For material to be meaningful, it must be clearly related to existing knowledge that the learner already possesses (*Omaggio, 1993*). Teachers must plan activities in their instruction to provide the relevant context to activate students' knowledge on the topic discussed.

## **B. Visuals**

Teachers should use visual displays (i.e. graphs, charts, photos) in the lessons and assignments to support the oral or written message. Visual / graphic organizers should be used before presenting a reading passage. The provision of additional contextual information in the form of a visual should make the comprehension task easier (*Omaggio, 1993*).

### **B1. Flow Charts**

This graphic organizer strategy assists students in representing position, role and order relationships among group elements. Students draw a representation of a sequential flow of events, actions, character roles, and / or decisions. Based on the situation, the graphic frame for the flowchart can be student and / or teacher generated.

### **B2-5. Maps / Charts / Graphs / Pictures**

Visual aids that assist teachers in demonstrating relationships between words and concepts.

### **B6. Semantic Webbing / Mapping**

This strategy provides LEP students with a visual picture of how words or phrases connect to a concept or a topic. The instructor lists the target topic or concept, and builds a web-like structure (by circling and connecting the words) of words, phrases and verbs that students offer as being connected with the central topic. Class discussion may follow, with the instructor as the facilitator, to argue against or to defend the perceived relationships of the called out words to the topic, and eventually a consensus is reached as to what the class believes constitutes a "web" for that concept.

### **B7. T-Charts**

T-Charts are graphic organizers that compare / contrast two topics by dividing a page in half like a "T".

### **B8. Venn Diagrams**

Venn diagrams can be used to create a visual analysis of information that represents similarities and differences among concepts, peoples and things. This graphic organizer is constructed by using two or more overlapping geometrical figures (i.e.: circles, squares, rectangles) that share an

area in common. Students list the unique characteristics of each concept or object being compared in the area not being shared with any other figure, and those elements that are common to all in the common shared area.

### **B9. Story Maps**

Story maps are visual outlines to help students understand, recall, and connect key terms and ideas from a text. Story maps may be made individually or by the class as a whole.

### **B10. Timelines**

Timelines are graphic organizers that allow learners to organize sequential events chronologically, and also give meaningful practice in the past and present tenses.

### **B11. Computer / Software**

This involves the use of technology to promote Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL).

### **B12. Realia**

Bringing **realia** (authentic objects from a culture), or manipulatives to the classroom helps teachers in providing comprehensible input in a second language. Students should be allowed to touch, smell, and taste, if possible, prior to being exposed to the lesson, for optimal comprehensible input.

### **B13. Videos / Films/ CD-ROM**

Borrowing films and other audiovisual materials from school district media centers can help improve a language arts lesson. Audiovisuals also assist in illustrating ideas, reteaching a concept, or infusing content area concepts from other disciplines. It is always wise to preview the audiovisual materials before showing them to a class, screening them for possible language difficulties, misleading cultural information or controversial content.

### **B14. Demonstrations**

Demonstrations involve step-by-step sequential procedures presented to the class using realia; i.e. cooking lessons, arts and crafts lessons, etc.

### **B15. Captioning**

Captioning uses written materials and pictures to demonstrate main ideas or to summarize exercises. Captioning can involve students at different language levels.

Steps for using Captioning in the Classroom:

1. Explain what a caption is.
2. Have learners read information on handout you develop and distribute.
3. Distribute illustrations and have students arrange in order of written information.
4. Have each group caption the pictures, and read their captions to the class.

### **B16. Labeling**

Labeling items in the classrooms will assist LEP students in the identification of items and in relating them to written words.

### **B17-19. Music / Songs, Jazz Chants / Raps, Cassettes-Music / Books**

Language teachers frequently use music and chants in their classes. These activities are motivating for students and assist in reinforcing and revisiting content area concepts while acquiring English pronunciation and intonation patterns.

Jazz Chants are rhythmic expressions of standard English as it occurs in situations through the use of music or rap. Jazz chants improve intonation, vocabulary and grammar development.

### **B20. Language Master**

Auditory practice is obtained through the use of Language Master Cards to provide repetitive tasks that increase vocabulary and pronunciation skills.

## **C. Interactive Strategies**

### **C1-3. Peer Buddy / Small Group Activities / Pairs and Threes**

Small cooperative groups are used to provide home language assistance and opportunities to negotiate meaning in the development of second language communication skills in a non-threatening environment.

### **C4. Jigsaw**

This is a cooperative learning strategy in which everyone becomes an “expert” about a topic or sub-topic, and shares his or her learning within a group setting so that eventually all members learn the content.

To implement this strategy, the students are divided into groups; each group member is assigned a section or a part of the material selected for study. Each student meets with the members of other similar groups who have similar assignments, forming a new group. This new group learns together, becomes an expert on their assigned material, and then plans how to teach this material to members of their original groups.

Students later return to their original groups (whose members each now represent one of the different areas of the topic being studied) and teach their area of expertise to the other group members. In this manner, a topic or subject of great length can be covered and learned in a fraction of the usual time. LEP students can learn the material much more effectively since they also must become teachers of the content they have learned to the members of their original groups. Jigsaw offers many opportunities for language acquisition, practice, enrichment and reinforcement.

#### **C5. “Corners”**

This is also a cooperative learning strategy, designed to optimize the learning of the assigned task, and sharing that learning with other students. The teacher needs to assign small groups of students to different corners of the classroom. They discuss various solutions, perspectives and points of view concerning a pre-selected issue, and decide on a presentation format. Finally, small groups present to the class.

#### **C6. Think / Pair / Share**

This strategy is well suited to help students develop their own ideas as well as build on ideas that originated from co-learners. After reflecting on a topic, students form pairs and discuss, review, and revise their ideas, and eventually share them with the class.

#### **C7. Cooperative Learning (Group Reports / Projects)**

Cooperative Learning is a dynamic strategy through which students develop linguistic and academic skills simultaneously (*Calderon, 1988; Cohen, 1986; Green, 1991; Kagan, 1985*). In this highly successful strategy, LEP students work together in small intellectually and culturally mixed groups to achieve a common goal. The outcome of their work is both a reflection on how well the group functioned, and an academic assessment tool for the instructor.

#### **C8. Panel Discussions / Debate**

This is also a cooperative learning strategy in which students organize planned presentations, where each member of the group takes one of the possible topic viewpoints. The individual presentations may have oral, written or multimedia components. Students form teams to research, develop, and articulate their viewpoints. This strategy helps the students in developing the ability to organize information, to filter ideas and to draw conclusions.

#### **C9. Choral Reading / Read Around Groups (RAG)**

This is an activity designed to give students an opportunity to think, discuss, and write about topics related to what they have read.

Procedure:

1. After reading, teacher and students select a purpose and topic(s) for a short writing activity. Students participate in a pre-writing activity such as brainstorming, develop criteria for the written work, then free-write for about ten minutes on a topic related to the reading.
2. Students code their written work with numbers instead of using their own names.
3. Papers are collected by the teacher, and students are divided into groups of four or five and given the same number of coded papers.
4. Everyone in each group reads all the papers assigned to their group. This is done by reading for a short timed interval, and then passing the papers around the circle and repeating the process until all papers are read.
5. Each group votes on the one or two papers that meet the criteria best, and explains their choice.
6. The teacher tallies the results of the papers voted “best” on the chalkboard and students share their ideas about how and why these papers are most effective in achieving the given purpose, e.g., organization of information, use of descriptive terms, persuasiveness, effectiveness in making a point.

## D. Other Interactive Strategies

### D1. Field Trips

This strategy consists of a planned learning experience in the community for the student group to observe, study, and participate in a real-life setting, using the community as a laboratory. The instructor and the students plan and structure the experience by preparing beforehand for activities during the visit and then engage in follow-up activities after the trip.

### D2. K-W-L (Knows / Wants to Know / Learned)

An introductory or pre-activity strategy that provides a defined structure for recalling and stating; What the student knows regarding a concept or a topic; what the student wants to know, and finally lists what has been learned and / or what is yet to be learned. To use this strategy, the student lists all the information he / she knows or thinks he / she knows under the heading “What We Know”; then, the learner makes an inventory of “What We Want to Know”, categorizing the information about the topic the student expects to use.

### D3. Role Play

In describing learning strategies, *Dale (1990)* emphasizes that direct and purposeful experiences are best for all students, especially LEP learners. For example, students can demonstrate comprehension of a story by role-play through retelling, using realia, visuals, and props previously demonstrated by the instructor.

#### **D4. Games**

Allow LEP students to develop conversational skills in a non-threatening format. Games are motivating for students and assist in reinforcing classroom material.

#### **D5. Dialogue Journals**

A dialogue journal is a written conversation in which a student and the teacher communicate regularly and carry on a private conversation. Dialogue journals provide a communicative context for language and writing development since they are both functional and interactive (Peyton & Reed, 1990). Students write on topics of their choice and the teacher responds with advice, comments, observations, thus, serving as a participant, not an evaluator, in a written conversation. Dialogue journals can and should be used very early in the language learning process. Students can begin by writing a few words and combining them with pictures.

### **E. Modified Class-work (Based on Level of English Proficiency)**

#### **E1-18, 20, 22-25.**

Modifying class-work involves the use of a variety of adaptations or modifications that provide class-work appropriate to the language proficiency level of the LEP students, so that comprehensible instruction can occur. Modifying class-work allows for differences in student learning styles and cultural diversity factors.

#### **E-19. Directed Reading / Thinking Activity (DRTA)**

The teacher directs the students in activities to check their prior knowledge of the subject, set the purpose for reading, and become acquainted with new vocabulary and concepts. At this stage, the students may also predict the content. Students then read small sections silently, while keeping their predictions and purposes for reading in mind. They read critically. After reading, the students think about what they read. They revise predictions or prove them. Follow-up activities help students expand, summarize, and restate their ideas.

#### **E21. Survey, Question, Read, Recite, Review (SQ3R)**

This is a pre-reading activity that helps students focus on their topic, develop questions about that topic, and answer those questions based on the reading.

Procedure:

1. S-Survey-“preview”
2. Q-Question-Wh-words, such as: why, who, what, etc.
3. 3R-Read, Recite, Review

## **E26. Question-Answer Relationship (QAR)**

Teachers can use QAR when developing comprehension questions, helping students to identify different question types, and teaching text organization. The QAR classification is divided into four question types in two categories:

### *A. In the Book*

#### 1. Right there

The answer is in the text, usually easy to find. The words used to make up the question and words used to answer the question are Right There in the same sentence.

#### 2. Think and Search (Putting It Together)

The answer is in the text, but you need to put together different text parts to find it. Words for the question and words for the answer are not found in the same sentence. They come from different parts of the text.

### *B. In Your Head*

#### 1. Author and You

The answer is not in the text. You need to think about what you already know, what the author tells you in the text, and how it fits together.

#### 2. On Your Own

The answer is not in the text. You can answer the question without even reading the text. You need to use your own experience.

## **F. Multicultural Resources**

### **F1-4 Multicultural Resources**

These include community resources, local organizations and clubs (e.g. Hispanic Unity, Haitian-American, German-American, Italian-American Clubs, etc.)

Organize cultural sharing through ESOL Parent Advisory Council, international fairs, parents as cultural representatives, business liaisons, multicultural guest speakers, ethnic folk music presentation, and multicultural students as resources for academic classes. For samples of varied holiday activities see Multicultural Calendar.

## **G. Alternative Assessment Instruments**

### **G1. Interviews**

Interviews are an excellent strategy to allow the student to master the competencies necessary to gather information about a particular topic and report on it following predetermined format. This

is most effective when students are guided to pre-plan a set of questions, use those questions to create a format for the interview and finalize it with a presentation.

### **G2-3, 5-10.**

Portfolios, observations, interviews, checklists, etc. are used to accurately assess the progress of LEP students when they may not be ready to complete traditional reading and writing evaluations that require reading on grade level. They should be ongoing utilizing a variety of strategies and procedures to collect student work. (Also called authentic assessment).

### **G4. Close Procedures**

This is an open-ended strategy in which a selected work or phrase is eliminated from a sentence or paragraph, while the student is asked to complete the missing word. The Cloze concept has also been applied to second language oral development, in which the instructor proposes a series of incomplete oral statements, and the student “fills in” the missing information.

### **G11. Portfolios**

Portfolios use work samples chosen with specific criteria to evaluate student progress. Students compare their current effort to their previous work rather than to the work of other students.

## **Sources**

- Badia, Arnhilda. (1996). Language Arts through ESOL; A guide for ESOL Teacher and Administrators, Tallahassee: Florida Department of Education, Office of Multicultural Student Language Education.*
- Teaching Excellence and Cultural Harmony (TEACH) (1995). Training of Trainers-Sessions I-IV, Trainer's Manual. Tallahassee: Florida Department of Education.*