

# 50 Strategies

*for Teaching English Language Learners*

Adrienne Herrell  
Michael Jordan



sixth edition

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# 50

## Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners

SIXTH EDITION

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To Susan McCloskey for her years of dedicated teaching of English learners and  
for all the things we have learned by observing in her classroom.

AH & MJ

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# Preface

## New to This Edition

This sixth edition of *50 Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners* presents a major focus in identifying and teaching students at their language development level. With adoption of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS), educators across the United States are reflecting on exemplary practices and research in strategies for supporting intellectual and educational growth in students of all ages. Common Core does, however, present additional challenges for students who are in the process of acquiring English. In this edition, you will notice the following:

- **A new chapter** is included that addresses the choice and use of technology strategies based on the needs of your students.
- **Additional adaptation charts** have been provided for matching the teaching strategies to the language levels of your students
- **Additional teacher self-evaluation rubrics** are included throughout this new edition to support teachers in ensuring that they are fully implementing exemplary strategies. These rubrics also provide ideas for improving teacher implementations.

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# An Introduction to the Strategies

The 50 strategies included in this edition have been sequenced to represent their importance and complexity of implementation. The first 15 strategies are presented to support some very basic requirements in any classroom that contains English language learners (ELLs) or limited English experience students (LEEs). Limited English experience students are those whose first language is English but who have limited vocabularies and experiences engaging in social or academic English. In today's busy society the students we teach sometimes have not had the experiences or verbal interaction opportunities they might have had in times past (Trelease, 2013).

It is crucial that classrooms provide multiple opportunities for students to practice verbal interaction in both social and academic English (Goldenberg, 2008). It is also important for teachers to establish an accepting and supportive classroom environment. The strategies included in this edition provide multiple ways to accomplish these goals on a daily basis.

The cultures that students bring to the classroom have an effect on their learning as well. Some cultures stress sharing, and students find it difficult not to share answers, even in a testing situation. They don't necessarily think of sharing as "cheating." They just have been deeply acculturated to share everything. Some other cultural considerations are explored in the video links, which address additional areas that teachers must consider in order to teach the whole child.

A teacher's job in a culturally rich society presents many challenges. We offer the strategies in this edition to support teachers in providing an environment and learning community in which they and their students will thrive. All of the strategies have been field-tested in classrooms in several states and have received powerful feedback:

"These strategies WORK with both our ELLs and our English-only students."—Susan McCloskey, Fresno Unified School District

"Many of my English-only students have very limited vocabularies and all the students have greatly benefited from the strategies in this book."—Jennifer Bateman, Dahlonge, Georgia

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# Theoretical Overview

In this section of *50 Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners*, you are introduced to the **basic theory**, **principles**, and **assessment strategies** underlying the effective teaching of students who are in the process of acquiring English as a second language.

This section provides the research and **exemplary practices** on which the 50 teaching strategies are built. It is vital that teachers make good choices in their everyday **interactions** with students, particularly students for whom English is not their first language. To make good choices in the way they plan instruction, interact verbally, correct mistakes, and assess English language learners, teachers must understand how language is acquired.

Educators are encountering a growing number of **English language learners (ELLs)** in their classrooms. They have become the fastest growing segment of the population in public schools today, with more than 9 percent of students in schools in the United States attending public schools coming from a home where a language other than English is spoken as their first language. This is a growth of 32% compared to numbers a decade ago, while overall student enrollment only gained 4.9% (United States Department of Education, 2017). To add to the challenge, accountability requirements of the **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)**, **Race to the Top (RTT)**, and the **Common Core State Standards (CCSS)** include English learners in the legal requirements for assessment. Their scores are often required to be factored into the determination of whether a school is making **adequate yearly progress (AYP)**. All of these elements add to the critical need for teachers to find effective strategies for teaching all learners. To learn more about each of these federal initiatives, you might want to explore the following websites:

NCLB—[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No\\_Child\\_Left\\_Behind\\_Act](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_Child_Left_Behind_Act)

RTT—[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race\\_to\\_the\\_Top](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Race_to_the_Top)

CCSS—[en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common\\_Core\\_State\\_Standards\\_Initiative](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_Core_State_Standards_Initiative)

This sixth edition of *50 Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners* incorporates and blends both the Common Core and the National Standards for Teaching English Language Learners published by Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). While the Common Core focuses on a nationally consistent “shared set of standards” for English and language arts and mathematics, it initially made limited provisions for supporting academic language acquisition while simultaneously learning academic content. TESOL standards provide teachers with clear guidelines in supporting ELLs as they become more proficient in speaking, writing, and comprehending social and academic English. “TESOL’s *PREK–12 English Language Proficiency Standards* (ELPS, 2006) provide a resource to blend both the CCSS and the individual state standards so



that ELLs are prepared to meet the goals of college and career readiness” (TESOL, 2013). This ongoing quest for ways to build and maintain proficient bilingual students in schools can only be achieved with teachers who understand the value of good teaching. These are teachers who can teach the language of the content, differentiate instruction, and scaffold learning to produce academically successful students who stay in school and are given every opportunity to participate fully and equitably.

## Theoretical Overview

The research in language acquisition has been rich and productive during the past 25 years. Working together, linguists and educators have discovered effective ways to support students in their acquisition of new languages and content knowledge (Crawford & Krashen, 2007). It is vital that classroom teachers understand the implications of language acquisition research so they can provide the scaffolding and verbal interactions necessary for their students to be successful in the classroom.

## Language Acquisition Theory and the Classroom Teacher

For classroom teachers to make good decisions about instructional practices for English language learners, they must understand how students acquire English and how this acquisition differs from the way foreign languages have traditionally been taught in the United States (Collier, 1995). Many teachers have experienced classes in Spanish, French, or other languages in which they have practiced repetitive drills and translated long passages using English–French (or Spanish) dictionaries. While these approaches have been used to study languages for many years in the United States, it should be noted that linguists such as Jim Cummins and Stephen Krashen have been researching and offering new approaches to language acquisition.

**Seminal research** in language acquisition was conducted in the 1980s and has been built upon continuously since that time. In his 1982 study of language acquisition, Krashen makes a distinction between language acquisition and language learning that is vital to the support of students’ gradual acquisition of fluency in a new language. He states that **language acquisition** is a natural thing. Young children acquire their home language easily without formal teaching. However, teachers must also keep in mind other factors such as gender, ethnicity, and the learner’s immigrant or “non-native” status, and how these affect language learning (Canagarajah, 2006). Language acquisition is gradual, based on receiving and understanding messages, building a listening (receptive) vocabulary, and slowly attempting verbal production of the language in a highly supportive, nonstressful setting. It is exactly these same conditions that foster the acquisition of a second language. The teacher is responsible for providing the understandable language—**comprehensible input**—along with whatever supports are necessary for the students

to internalize the messages. To explore the importance of comprehensible input and the role the teacher plays in making language understandable, view this video and think about ways you, as a teacher, can provide instruction that is comprehensible. Ask yourself:

- How is planning important in providing comprehensible input?
- What habits do teachers need to develop in order to be more understandable?

Using approaches and materials that add context to the language—props, gestures, pictures—contributes to the child’s language acquisition and eventually to the production of the new language. Recent trends in language acquisition support in the classroom rely heavily on

- using assessment of the learner's needs,
- present level of functioning, and
- individual motivation to acquire the target language in structuring the teaching methods to be employed (Canagarajah, 2006).

Krashen and Terrell (1983), even in their earliest research, stressed the need for English language learners to be allowed to move into verbal production of the new language at a comfortable rate. Students must hear and understand messages in the target language and build a listening vocabulary before being expected to produce spoken language. This does not mean that the English language learners should be uninvolved in classroom activities but that the activities should be structured so that they can participate at a comfortable level. Questions asked of them should be answerable at first with gestures, nods, or other physical responses. This language acquisition stage is called the silent or **preproduction period**, and it is a vital start to language acquisition. The subsequent stages and implications for teaching and learning are explained in Chapter 15, *Leveled Questions*. For a description of the language development stages, see Figure TO.1.

It is important to recognize that levels of language proficiency are dynamic; that is, they change as students grow and learn. TESOL has adopted a slightly different description of the levels of language proficiency that accounts for the changes that take place as students make progress in acquiring English proficiency and emphasizes the ongoing changes that take place. TESOL's descriptors are organized into five levels: starting, emerging, developing, expanding, and bridging. Figure TO.2 shows the levels and their characteristics.

Researchers around the world have explored approaches to teaching language. German researcher Leo van Lier insists that the most important aspect of effective teaching is understanding the learner. He ascribes to Vygotsky's theory (1962) that teaching and assessing in the child's **zone of proximal development (ZPD)** is vital, as is the role of verbal interaction. The "AAA curriculum" (van Lier, 1996) is based on three foundational principles: awareness, autonomy, and authenticity. In the area of awareness, van Lier sees focusing attention and the role of perception as vital for teachers and learners. Both students and teachers must (1) know what they are doing and why, (2) be consciously engaged, and (3) reflect on the learning process. Autonomy involves **self-regulation, motivation, and deep processing**, all of which include taking responsibility, being accountable, and having free choice in learning activities. Van Lier believes that all these

**FIGURE TO.1** Stages of Language Development

**Preproduction (also known as the silent period) Characteristics:**

- Communicates with gestures, actions, and formulaic speech
- Often still in silent period
- Is building receptive vocabulary

**Early Production Characteristics:**

- Can say, "I don't understand."
- Can label and categorize information

**Speech Emergence Characteristics:**

- Uses language purposefully
- Can produce complete sentence

**Intermediate Fluency Characteristics:**

- Can produce connected narrative
- Can use reading and writing within the context of a lesson
- Can write answers to higher-level questions
- Can resolve conflicts verbally

**FIGURE TO.2** Performance Definitions of the Five Levels of English Language Proficiency

English language learners can understand and use . . .

Level 1 Starting	Level 2 Emerging	Level 3 Developing	Level 4 Expanding	Level 5 Bridging
. . . language to communicate with others around basic concrete needs.	. . . language to draw on simple and routine experiences to communicate with others.	. . . language to communicate with others on familiar matters regularly encountered.	. . . language in both concrete and abstract situations and apply language to new experiences.	. . . a wide range of longer oral and written texts and recognize implicit meaning.
. . . high-frequency words and memorized chunks of language.	. . . high-frequency and some general academic vocabulary and expressions.	. . . general and some specialized academic vocabulary and expressions.	. . . specialized and some technical academic vocabulary and expressions.	. . . technical academic vocabulary and expressions.
. . . words, phrases, or chunks of language.	. . . phrases or short sentences in oral or written communication.	. . . expanded sentences in oral or written communication.	. . . a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral and written communication.	. . . a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in extended oral or written discourse.
. . . pictorial, graphic, or nonverbal representation of language.	. . . oral or written language, making errors that may impede the communication.	. . . oral or written language, making errors that may impede the communication, but retain much of its meaning.	. . . oral or written language, making minimal errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication.	. . . oral or written language approaching comparability to that of English-proficient peers.

Source: From PreK–12 English Language Proficiency Standards, 2006, TESOL. Copyright 2006 by the Teachers of English to Students of Other Languages. Used with permission.

principles apply to both learners and teachers, and he encourages teachers to provide opportunities for autonomy for the students as teachers make curriculum choices that address the needs of individuals. This is in direct opposition to packaged curricula that require all students to move through the activities in the same manner and pace.

The third principle of van Lier's approach is authenticity. He defines **authenticity** as teaching and learning language as it is used in life, being relevant, and basing all learning activities on true communication. All the aspects of authenticity involve a commitment to learning, integrity, and respect on the part of both learner and teacher. Hart and Risley (2003) concur with van Lier. They found that a child's experience with language mattered more than **socioeconomic status**, race, or anything else they measured.

The role of practice in language learning is addressed by van Lier in his principles. He identifies two aspects of practice that must be considered: focus and control. Although he agrees that learning a language requires lessons that focus on various aspects of the language, he believes that activities such as guided dialogues, role takings, and simulations are not so narrowly focused. They require language learners to problem-solve and choose their own words instead of simply parroting standard responses.

A summary of van Lier's thoughts on language activities and specifically language practice includes the following five points:

1. Quality of exposure and interactions is more important than quantity. Thoughtfully designed activities that engage students and encourage authentic language participation are more valuable than numerous, repetitive parroting exercises.
2. The quality of the interaction is determined by a student's access. The comprehensibility of the activity, the context in which it takes place, the student's familiarity with the topic and the others engaged, and the student's self-confidence are all factors that make an activity work to advance language understanding.
3. Students must be receptive to participation in activities. In order for this to take place, students must feel that they can be successful and will receive support if needed.
4. In order for the language activities to become a part of a student's language **repertoire**, the student must process the material both cognitively and socially.
5. In order for new learning to be remembered and accessible, various forms of practice, including rehearsal, may be necessary (van Lier, 1996).

The principles noted by van Lier have an important impact on the types of activities we plan for our language learners. Keep in mind his emphasis on considering students' interests, personalities, and motivation; actively engaging students; and assuring students that they will be supported as they participate.

The role of the classroom environment in supporting children's language acquisition cannot be ignored. Meaningful exposure to language is not enough. Students need many opportunities for language interaction. Swain and Lapkin (1997) propose that a classroom where children work together to solve problems and produce projects supports their language development in several ways. It gives them authentic reasons to communicate and support in refining their language production. It also helps students understand that their verbal communication is not always understood by others. This realization helps to move children from **receptive, semantic processing** (listening to understand) to **expressive, syntactic processing** (formation of words and sentences to communicate). If children are simply left to listen and observe without the opportunity or necessity to communicate they remain in the **preproductive stage** for an extended period of time. The structure of **communicative classroom activities**, those that necessitate communication and verbal interaction, prevents this from happening. As far back as 1991, a shift in classroom structures for English learners was under way (Brown, 1991). The shift includes a number of areas as illustrated by the following:

**We are moving from:**

A focus on product  
Teacher-controlled classrooms  
Preplanned, rigid curricula  
Measuring only performance  
Praising correct answers

**and shifting to:**

a focus on process  
student-involved classrooms  
flexible, open-ended curricula  
gauging competence and potential  
building on approximations

Source: Adapted from Brown (1991).

The values underlying these shifts are clear. "Teaching practices that are **process-oriented, autonomous, and experiential** are considered empowering. The shift from the previous product-oriented and teacher-fronted **pedagogies** certainly reduced passivity of students and encouraged greater involvement" (Canagarajah, 2006; Zhang, Munawar, Nui, Anderson, 2016).

In addition to the shift in teaching focus in the 1990s, the focus of the Common Core standards added another challenge to teachers and students alike. Teachers implementing Common Core are expected to raise **student interactions** to include requiring that students explain the processes they use to obtain answers in mathematics as well as strategies they use in solving problems or reading for understanding. This change in requirements provides an additional challenge to both teachers

and ELLs. Standards provide a tool for identifying the language as well as the content that ELLs are expected to achieve. **English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS)** act as a starting point for identifying the language that ELLs must develop to access and negotiate **content** successfully. They provide the bridge to the **content-area standards** expected of all students (Fenner & Segota, 2012).

## Current Research Related to Teaching Reading to English Language Learners

It is widely recognized that limited language proficiency hampers reading development in English (August & Shanahan, 2006). Reading proficiency is central to student learning in all content areas and, because of this, has generated a large number of research studies in recent years (Brown, 2007). In 2012, the Educational Testing Service published an extensive review of literature concerned with teaching reading to English language learners (Turkan, Bicknell, & Croft, 2012). This report identifies successful strategies for teachers who want to become effective teachers of English language learners and groups the approaches into three areas of importance for ELLs:

1. Teachers should recognize that literacy skills in the ELLs' native languages might influence their processing of linguistic information in English.
2. Teachers should facilitate active learning of academic vocabulary and the linking of new vocabulary to everyday experiences.
3. Teachers should be able to guide ELLs with metacognitive reading strategies that help them monitor and repair comprehension problems.

### Literacy Skills in the First Language

Although it is widely recognized that students who already know how to read in their first language have an advantage in learning to read English, there are some ways that reading knowledge in one language may interfere with comprehension in English, or any second language. Several studies found that phonological awareness in Spanish supported the growth of phonological awareness in English (Leafstedt, Richards, & Gerber, 2004; Lindsey, Manis, & Bailey, 2003). There has been some attention to the possible interference caused by false cognates in English. Cognates are words in English that sound similar to Spanish words. False cognates are words that are similar in spelling in both languages but have different meanings in English (Durgunoglu, 2002). This becomes problematic when teachers have limited or no knowledge of the students' first languages. There are resources available to teachers, however. In *Learner English*, Swan and Smith (2001) examine the types of interference students of various languages encounter when they are in the process of acquiring English. By identifying the differences between various languages and English, the book helps teachers pinpoint difficulties in reading, writing, and speaking that may be due to the interference of rules and formats from a student's first language (see Chapter 24, Cognate Strategies). There are also lists of cognates and false cognates available online that provide teachers with knowledge of when to draw on students' cognate knowledge and when to warn them of false cognates. Several good lists of cognates and non-cognates are available online.

### Vocabulary Instruction

Calderon (2007) highlighted the importance of teachers understanding the levels of lexical challenge presented by different English words. Based on the work of Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2002), Calderon suggests that teachers distinguish words as belonging to one of three tiers:

Tier one words are common, everyday words in English that are probably understood in the students' first language. These words can often be taught by providing a visual or referring to a word in the students' first language.

Tier two words are more academic words that are used across disciplines. Many of these words are prepositions and conjunctions that are used across all content areas, for example: *so*, *at*, *into*, *within*, *by*, *if*, and *then*. Understanding the relationship implied by



these words supports the students' comprehension of academic language. Without this understanding, comprehension of tier three vocabulary becomes more challenging.

Tier three words are infrequently used words that may be content-specific. These words often have cognate words in the students' first language.

Townsend and Collins (2009) drew on the findings of an intervention study to suggest that teachers provide multiple exposures to target words in multiple texts so students have many opportunities to use words in meaningful contexts (see Chapter 7, Collecting and Processing Words and Chapter 6, Vocabulary Role-Play).

Calderon (2007) and Herrera, Perez, and Escamilla (2010) suggest several additional instructional approaches. Teachers should:

- preteach vocabulary including contextualization to support the text to be read;
- differentiate their vocabulary instruction based on students' language development level;
- choose words from the correct tier to enable students to comprehend;
- use graphic organizers to support vocabulary understanding (see Chapter 30, Graphic Organizers);
- make vocabulary collections (see Chapter 7, Collecting and Processing Words);
- incorporate oral activities to give students practice in using the new vocabulary (see Chapter 19, Verb Action); and
- provide multiple opportunities to use the new vocabulary in several contexts during the school day.

Several researchers have focused on the importance of contextualizing vocabulary. McIntyre, Kyle, and Chen (2008) found that the connections made between new vocabulary and students' past experiences are vital in supporting the students' retention and use of the vocabulary, both orally and in writing. The research done by McIntyre et al. (2008) and Marzano and Pickering (2006) also found that repeated practice with new vocabulary serves a vital role in the retention and use of words. Other recommendations include:

- using Total Physical Response with beginning-level ELLs (see Chapter 2, Total Physical Response), and
- acting out word meanings (see Chapter 6, Vocabulary Role-Play) .

Rieg and Parquette (2009) present the idea that ELLs' comprehension of vocabulary and text is enhanced through music, drama, and reader's theater activities (see Chapter 12, Repeated Readings). Porter (2009) suggests several strategies:

- using adapted texts or abridged versions of texts;
- reading summaries of text before reading the actual text; and
- using visual aids such as maps of character relationships, student-produced storyboards, and student illustrations depicting characters or scenes in the text.

Zhang et al (2016) present an approach to conducting discussion groups focused on interactions among students after reading a common text. The teacher's questioning provided support for both students' involvement in the group and their deeper understanding of the text.

Focusing on text "structure" is identified by Dreher and Grey (2010) as a vital part of supporting ELLs in comprehending text. Very often ELLs are not familiar with sentence structures such as *compare* and *contrast*. Providing direct instruction in comprehending sentence structure as well as specific vocabulary connected with varying sentence structure supports both vocabulary and comprehension development. Terms such as *unlike*, *similar to*, *compared to*, and *resembles* require identification, definition, and practice in use. Combining reading and writing instruction by discussing, identifying, and then writing sentence structures like compare-and-contrast statements supports student understanding and presents an opportunity to assess student achievement in an authentic way.

Several researchers (Cummins, 2003; Shanahan & Beck, 2006) have noted that teachers should emphasize vocabulary but also emphasize comprehension. Research supports the use of a reading instruction approach that balances an emphasis on word recognition with the teaching of high-level reading strategies. This is also emphasized in the Common Core, where much attention is

paid to high-level comprehension skills such as recognizing motivation in characters and the way in which word choice changes the nuances of meaning. These types of reading strategies require that students use self-monitoring or metacognition skills.

### Improving Metacognition Skills

Herrera et al. (2010), p. 142) define metacognition skills as the “ability to think about [one’s] own thinking.” Proficient readers are able to monitor their own understanding of text, identify problems when they are not comprehending, and find resources to build their understanding (e.g., bilingual dictionaries, reading strategies, and asking clarifying questions). Other exemplary practices for ELLs identified in the research include:

- teaching students to verbalize their thought processes while reading (Herrera et al., 2010; Vacca & Vacca, 2008);
- teaching students to use think-aloud strategies combined with (1) making predictions, (2) developing images from the text as it is being read, (3) linking to information to past knowledge or experience, and (4) demonstrating strategies they employ to explain how they got their information (Vacca & Vacca, 2008);
- providing explicit instruction in strategies such as questioning, making inferences, monitoring, summarizing, visualizing, and identifying main ideas (Mokhtari & Sheorey, 2002; Taboada, 2010); and
- explicitly modeling strategies and ensuring that students have repeated **guided practice** in using them.

### Supporting English Language Learners in Constructing Meaning

Making meaning is defined by Ajayi (2008) as “a process by which learners gain critical consciousness of the interpretation of events in their lives in relation to the world around them” (p. 211). This concept stresses that meaning is created by individual learners, and that they construct meaning after reading a story or watching a video while being influenced by their own social, cultural, and historical experiences.

The role of the teacher is important in supporting students in building on their background knowledge and cultural experiences (Herrera et al., 2010). Successful strategies found for facilitating students’ abilities to integrate past knowledge and experience with understanding of texts being read include:

- using literature logs to encourage students to think about the meanings of words, ideas, and themes in text (see Chapter 7, Collecting and Processing Words);
- promoting students’ extended verbal and written interactions by *working the text*—reading it, rereading it, discussing it, and writing about it (see Chapter 11, Close Reading);
- using literature circles to support students’ in making text-to-self, text-to-text, and text-to-world connections (Farris et al., 2007); and
- using multiple modalities to communicate meaning by providing pictures, songs, textbooks, narratives, spoken and written words, gestures, films, or videos that support understanding (Ajayi, 2008; see Chapter 4, Visual Scaffolding).

Many researchers (Krashen, 1982; Krashen & Terrell, 1983; McLaughlin, 1990) have studied the role of emotions in the acquisition of language. Krashen calls the effect of emotions on learning the **affective filter**. When a learner is placed in a stressful situation in which language production or performance is demanded, the student’s ability to learn or produce spoken language may be impaired. This underscores the responsibility of the teachers to provide a supportive classroom environment in which students can participate at a comfortable level without having to worry about being embarrassed or placed in a situation where they will be made to feel incompetent. Krashen’s affective filter hypothesis stresses that for a student to learn effectively, the student’s motivation and self-esteem must be supported while anxiety is diminished. This provides an opportunity for the English language learner to take in information, process vocabulary, and eventually produce language because stress levels are lowered and the affective filter is not interfering with thinking and learning.

## Motivation and Competition as they relate to English Language Learners

Motivation is generally recognized as a key factor in language learning. In first language learning, the basic need to communicate wants and desires is highly motivational. Ushioda (2013) asserts that motivation is a key factor in second language learning, as well. Because of this factor, teachers must recognize that their ability to motivate is extremely important to their teaching effectiveness. A major factor in students' development of autonomy is the teacher's ability to support them in acquiring techniques that support their learning success through individual effort and the use of strategies and self-regulation methods (Kormos & Csizer, 2013).

Competition is a motivational approach used in many classrooms. Its success has been shown to be dependent upon students' confidence and perception of themselves as learners.

Two types of competition are typically used in the classroom: self and social. In self-competition, students try to achieve personal bests by improving their performance and tracking their progress. The teacher helps by setting up a record-keeping system and consistently celebrating student achievements. Self-competition is seen as a more positive approach with English Language Learners until their abilities to communicate in English become more closely aligned to their peers (Zhi-Hong, 2014).

An alternate approach used by some teachers allows the use of both systems at the same time. The idea is to have some students track their own personal achievements while others compete and compare with one another. For example, if teams are doing math problems on the board, self-competitors do the same problems at their seats and keep track of their own successes. That way everyone gets the practice, some individual and some social. This allows students who are motivated by team competition the enjoyment of "comparing" while others can choose to compete solely with themselves. Self-competitors should be encouraged to keep track of their growth in a small notebook in much the same way that athletes keep track of their "personal bests".

## Language Demands on the Student

Jim Cummins's research (2000) contributes to the understanding of language acquisition and effective classroom practice in several ways. First, Cummins differentiates between social language, called **basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS)**, and **academic language**, called **cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)**. Though students may acquire BICS and be able to communicate in English while on the playground or when asking and answering simple questions, this is not the same thing as having the level of language proficiency necessary to benefit fully from academic English instruction without additional support. As you watch this video in which Dr. Cummins explains his theories, think about the following questions:

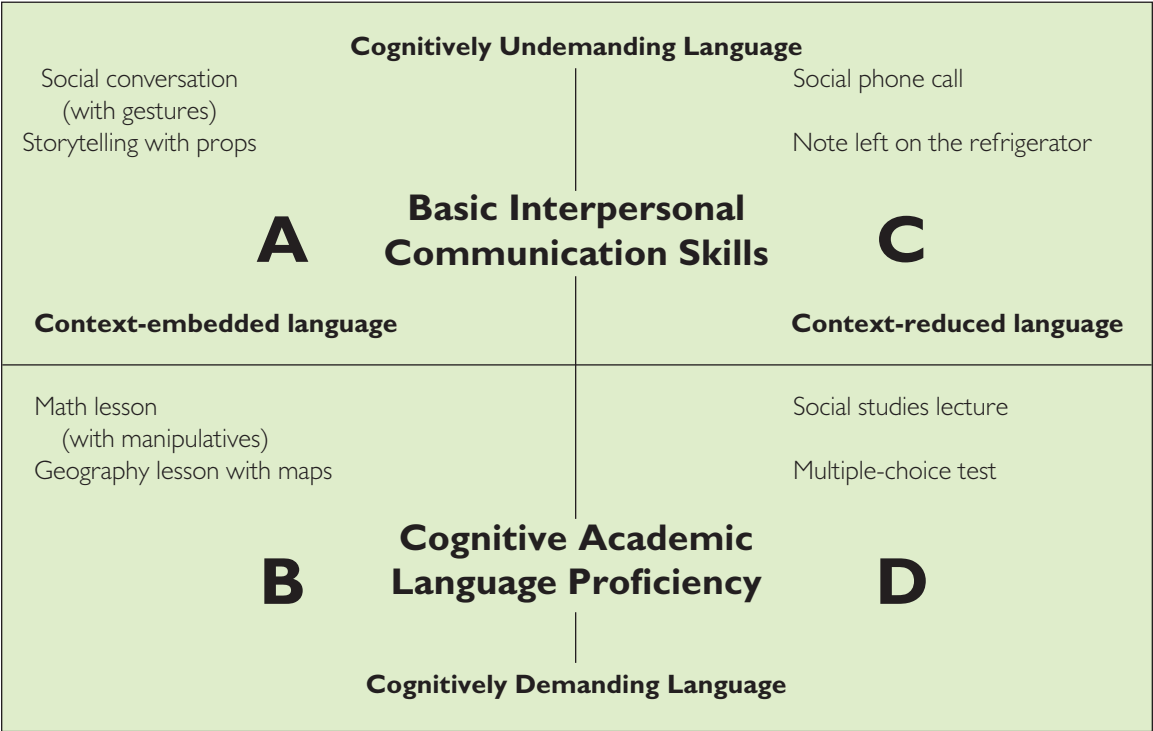
- What indicators of a student's acquisition of BICS would a teacher be able to observe?
- How would indicators of CALP differ from those of BICS?

Cummins's theory of the differences between social and academic language has been criticized, especially by proponents of the whole language approach. Although Cummins responds to these criticisms in his book *Language, Power, and Pedagogy* (2000), he still maintains that, although social and academic language are not mutually exclusive, differences between the two are real. He also maintains that instruction in academic language does not have to be reduced to "drill and kill." One of the criticisms of his theory is based on the definition of academic language as "decontextualized." One of the important approaches to teaching academics to English learners is the use of **visuals**, manipulatives, and **multiple examples** to provide **context** and promote understanding. Cummins also emphasizes the power of academic language in promoting success for English learners, both in school and in life (Cummins, 2000).

Cummins helps us understand what must be added to instruction to make it comprehensible to students. He identifies two **dimensions of language**: its **cognitive demand** and its **context embeddedness**. Using a **quadrant matrix**, Cummins (1996) demonstrates how the addition of context supports students' understanding of all verbal communication and is vital with more

**FIGURE TO.3** Cummins’s Quadrant Demonstrating the Dimensions of Language

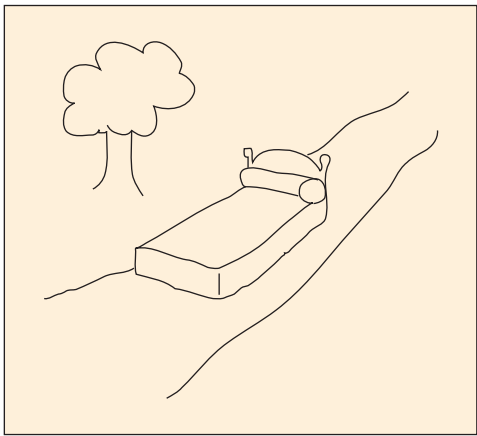
Source: Adapted from “Primary Language Instruction and the Education of Language Minority Students” (p. 10), by J. Cummins, 1996, *Schooling and Language Minority Students: A Theoretical Framework*, 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: Evaluation, Dissemination, and Assessment Center, School of Education, California State University, Los Angeles. Copyright 1996 by Charles F. Leyba, Reprinted with permission.



cognitively demanding language such as the language of content instruction in the classroom. Figure TO.3 points out the interaction of these linguistic elements.

By examining Cummins’s quadrant, teachers can see that even social language is made more understandable by the addition of context. Directions given orally with gestures are more easily understood than the same words spoken over the telephone without the aid of gestures. This becomes even more important in the classroom, where teachers use academic terms that may be unfamiliar to the English language learner or use them in a way that might be different from the customary social meaning. Figure TO.4 demonstrates this possible confusion with one English language learner’s illustration of a riverbed in response to a geography lesson. The student’s understanding of the word *bed* was linked to his prior knowledge of the word and did not support his understanding of the term when used to describe a geographic feature.

**FIGURE TO.4** An English Language Learner’s Concept of a Riverbed



## The Underlying Theory Base of Instruction for English Language Learners

In recent years, the research base addressing effective teaching strategies for English learners has grown as more teachers experience the need

to prepare themselves to better serve this population. Basic techniques to support English learners in the classroom have been employed widely. These techniques include such things as slower speech, clear enunciation, use of visuals and demonstrations, vocabulary development, making connections to student experiences, and the use of supplementary materials (Genesee, 1999).

With the initial publication of *50 Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners* (Herrell, 1999) and *Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners: The SIOP Model* (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2000), teachers have concrete strategies for effectively supporting the learning of English learners in their classrooms. These resources provide strategies that support the progress of English learners in the classroom and include such vital components as:

- planning language objectives for lessons in all curricular areas;
- building academic vocabulary development into all lessons;
- building and activating background knowledge;
- providing opportunities for extended academic English interaction;
- integrating vocabulary and concept review throughout lessons; and
- providing both modeling and feedback related to language usage in both speech and writing (Short & Echevarria, 2004/2005).

Strategies are defined in this book as approaches that can be used across curricular areas to support the learning of students. The strategies described in this book are based on the theories of the linguists described in this introductory section. The goals of the strategies are to enhance learning. To provide this enhancement, one or more of the underlying premises of effective instruction of English language learners are emphasized in each of the strategies. These five premises are as follows:

1. Teachers should provide instruction in a way that ensures students are given *comprehensible input* (material presented in a manner that leads to a student's understanding of the content, i.e., visual, manipulative, scaffolded in the child's first language [L1], etc.).
2. Teachers should provide opportunities to increase verbal interaction in classroom activities.
3. Teachers should provide instruction that contextualizes language as much as possible.
4. Teachers should use teaching strategies and grouping techniques that reduce the anxiety of students as much as possible.
5. Teachers should provide activities in the classroom that offer opportunities for active involvement of the students.

According to Díaz-Rico and Weed (2002) and Ovando, Collier, and Combs (2003), teachers who consistently use scaffolding strategies (contextual supports, simplified language, teacher modeling, visuals and graphics, and cooperative and hands-on learning) to help English learners organize their thoughts in English, develop study skills, and follow classroom procedures, support their students in making significant gains in knowledge of both academic English and curriculum content.

As teaching strategies like the scaffolding strategies previously listed are explained in the following chapters, the reader will be reminded of the national TESOL standards by means of a feature at the end of each chapter entitled "Examples of Approximation Behaviors Related to the TESOL Standards." They connect the strategy to the reasons for its appropriateness to English language learners. Strategies are related to the goals deemed by TESOL to be important in supporting students who are acquiring English. Making the connection between the TESOL goals and the students' levels of English development enables teachers to select activities that best suit the needs of their learners. The strategies in this book are not meant to be used in isolation. By combining strategies, teachers can plan innovative lessons that will motivate students to learn. The examples that are included in each chapter demonstrate ways the strategies can be combined and used effectively.



## The Role of Assessment in Teaching English Language Learners

Students who are in the process of acquiring English often have difficulty expressing themselves in conveying their understanding of the content they are learning. Beginning English learners often understand much more than they are able to express. Their receptive English grows at a much faster rate than their expressive English. For this reason, teachers must create a variety of ways for English learners to demonstrate their understanding. It is important that teachers provide ways of documenting the learning of ELLs so that appropriate lessons can be planned. It is also vital that English learners be able to show that they are learning and be included in classroom interactions. Assessment strategies are included as part of this theoretical overview because teachers will need to adjust their teaching strategies on the basis of their knowledge of students' growing competencies. Because assessment can be extremely language-based, requiring exact vocabulary to read and answer questions, assessment strategies must be adjusted to find out how well students understand the concepts being taught. Less formal assessment also provides an opportunity for teachers to learn more about their learners' understanding of English vocabulary and use of sentence structure.

Assessment strategies appropriate for English learners include the use of observation and anecdotal records by the classroom teacher and paraprofessionals (watching and documenting the students' reactions and responses, as well as documenting their growth). In addition, performance sampling, in which students complete certain tasks while teachers observe and document their responses, are very effective in monitoring and documenting growth. The third assessment strategy, portfolio assessment, is a way to maintain records of observations, performance sampling, and ongoing growth. These three assessment strategies, when combined, provide a rich store of information about English learners that give a more complete picture of their individual growth and learning development.

## Anecdotal Records

Anecdotal records (Rhodes & Nathenson-Mejia, 1993) are a form of assessment that allows teachers to document the growth and accomplishments of students. Anecdotal records are based on a teacher's observations of students as they engage in classroom activities. This form of assessment and documentation is especially appropriate for English language learners because the teacher can ask questions of students, record language samples, and note ways in which students demonstrate understanding (Genishi & Dyson, 1984).

Teachers are free to discuss observations with students and celebrate the growth that is documented. This encourages and motivates students and may even serve to lower classroom anxiety, thereby increasing participation and learning (Garcia, 1994). An anecdotal record always includes the student's name, the date of the observation, and a narrative of what was seen and heard by the teacher. It is not intended to be a summary of behavior but instead a record of one incident or anecdote observed by the teacher. Such things as quotes, descriptions of interactions with other students or teachers, and demonstrations of knowledge through the use of manipulatives or learning centers are easily documented through these narratives. If anecdotal records are taken regularly and placed in sequential order, they provide a good indication of a student's progress and a basis for instructional planning. A sample of an anecdotal record of a first-grade child working at the writing center is shown in Figure TO.5.

**FIGURE TO.5** Anecdotal Record for an English Language Learner

<b>Maria</b>	<b>4/15</b>	<b>Writing Center with Dolores</b>
<p>Maria and Dolores are sitting at the writing center looking at labeled pictures of birds. On the table is a collection of books about birds. The students are to write one page for a book about birds they are compiling this week.</p> <p>"What this word?" Maria asks Dolores, pointing to the word <i>eagle</i>. Dolores answers "eagle." Maria: "That a pretty bird. I write about eagle." She writes, "Eagle is a prty brd." and draws a very detailed picture of the eagle. The teacher asks her why she thinks the eagle is pretty. Maria says, "Eagle have shiny feathers." The teacher asks if she can write that. Maria smiles, and says, "I try." She writes, "Eagle hv shne fethrs."</p>		

## Step-by-Step

The steps in implementing anecdotal records are the following:

- **Decide on a system**—Decide what system you will use for keeping anecdotal records. They can be kept on index cards, in a notebook, on peel-off mailing labels (later transferred in sequence to an anecdotal record form), or in any format that helps keep track of student progress.
- **Choose what to document and schedule**—Decide what you want to document and make a schedule for observing the students. A sample schedule allowing a teacher to observe a class of 20 students—4 per day—in four areas a month is shown in Figure TO.6.
- **Conference and set goals**—Set up a conference schedule and discuss your observations with the students and/or parents. This is also a good time to discuss language development and the setting of language and content-area goals.
- **Use records for planning**—Use the records to plan appropriate lessons for your students or to focus on language acquisition goals and progress. See the "Language Framework Planning" section in Chapter 34 for an example of how this could be done.

**FIGURE TO.6** Schedule for Conducting Observations for Anecdotal Records

Focus Area	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Writing Center	Ana Blia Carol Helen	Dan Irana Maria Susana	Jose Earl Patrick Wally	Luis Rosa Tomas Franco	Gina Karen Ned Pablo
Literature Circles					
Writing Conference					
Guided Reading					

## Performance Sampling

Performance sampling is a form of authentic assessment in which students are observed in the process of accomplishing academic tasks and evaluated on how the tasks are done. The word *authentic* indicates that the tasks students are asked to do are similar or identical to actual tasks that students routinely accomplish in the classroom setting, unlike more traditional forms of assessment, which tend to be unlike everyday classroom activities.

Performance samples are well named because the teacher observes a sample of the student's performance in a given academic task. Examples of the types of tasks used in performance sampling are the following:

- working a mathematics problem that involves reading the problem, setting up an approach to finding a solution, and finding a reasonable solution;
- responding to a writing prompt by webbing a short piece of writing, writing a draft of a written piece, working with a peer to elicit feedback on the draft, revising the piece, and working with a peer to edit the piece for mechanics and spelling; and
- researching a topic in social studies and documenting the information gained by completing a data chart.

Performance samples are documented in several ways. The teacher might write an anecdotal record of the observation. The teacher might design a scoring **rubric** and evaluate the student's performance on the rubric as seen in Figure TO.7. Figure TO.8 shows a teacher's checklist for evaluating student performance.

**FIGURE TO.7** Example of a Scoring Rubric for Performance Sampling

<b>5 Exemplary Performance</b>
The student:
planned the task in an outstanding way
followed the plan to achieve a high-level product
proofread and corrected all errors
produced a unique product
<b>4 Strong Performance</b>
The student:
planned the task
followed the plan to complete the product
proofread and corrected the majority of errors
produced a good product
<b>3 Acceptable Performance</b>
The student:
performed the task to an acceptable end
corrected some errors
showed some understanding of what was required
<b>2 Weak Performance</b>
The student:
showed some confusion about what was expected
left out some important steps in the process or didn't finish the task completely
failed to correct errors
<b>1 Very Weak Performance</b>
The student:
showed only minimal understanding of the task
completed a very small portion of the task
<b>0 No Performance</b>
The student failed to complete the task

**FIGURE TO.8** Example of a Checklist for the Assessment of Performance Sampling

- |       |  |
|-------|--|
| _____ | The student read the problem.  |
| _____ | The student made an attempt to find a solution to the problem.                           |
| _____ | The student demonstrated planning to devise a solution.                                  |
| _____ | The student followed the plan created.   |
| _____ | The student found a solution to the problem.   |
| _____ | The student found multiple solutions to the problem.                                     |
| _____ | The student evaluated the solutions found and recognized the most unique or viable one.  |
| _____ | The student was able to communicate viable reasons for his/her choice of solutions.      |
| _____ | The student was able to explain the methods used in finding the solution to the problem. |

Note: Dates should be included.

Performance sampling is a particularly appropriate form of assessment for English language learners because their approach to academic tasks is observed and documented and their assessment is based on their ability to perform the task rather than their fluency in English, which is sometimes the case in more traditional forms of assessment (Hernandez, 1997).

## Step-by-Step

The steps in performance sampling are the following:

- **Choose an assessment task**—Decide on the academic area to be assessed and choose a task for the students to perform that will demonstrate their understanding of the content that has been studied. Design an observation instrument such as a rubric or **checklist** (Figures TO.7 and TO.8) or structure an anecdotal record that will itemize the abilities documented by the student.
- **Set up a schedule**—Set up a schedule so that you can observe all the students within a reasonable amount of time.
- **Design the task**—Gather materials and set up the task so that you can observe the students and document their performance. Plan an assignment for the rest of the class to do so that you will be able to observe without interruption.
- **Observe and give feedback**—Observe the students, complete the observation instrument, and give them feedback on their performances.

## Making Classroom Assessments Comprehensible to English Language Learners

Writing equitable classroom assessments for maximum success without watering down the content requires following some guidelines (Siegal, Wissehr, & Halverson, 2008). In order for test questions to be comprehensible to English learners, several considerations must be employed.

- The learning, instructional goals, and assessment questions must match.
- The conceptual and scientific goals should be assessed.
- The language demands of the lesson and the assessment must match.
- Make assessments linguistically and culturally comprehensible by using shorter sentences, bulleting ideas, and adding visuals.

## Language Development Profiles

Language development profiles are a form of rubric based on language acquisition stages. Typical language usage and structures are listed along with the language development stage. The teacher uses these profiles to document the progress of an English learner by noting examples of the student's language usage along with the date the sample was noted. Language development profiles are most effective when combined with short anecdotal records and included in a portfolio that provides samples of the student's class work.

## Step-by-Step

The steps in using language development profiles are the following:

- **Identify the state or national language development standards to be used**—Since teachers are responsible for addressing the language development standards of their own state, it makes sense to use those standards as a basis for observing and documenting the progress of the English learners for whom they are responsible. Figure TO.9 provides an example

**FIGURE TO.9** Language Development Profile

**Student's Name:** Jose Garcia

**Grades K–2 Listening and Speaking**

Early Production	Speech Emergence	Intermediate Fluency	Full Fluency
Speaks single words or short phrases	Beginning to be understood when speaking (may still have inconsistent use of plurals, past tense, pronouns)	Asks and answers instructional questions using simple sentences	Listens attentively to stories and information on new topics and identifies key concepts and details both orally and in writing
8/29/05 Jose asked, "I come?" when I asked his table group to move to the carpet.	10/12/05 Jose said, "They same size." when asked why he put two figures together in a sorting activity.		

### Grades K–2 Reading Fluency and Vocabulary Development

Early Production	Speech Emergence	Intermediate Fluency	Full Fluency
Reads aloud simple words (nouns, adjectives)	Reads aloud an increasing number of English words	Uses decoding skills to read more complex words independently	Recognizes words that have multiple meanings in texts
9/15/05 Jose read his name and Angelica's on the duty chart.	10/14/05 Jose read all the color words aloud when playing a game.		

Please note that this is a small section of the K–2 English Development Profile, used for an example, only. For the complete profile, please see the Teacher Resource section of this text.



of a language development profile based on the California English Language Development Standards. A complete profile is also included in the Teacher Resources section.

- **Prepare a functional profile for classroom use**—Using the English language development standards for your state, compare them to the example given in this text. Make any adaptations needed to address the standards for which you are responsible. The profile should clearly describe an example of the type of language the student will be able to produce at each level. Structure the profile so that you have space for dating and documenting the language samples that you observe (see Figure TO.9 for an example).
- **Familiarize yourself with the profile**—It is easier to recognize growth when you are very familiar with the stages and examples given on the profile. Keep an example of the profile handy to guide you in the beginning. As you interact with students, practice identifying the stages at which they are communicating. The stages will soon become very familiar to you.
- **Plan regular observations**—Until this process becomes a part of your regular teaching routine, plan times for observing. Whenever you have an opportunity to interact verbally with English learners in your classroom, document their levels of language development.
- **Document the students' language development progress**—Make a habit of jotting down the date and a few words to help you remember the content and context of verbal interactions that can be documented on the profiles. You may start by using sticky pads and attaching your notes on a blank profile. However, you should always take a few minutes at the end of each day to update your profiles. Once your notes become cold, it's hard to remember exactly what you wanted to document. (Again, refer to Figure TO.9 for an example of documentation.)
- **Share the language development progress with students and parents**—Plan time to share the progress you are seeing. You will find that the developmental profiles support you in celebrating student growth by giving you very specific language samples to share with your students and their parents.
- **Store the profiles**—The profiles are valuable to you in documenting student growth, writing comments on report cards, and passing on information to other teachers and support personnel. If you are maintaining portfolios, they provide a perfect place for storing the profiles. Some teachers have found that they prefer to keep the profiles in a separate folder within easy reach so that they can be constantly updated.
- **Use technology in the process**—Many teachers use a computer to add the documentation to their developmental profiles. They take informal notes, as previously described, but then update the profiles on the computer. This provides an ongoing file of information that can (and should be) updated and printed out periodically for safekeeping.

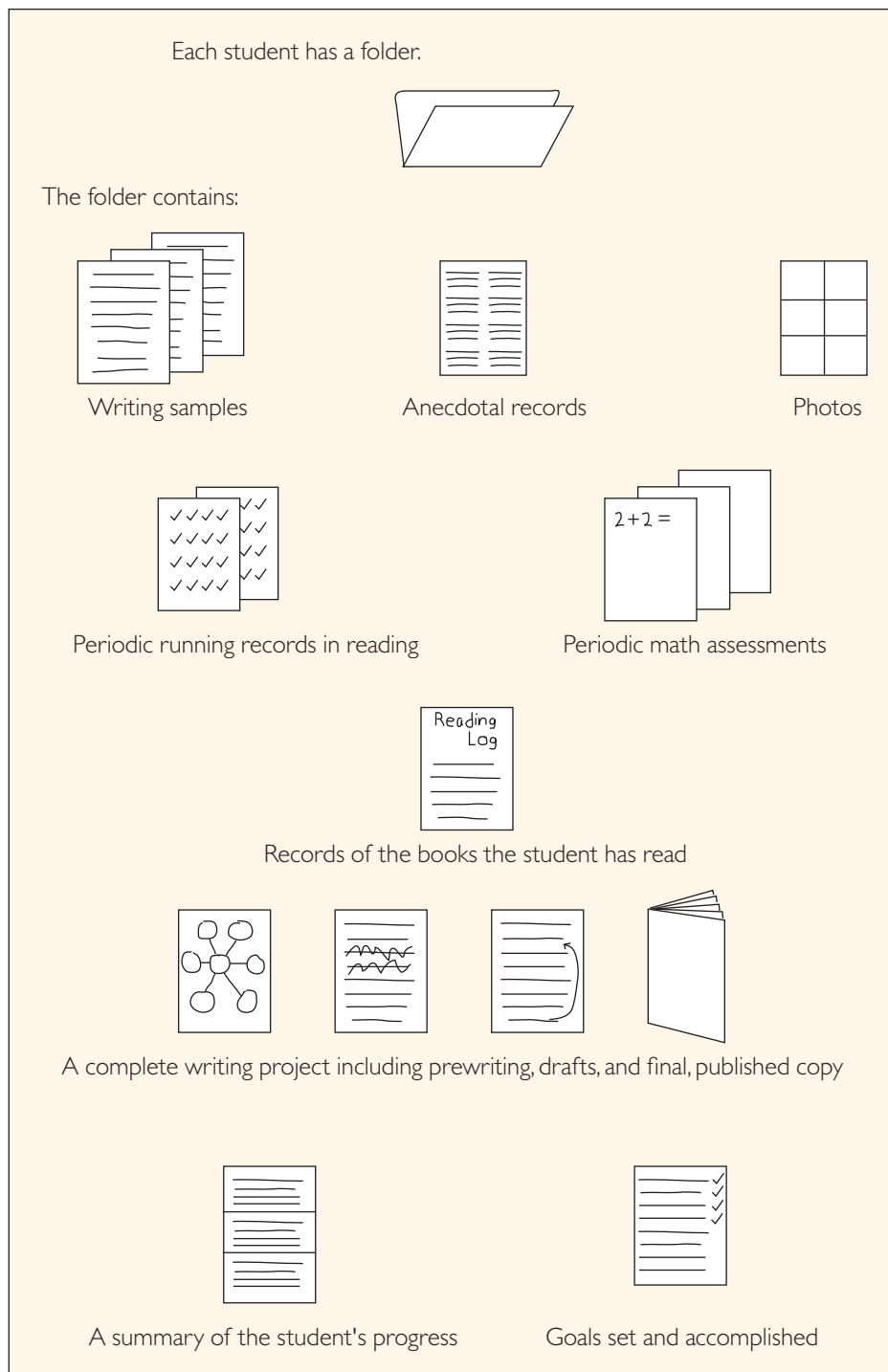
## Portfolio Assessment

*Portfolio assessment* refers to a system for gathering observations, performance samples, and work samples in a folder or portfolio; regularly analyzing the contents of the portfolio; and summarizing the students' progress as documented by the contents of the portfolio (Herrell, 1996). Often, students are involved in selecting the work to be kept in the portfolio. Students are also involved in the review and summarization of the work, setting goals for future work, and sharing the contents of the portfolio with parents (Farr & Tone, 1998). English language learners can demonstrate their growth over time by being actively involved in selecting items to be included in their portfolios. This video demonstrates how students reflect on their own work while teachers help them identify ways in which they have grown and areas that still need focus. After you view the video, think about:

- How does the teacher use the work samples to celebrate growth with the students?
- How does the teacher use the work samples to suggest areas that still need improvement?

This approach to assessment is particularly appropriate for English language learners because it enables assessment based on actual sampling of students' work and the growth they are experiencing, with less dependence on scores on standardized tests, which are often difficult for English language learners to understand (Hernandez, 2000). Portfolio assessment allows students to demonstrate their content knowledge without being so dependent on English fluency. The focus in this approach to assessment is celebration of progress rather than dwelling on weaknesses. Figure TO.10 looks at examples of the contents of a student portfolio.

**FIGURE TO.10** Examples of the Contents of a Portfolio



## Step-by-Step

The steps in implementing portfolio assessment are the following:

- **Choose portfolio contents**—Decide what curricular areas you want to include in the portfolio and obtain baseline work samples, performance samples, or observations for each student, in each area to be included.
- **Introduce the portfolio to the students**—Explain the portfolio system to the students, stressing their active involvement in the selection of materials to be included in the portfolio. Also explain the use of baseline samples and the fact that future work samples will be selected to demonstrate the students' progress. Involve them in setting up the portfolio and labeling the samples of work that will be used as baseline samples.
- **Schedule performance and work samples**—Establish a schedule of observations and performance and work sampling that will serve to document periodic checks on the students' progress and provide updated samples of their work.
- **Schedule conferences**—Schedule periodic conferences with the students and their parents to review the contents of their portfolios, celebrate their growth, and involve them in setting goals for themselves.

## Using Assessment to Differentiate Instruction

The purpose of formative assessment is to determine exactly what students understand in order to provide effective instruction that meets individual needs. Identifying students' language development level is always an approximate determination that can fluctuate according to the activity and context. Language development levels are used in Figure TO.11 to demonstrate adaptations that can be made to individualize instruction that meets students' needs.

**FIGURE TO.11** Differentiating Instruction Based on Language Development Level

Activity: Read-Aloud	
Language Development Stage	Teacher's Action
Preproduction	Point to pictures to show words.
Early Production	Have students repeat word.
Speech Emergence	Ask simple questions.
Intermediate Fluency	Ask students to predict verbally.
Fluent	Ask students to summarize.
Activity: Writing a Story on a Chart	
Language Development Stage	Teacher's Action
Preproduction	Ask students to add periods.
Early Production	Ask students to write initial consonants they can identify.
Speech Emergence	Ask students to add high-frequency word (with support).
Intermediate Fluency	Ask students to write entire word.
Fluent	Ask students to reread entire sentence after group works together to write it.
Note: Students can all be listening to the same story. The teacher simply involves them according to their language development level.	

## Conclusion

It is important for teachers of English language learners to recognize the essential ways in which they must adapt lessons and assessment to meet the unique needs of these students. Teachers need to understand the basic support that must be provided for English language acquisition in the classroom context. English learners can comprehensively acquire language and content if they receive the appropriate scaffolding and are assessed in ways that allow them to demonstrate their understanding and knowledge.

This new edition of *50 Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners* is specifically formatted to help teachers recognize how these students must be supported so that they can be successful in classes taught in English. The strategies are arranged in order of their recommended use according to the English language development levels of the students. Strategies typically used for preproduction students are explained first, and strategies for more advanced English learners are presented in order of their effectiveness with students as they increase in English proficiency. For each strategy, adaptation techniques show how to add support for English learners at different levels. Because it is vital that teachers continually assess and keep track of the English language development levels of students, approaches for assessing the understanding and needs of students are included and recommended for each strategy.

The strategies to support English learners are many. It is recommended that teachers implement them slowly so neither the teacher nor the students become overwhelmed. To quote Canagarajah (2006), "There are no easy answers for teachers here. They are themselves compelled to learn from students and develop engaged positions of agency as they provide learning environments that better enable critical negotiating language. The most important attribute of a successful teacher of English learners is the confidence they place on the learners and their abilities as teachers to work together in building comprehension (Gibbons, 2015).

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# 1



## Predictable Routines and Signals

### Reducing Anxiety

**Predictable routines and signals** in the classroom are highly important in structuring a positive and nurturing environment and reducing anxiety of English language learners (Ferlazzo & Sypnieski, 2011; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Because English learners do not always understand everything that is said in the classroom, having set patterns, routines, and signals helps them relax and not worry as much about being able to follow the sequence of events and activities during the school day. If they know what to expect, they can focus more of their energy on the instruction and less on what they will be expected to do next. Predictable routines can include the sequence of the subjects to be taught, places within the classroom where certain things are stored and accessible to students, a certain spot on the chalkboard or bulletin board where reading or homework assignments are posted, a daily list that gives the routine in sequence, and hand or flashing light signals that indicate the close of one activity and the beginning of another (Goldenberg, 2008). Watch this video to see how teachers keep their students focused and alert, enabling students to connect to instruction rather than worry about what they are supposed to do next.

- How does the use of routines and procedures enhance the learning environment?
- How do English language learners benefit from the use of routines and procedures in the classroom?

Figure 1.1 provides a list of predictable routines and signals that support English language learners in the classroom.

Although implementing predictable routines and signals is usually associated with elementary classrooms, this practice is also vital in secondary classrooms. In addition to classroom routines, secondary teachers must also make their academic expectations clear. As the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) are implemented and assessed, academic expectations are changing. Fisher and Frey (2013) suggest introducing students to the Common Core expectations in a gradual way during the first month of school. Planning activities that support students in understanding how the expectations have changed helps prepare them to address those standards. Fisher and Frey list several changes that students must understand and begin to practice in order to address the Common Core:

- Students will be expected to explore below the surface of academic tasks.
- Students will be expected to construct knowledge within and across curricular areas.
- Students will be required to be able to explain their solutions and how they arrived at them verbally and in writing.

**FIGURE 1.1** Predictable Routines and Signals in the Classroom

<b>Routine</b>	<b>Use</b>	<b>Benefit to English Language Learners</b>
Morning sign-in	A way of taking roll and indicating lunch count.	Students feel a part of the class and that their presence is valued.
Set activity at the beginning of the school day	A way to engage students immediately. Such things as journal writing, reading library book; tasks such as watering plants, sharpening pencils are appropriate.	Students know what to do immediately. Have a chance to share their evening in writing, sign up to share journal entries, or chat briefly with peers and teacher.
Set place in the room where certain activities occur	Students move to certain areas for group lessons, review, sharing orally.	Students know what to expect when moved to a certain area.
A list of the day's activities and approximate times are posted in the same place each day	Helps students get their assignments in order and know which books to get out, when homework will be collected.	Students have a visual reminder of the day's activities; less reliance on oral directions.
Consistent use of modeling and contextualizing of oral directions	Helps students to follow directions.	Students waste less energy wondering what to do next.
Use of hand signals, light signals	Helps student to redirect their energies, know when activity changes are coming.	Students alerted to upcoming events, drawing to a close of activities and events.
Posting of assignments, page numbers, long-term assignments, homework	Helps students stay on task.	Students are aware of expectations.
Set place to submit assignments and get materials	Fosters reliability and self-reliance.	Students are aware of expectations.

All of these changes put additional stress on students learning to speak and write in English. For this reason, teachers are advised to provide training exercises from the beginning of the year so that all students are aware of the expectations.

## Step-by-Step

The steps in implementing predictable routines and signals are as follows:

- **Set up your room**—Set up your room with certain areas designated for group activities, free reading, and partner work. Establish these areas with the students by **modeling** their use and asking questions like, “Will you work with other people in this area?” or “Where will you sit if you want to read a book by yourself?” Use your computer to create clear, legible, large-print signs and graphics to help guide students.
- **Establish routines**—Establish set places for students to turn in assignments, pick up needed materials, and keep their book bags, lunch boxes, and other personal belongings. Model putting these things in the established places.
- **Model routines**—Model each new routine as it is established, and be careful to maintain the routines once they’ve been established. Anytime a student shows confusion about a classroom routine or expectation, determine if a set routine would lessen the student’s confusion.
- **Contextualize directions**—Be **consistent** about modeling as you give directions. For example, “Take out your math book” should be accompanied by your holding up the math book. “Open to page 21” should be modeled and *page 21* should be written on the board. Modeling, gestures, and demonstrations are all vital ways to **contextualize instructions**. Be consistent!
- **Evaluate your use of routines and procedures periodically to identify areas that can be improved**—Periodically use the **self-evaluation rubric** shown in Figure 1.2 to identify areas in which you can improve the use of routines and procedures in your classroom.

**FIGURE 1.2** Routines and Procedures Teacher Self-Evaluation Rubric

Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary
Establish routines and procedures for some activities.	Routines and procedures are established and rarely changed.	Routines and procedures are established and changed when students are observed needing different or additional support.	Routines and procedures are established and changed when needed. Students are given periodic reviews. Areas of the classroom are labeled to support students’ use of them.
Routines and procedures are explained orally.	Routines and procedures are explained orally and modeled.	Routines and procedures are explained orally and modeled, and visual supports are added. Teacher observation is used to determine when changes are needed.	Routines and procedures are explained, orally and modeled, and visual supports are used. Their use is observed and changes are made to improve student understanding and success. Student input is a part of the planning for change.

FIGURE 1.3 Checklist for Observing Student Use of Classroom Routines and Signals

Names	Date	No Response	Watches Others Before Responding	Responds to Signal or Verbal Direction
<b>Suggested Interventions</b> No response: Assign a partner. Watches others: Offer verbal encouragement. Responds appropriately: Offer positive nonverbal acknowledgment. Establish a signal that indicates "I need help."				

• *Assess to determine appropriate follow-up instruction*—When giving directions in the classroom, be aware of how your English learners respond. Note whether they need visual cues, for instance watching others before responding. You may want to use a simple checklist to focus your observations and keep track of students’ progress in classroom participation. See Figure 1.3 for a sample checklist.

Applications and Examples

**Mr. Castle’s kindergarten students** know exactly what to expect when he starts singing, “Time to clean up.” They immediately begin to put their materials away. They seem to shift into high gear when they see their teacher pick up a book and go to sit in the rocking chair. They all know it’s story time. They quickly clean up and go sit on the carpet. They love to hear Mr. Castle read stories.

Mr. Castle uses a set of predictable routines and signals with his 5-year-olds. Using consistent and predictable routines is especially effective for his English learners. His students know that when the light on the overhead projector comes on, Mr. Castle wants them to quiet down. He has several songs he sings to give them signals about changing activities and he always puts notices to go home on top of the bookshelf by the door. If Mr. Castle forgets to give out the notices, he hears from 20 youngsters, “You forgot to give us our notes!”

\* \* \* \* \*

**Ms. Newsome teaches high school economics.** A number of her students are English language learners, so she has assigned study partners for them. Ms. Newsome uses a simple routine to signal to her students when an assignment can be done with the study partners. She writes the names of both partners on the top of the assignment page when she determines that the

assignment can be done in collaboration. When she thinks the assignment is one that her English language learners can handle on their own, she doesn't write the names on the assignment paper.

Ms. Newsome has established a set routine that also serves as a signal to her students for when collaborative work is acceptable. She also has some lessons she records, and the English language learners are instructed to use the listening station to listen to the tape and follow the directions step-by-step. Her English language learners know when she wants them to move to the listening station because Ms. Newsome simply hands a tape to Joaquin, which signals that it is his job to go by and tap the others on the shoulder. Ms. Newsome doesn't have to say a word.

## Conclusion

Predictable routines and signals save a lot of time in the classroom because a short signal or standard routine lets students know what is expected of them. Signals and routines also serve to lower students' anxiety and help them feel they are fully participating in the classroom community, which is especially important for English learners.

### Examples of Approximation Behaviors Related to the TESOL Standards

*PreK–3 students will:*

- restate information given.
- give or ask for permission.

*4–8 students will:*

- follow directions from modeling.
- associate labeled realia with vocabulary.

*9–12 students will:*

- ask for information and clarification.
- negotiate solutions to problems.

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# 2

## Total Physical Response and Total Physical Response Storytelling (TPR and TPRS)

### Integrating Movement into Language Acquisition

**Total physical response (TPR)** (Asher, 1982, 2009) is an approach to second-language acquisition based on first-language acquisition research. In first-language acquisition, children follow a sequence: a) they listen and acquire receptive language before attempting to speak, b) they then develop understanding through moving their bodies, and c) they are not forced to speak until they are ready. Repetition and active involvement are vital to the retention of new vocabulary (Nation, 2005).

In total physical response (TPR), teachers build on the natural sequence of language acquisition. Teachers gradually introduce commands, acting them out as they say them. Initially, students respond by performing the actions as the teacher demonstrates. Gradually, the teacher's demonstrations are removed, and the students respond only to the verbal commands. Teaching classroom routines through total physical response helps students gain confidence in classroom participation (Díaz-Rico, 2013).

Further research in the practice of TPR (Seely & Romijn, 2006) has identified uses for this strategy beyond learning basic vocabulary, directions, and procedures. Research suggests that total physical response storytelling greatly enhances language fluency. According to language acquisition expert Stephen Krashen, “TPR storytelling is much better than anything else out there” (quoted in Seely & Romijn, 2006, p. 39).

### Step-by-Step

The steps in teaching a total physical response lesson are the following:

- **Choose vocabulary to physicalize**—Choose vocabulary that will be used in the classroom, such as verbal directions, colors, and parts of the body, and list the words that students will need



to know. For older students, select directions and vocabulary that are relevant to the current lesson. Choose simple commands that incorporate the target vocabulary and that require a movement response such as “Stand up,” “Sit down,” “Touch your head,” or “Show me the red block.”

- **Introduce vocabulary gradually**—Introduce two or three commands at first. Give a **command** while demonstrating it physically. For example, “Stand up” is accompanied by standing up. Motion for the students to do it with you. Introduce the next command and demonstrate. After you have introduced three commands, randomly alternate the commands and continue modeling and encouraging the students’ responses.

- **Drop the physical modeling**—After students have practiced the commands as you model them, and once they appear to know what to do without waiting for your demonstration, drop the demonstration and encourage students to respond to the verbal commands.

- **Add additional commands**—Add new commands, but no more than three at a time. Always start with a demonstration when introducing a new command, practice until the students appear to understand, and then stop modeling the behavior.

- **Add additional responses**—Find new ways for students to demonstrate their understanding of the vocabulary being practiced—such as pointing to pictures, drawing pictures, and taking turns demonstrating commands. Increasing the variety of activities will promote practice and improve student confidence. Total physical response can be included in many lessons, especially when reviewing concepts. View this video to see TPR being used to review math concepts while practicing following English directions. As you watch, consider the following questions:

- What other types of activities would lend themselves to the use of TPR?
- How does this activity format support English language learners?

- **Play games for additional practice**—Once the students gain confidence, play a game that involves a student volunteer giving the commands. Gradually encourage new student volunteers to give the commands as they become comfortable speaking the words. Never force students to speak the commands. Wait until they are confident enough to volunteer.

- **Assess student progress and understanding**—Because students are responding to commands with physical movements, it is easy to document their progress. Make a checklist of the commands you have taught and keep track of the commands that students know automatically and those that still require modeling. Be sure to document when students volunteer to be leaders in the games being played for practice. Share with students the progress you have documented and celebrate together.

- **Periodically review your use of total physical response and plan to improve and expand your use of the strategy**—Use the teacher self-evaluation rubric in Figure 2.1 to determine your present level of implementation. Plan to improve your use of the strategy by adding the descriptors given at the next highest level.

## Step-by-Step for TPR Storytelling

- **Start with basic TPR**—Give a command and perform the corresponding action to demonstrate its meaning. Restate the command and have students move in response to it. Don’t expose students to more than three new words at a time.

- **Incorporate hand TPR**—Add the use of hand gestures or hand signs to represent words or concepts. Examples of **hand TPR** include a stroking motion to represent *cat* and raising hands and wiggling fingers as the hands are brought down to represent *rain*. These hand gestures can be combined with whole-body TPR.

- **Ask some questions that can be answered with one word**—**Pantomime** putting a hat on your head, then ask, “What is on my head, a hat or a dog?” The students should respond, “*Hat*.” This step helps to build the students’ vocabulary and confidence in responding to questions in English. Repeat this step several times to build vocabulary for future activities like telling mini-stories.

**FIGURE 2.1** Total Physical Response Teacher Self-Evaluation Rubric

Beginning	Developing	Accomplished	Exemplary
TPR is used for demonstrating directions and/or simple vocabulary.	TPR is used for teaching basic directions, simple vocabulary, and other words that students don't seem to understand (based on observation).	TPR is used for a variety of lessons whenever new vocabulary is introduced.	TPR is used for a variety of lessons with students of various English language development levels. New vocabulary, procedures, and the sequence of actions are all frequently introduced using TPR.
TPR is used only for introductory lessons.	TPR is used for a variety of lessons. It may be used very briefly at times to introduce new procedures.	TPR is used almost daily for brief lessons, and whenever new vocabulary or procedures are introduced.	Students are encouraged to use TPR to demonstrate vocabulary and/or procedures to other students.

- ***Start telling mini-stories and have students repeat them***—After you have introduced the vocabulary for the mini-story, tell the story and have the students pantomime the words. For example, you may tell this mini-story after introducing and having the students use a combination of hand and whole-body TPR for the words *I, ran, school, morning, raining, wet, and cold*.

- I ran to school this morning because it was raining. I got very wet and cold.

The students should act out the words as you tell the story several times. If you have students who can retell the story, ask them to retell it while other students continue acting it out.

- ***Do not require students to repeat the words after the storyteller***—The students should demonstrate their comprehension of the story by acting out key words. Give them an opportunity to retell the story when they gain the confidence to do so.

- ***Teach the students to tell their own stories***—Encourage students to make up a simple story (two or three sentences) and teach the vocabulary using hand and whole-body TPR. Work with students to help them identify vocabulary to teach and ways to make the vocabulary understood. Support their initial efforts by writing the vocabulary words on the board. After a student tells a mini-story, encourage other students to ask questions about the story that can be answered with gestures as well as words.

- ***Continue to observe your students to determine when lessons should be repeated***—Observe your students during TPR and TPR storytelling to identify areas of confusion and document vocabulary growth. Also document any increased willingness to participate in activities, which is a strong indicator of language development and confidence.

## Applications and Examples

**Mr. Tong's kindergartners** are learning the names of body parts. Because he has many English language learners in the class, Mr. Tong decides to use total physical response to support their understanding of the English names for body parts. He begins the lesson by saying, "Point to your head," as he demonstrates. He motions for the students to join him in touching their heads, and nods and smiles as they follow his lead. He then introduces, "Touch your chin," as

he demonstrates. He alternates the two commands for a few minutes and then adds and models, “Touch your nose.”

Mr. Tong repeats these three commands several times before he drops the demonstrations and gives just the verbal commands. He watches the students carefully after he stops modeling to make sure they are following along. Mr. Tong continues this game for a few days until the students respond to commands to touch or point to their heads, chins, noses, ears, eyes, shoulders, feet, toes, knees, hands, arms, and elbows.

Mr. Tong changes games once he observes the students responding to verbal commands to identify each part of the body. The new game will help them understand the uses of each body part. He adds this game to address the Common Core standard for students to “identify real-life connections between words and their use.” Mr. Tong asks the students to point to the body parts according to their uses. For example:

What helps you see? What helps you hear? What helps you walk?

Mr. Tong notices that several of the students are using body part names when communicating verbally in the classroom, so he plans a game that will require students to give directions in English. First, Mr. Tong pairs the students and tells them to touch their heads while he demonstrates with a partner. Then, he tells them to touch their hands as he demonstrates. Next, Mr. Tong asks a volunteer to give the directions, and one child eagerly raises his hand. Mr. Tong helps the volunteer to demonstrate the commands as the student gives the directions and the others follow along. This game is played for a few minutes a day for about a week to give additional volunteers a chance to be the leader. Even the native English speakers enjoy playing.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Ms. Lopez teaches seventh-grade science**, and she is concerned about student safety. She wants to begin addressing the Common Core science standard related to scientific procedures that requires students to “follow precisely a multistep procedure when carrying out experiments, taking measurements, or performing technical tasks.” To make sure that everyone understands the safety procedures, she uses a total physical response lesson. She introduces the terms *pitcher*, *beaker*, and *Bunsen burner*, and the directions “Tip the beaker” and “Pour carefully” at the beginning of the lesson with the burners turned off. She demonstrates exactly how to tip the beakers to make sure the liquid doesn’t splash as she says, “Tip the beaker slowly toward the pitcher and pour carefully.”

After Ms. Lopez is sure that the students understand the terms and directions with the accompanying demonstration, she repeats the directions without a demonstration as she walks around the room.

Ms. Lopez observes the students as they practice transferring liquids from the pitchers to the beakers and placing the beakers into the holders, and she feels much more confident about their understanding of the safety procedures. The next day, Ms. Lopez will introduce how to light the burners and what procedures to follow during emergencies. However, Ms. Lopez will review today’s lesson before introducing the new one.

## Conclusion

Although the total physical response strategy is generally used with young children or English language learners who have very little English knowledge, the method can be used to introduce new procedures and vocabulary at almost any level. Figure 2.2 shows many ways in which this strategy is effective.

Total physical response is an active learning approach for supporting comprehension in a low-anxiety atmosphere (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). For this reason, it is very popular with English language learners and teachers alike. Total physical response is also highly effective in teaching vocabulary associated with **content-area knowledge**. Teachers can introduce vocabulary and

**FIGURE 2.2** Applications for Total Physical Response

- Movement directions (stand up, sit down, line up, walk, run, kneel, hop, etc.)
- Students' names
- Color words
- Number words
- Shapes
- Body parts
- Prepositional phrases
- Directions (up, down, left, right, high, low, etc.)
- Classroom procedures
- Content vocabulary/picture sorts

have students respond by drawing, pointing, putting pictures in order, or engaging in any other physical response that encourages active involvement and verifies understanding.

TPR storytelling has been shown to facilitate the development of verbal fluency in English language learners (Seely & Romijn, 2006). Having students use hand gestures and whole-body responses encourages their participation as they acquire new skills.

### Examples of Approximation Behaviors Related to the TESOL Standards

#### *PreK–3 students will:*

- observe and imitate motions of others.
- use practiced motion appropriately in class.

#### *4–8 students will:*

- use knowledge of the classroom setting to determine acceptable behavior.

- use observations to determine appropriate physical responses.

#### *9–12 students will:*

- observe and imitate the speech and actions appropriate in a particular situation.
- vary oral responses according to social settings.

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# 3



## Modeled Talk

### Demonstrating as You Talk

**Modeled talk** (Herrell, 1999) or **scaffolded instruction** (Gibbons, 2015), the **concurrent** verbal explanation and physical demonstration of directions or concepts, is one of the simplest and most powerful strategies to use with English language learners. It takes some planning and practice but can quickly become a habit for effective teachers. Modeled talk involves the use of gestures, visuals, and demonstrations as explanations are made (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2012). Gestures and modeling provide examples for learners to follow and lower learners' anxiety since they know exactly what to do because they have seen the directions or content modeled (Peregoy & Boyle, 2011).

### Step-by-Step

The steps in implementing modeled talk are the following:

- **Identify the lesson and gather materials**—Identify the lesson to be taught and the materials to be used. Think about what you plan to say to explain the lesson and the directions to the students. Prepare the materials students will use so that you have an example to show and, if necessary, examples in various stages of completion. Create physical gestures that will help students understand exactly what will be expected of them without having to rely solely on English vocabulary for understanding.
- **Practice your modeled talk**—Practice your talk in front of a mirror to determine if your instructions, modeling, and gestures convey the message you want the students to understand.
- **Design a visual of directions**—Design a standard visual that will be used regularly if the lesson or directions require that students follow a sequence of instructions. This will help students become accustomed to looking for this visual for support in remembering the sequence. Simple numbered drawings work well for this. A set of standard drawings created and saved on the computer, printed, laminated, and placed in sequence on the chalkboard can be used again and again for different activities. A picture of a pair of scissors, for example, always reminds the students that the next step is to cut, while a picture of a crayon reminds them to color.
- **Review the steps to be taken**—Review the steps students are to take after you have delivered your modeled talk. Use the visuals you have created to reinforce the students' reference to them for support in remembering what to do. When the students are performing the activities you have explained, refer to the visuals whenever there is a question about what to do next so that the students practice using them. Figure 3.1 provides suggestions for props and visuals that support modeled talks.



FIGURE 3.1 Props and Visuals to Support Modeled Talk

Props	Visuals
Any textbooks to be used Scissors, tape, rulers, pencils, notebooks that will be needed Realia whenever vocabulary will be new Word cards for any new vocabulary to be written Maps, globes, manipulatives, examples of products to be made	Numbered charts showing sequence to be followed Diagrams showing a recap of directions given Standard illustrations for scissors (for directions to cut), crayon (for directions to color), pencil (for directions to write), computer (when it is to be used), ruler (for directions to measure), paintbrush (for directions to paint)

- **Observe students as you model talk**—As you observe students following the directions, determine the sections that need to be re-modeled. Ask follow-up questions that students can answer by demonstrating a part of the directions you have given and modeled.

## Applications and Examples

Ms. Milsovic is using modeled talk to explain the day’s learning centers to her kindergarten class of English language learners. She begins by sitting in a small chair with the students sitting on the floor in front of her.

“When I play the music,” Ms. Milsovic says as she points to herself and then touches the play button on the CD player so the children hear a short section of the music they use as a signal to change activities, “you (indicating the children) will go to the centers (she motions toward the centers).”

“First (she holds up one finger), you will go to the planning board,” Ms. Milsovic says while signaling for them to follow her to the planning board. The **planning board** is made of a large automotive drip pan. It has photographs of each of the centers attached by magnetic tape across the top of it and room for children’s names on magnets under each of the center pictures.

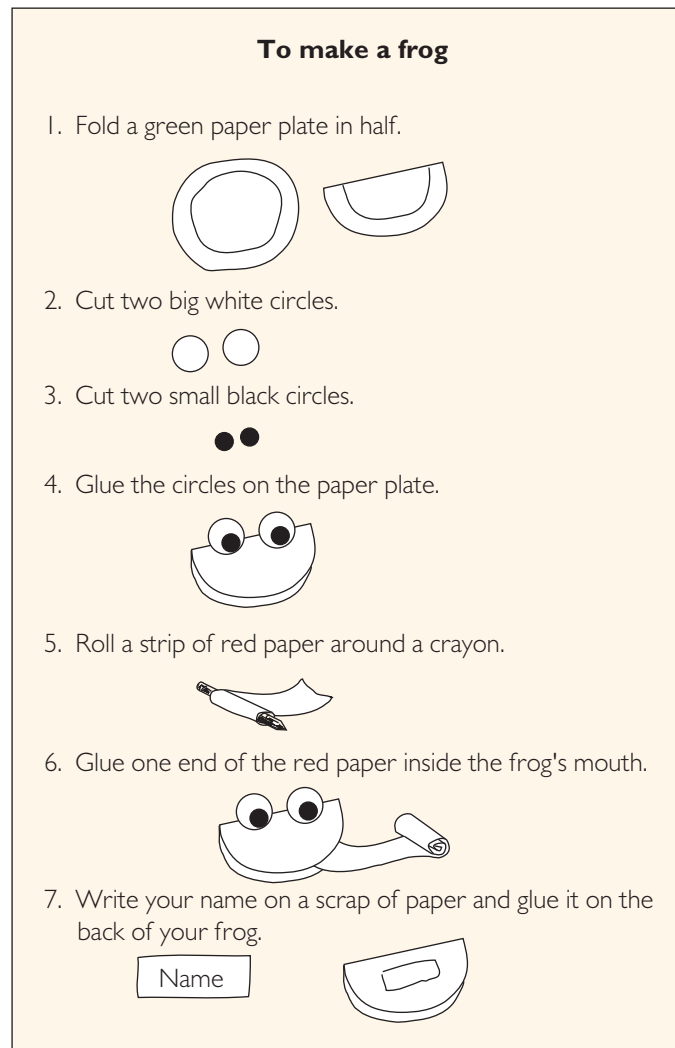
“You will look for your name,” Ms. Milsovic continues as she shows the children the name cards, which are not yet attached to the board. She reads a few of the names so the children understand what is written on the name cards.

“If Cher’s name is under this center,” she points to the picture of the Art Center, “she will go to the Art Center first.” She motions for the children to follow Cher to the Art Center.

At the Art Center, Ms. Milsovic shows the children exactly what they will do there. She demonstrates each step as she talks about it. On this particular day, the children are studying frogs and toads, and they are using green paper plates to make frogs with long curled tongues. Ms. Milsovic shows them how to make the frog and posts a visual with drawings that demonstrate what to do first, second, and third. After she demonstrates, she refers to the visual and asks one of the children to tell her what to do at each step. Figure 3.2 shows the directions Ms. Milsovic used.

Each center is carefully modeled, and key English vocabulary is taught and practiced. When all the centers have been explained, the children and Ms. Milsovic return to the planning board, and the names of the children are placed on the board so they know where to go first. She then asks a few of the children to show her where they will go. “Alberto, where will you go?” she asks as she points to his name on the chart. Alberto answers by pointing to his assigned center or naming the center. Once this is done, Ms. Milsovic plays the music on the CD player, signaling that it’s time to move to the centers. Since the children know what to do at each center and there



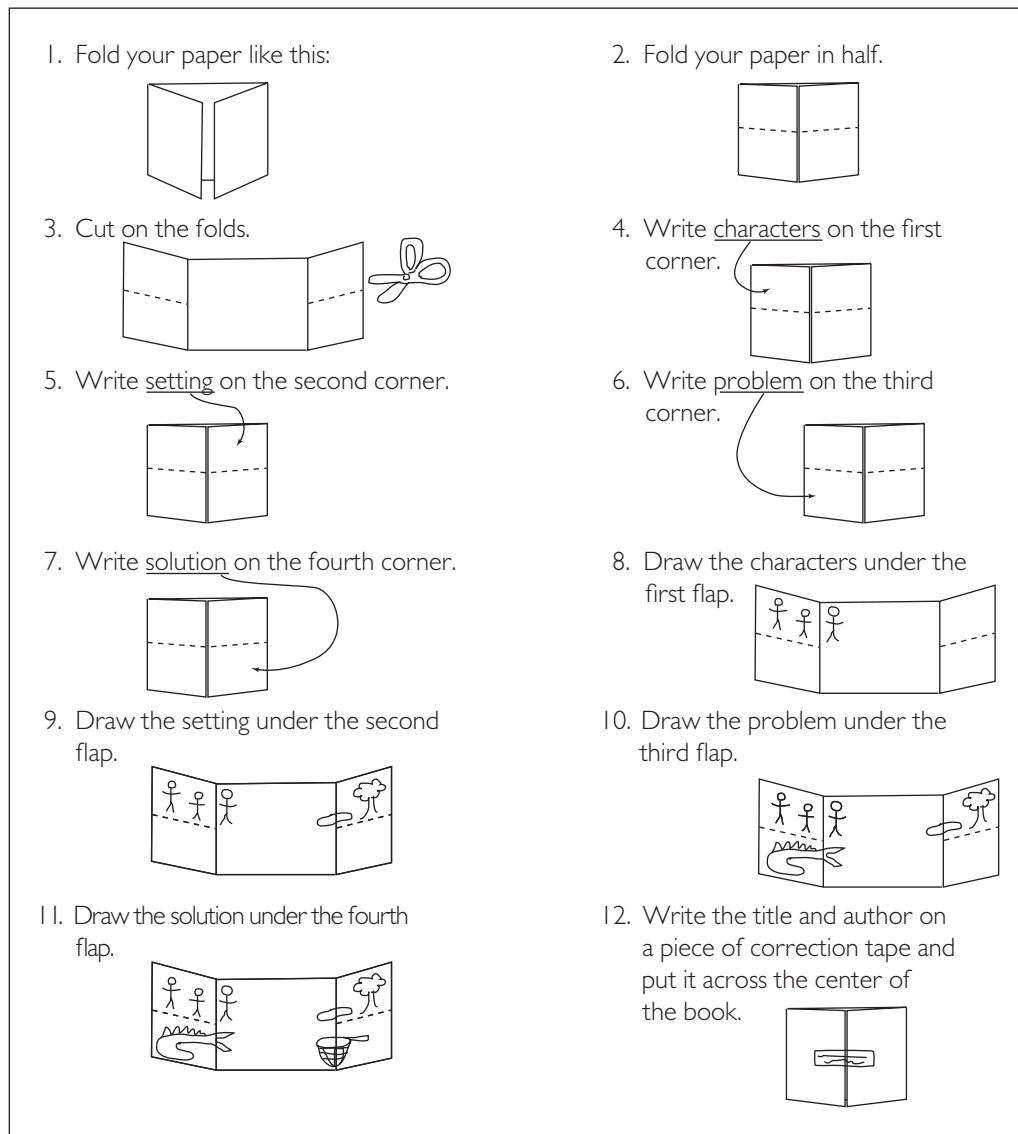
**FIGURE 3.2** Ms. Milsovic's Directions for the Art Center

are visuals available at each center to remind them in case they forget, Ms. Milsovic is able to work with small groups of students at the Writing Center using interactive writing to teach them how to write words describing frogs. The children are secure in their understanding of what is expected of them.

\* \* \* \* \*

Ms. Delgado is demonstrating how to make four-corner books for her fifth graders, who are always looking for new ways to celebrate the books they have read. Since the students will be making their books while Ms. Delgado is holding literature discussions, she wants to make sure that they know exactly what to do. She displays a poster that shows each of the steps in their assignment, and then she gives a modeled talk demonstrating the steps in the process. Figure 3.3 shows the poster Ms. Delgado displays. She's always careful to use clear instructional illustrations so that her English learners can easily access the information.

As Ms. Delgado demonstrates how to make a four-corner book, she refers to the steps listed on the poster. "First," she says as she points to the number 1 on the poster, "you fold a piece of paper like this." She demonstrates and then points to the drawing on the poster. Ms. Delgado writes "1" on the chalkboard and puts the sample she has started under the number.

**FIGURE 3.3** How to Make a Four-Corner Book

“Second,” she continues, as she points to the number 2 on the poster, “you fold the paper in half, this way.” She takes a premade sample that was completed in step 1, demonstrates step 2, points to the drawing on the poster, writes the numeral 2 on the chalkboard, and puts the second sample under it.

“Third,” she says as she points to the number 3 on the poster, “you cut on the folds you just made.” She demonstrates the cutting on an additional sample, writes the numeral 3 on the chalkboard, and puts the third sample under it. At this point, samples of each stage of the process line the chalk tray for the students to examine later if necessary.

Next, she takes a premade sample of a four-corner book and writes “characters” on one corner. “You write the word *characters* on the first corner,” she says as she demonstrates.

Ms. Delgado models each step, adding the word *setting* on the second corner, the word *problem* on the third corner, and the word *solution* on the fourth corner. She then lifts the flap labeled *characters* and demonstrates how to draw the main characters of her book. She repeats the process with the rest of the four corners.

Last of all, Ms. Delgado takes a piece of wide correction tape and puts it across the middle of her four-corner book and writes the title and author of the book on it. As she does each of these steps, she refers the students to the poster and leaves a sample on the chalkboard for them to examine as they are making their own books. Once she has completed the modeled talk, she puts the supplies on a table for the students to use and calls a literature discussion group together. The rest of the class is busily engaged in making four-corner books, and her group is not disturbed. They know how to make their books and know they will have an opportunity to share the books after Ms. Delgado finishes working with her groups. This was explained to them as a part of the modeled talk, and it's on the poster.

## Conclusion

Modeled talk is helpful in lowering students' anxiety because they know and can respond to what is expected of them. It serves another important function when a teacher uses it consistently. English-speaking students often learn how to model talk and use it when explaining procedures and concepts to English language learners in the classroom. Students' use of modeled talk to other students increases the opportunities for English language learners to interact successfully with their peers, and it builds feelings of community within the classroom.

### Examples of Approximation Behaviors Related to the TESOL Standards

*PreK–3 students will:*

- follow instructions from verbal and nonverbal cues.
- gather and organize materials needed to complete a task.

*4–8 students will:*

- follow a sequence of instruction based on verbal directions and physical actions.

- generate and ask questions to clarify expectations.

*9–12 students will:*

- compare and classify information based on verbal instructions and physical modeling.
- construct a chart or visual representation of information gained through oral directions and physical modeling.

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# 4

## Visual Scaffolding

### Providing Language Support through Visual Images

**Visual scaffolding** is an approach in which the language used in instruction is made more understandable by displaying drawings or photographs that allow students to connect spoken English words to visual images being displayed (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2010a; Greenberg, 2008). To use this strategy, the teacher builds **hard-copy** and **digital** files of visuals, such as photographs or drawings, that can be easily accessed for teaching. Photographs, illustrations, and even hand drawings can provide visual support for a wide variety of content and vocabulary concepts and can build background knowledge (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2010b). In addition to visual representations, gestures used by teachers can be extremely supportive of student understanding. The meanings of gestures should be pretaught and used consistently (Díaz-Rico, 2018). 4.1 lists resources for securing visuals.

### Step-by-Step

The steps in planning and implementing visual scaffolding are the following:

- **Identify the vocabulary**—Identify specific vocabulary to be taught in the lesson that can be scaffolded with visual images, such as drawings or photographs.
- **Collect visuals**—Find (or make) photos or line drawings that can be used to support visually the vocabulary needed for the students to understand the lesson. Use the Internet to search for images that can be collected in a “visuals file” on the computer for future use.
- **Reproduce and organize visuals**—Reproduce the visuals on transparency film for use on an overhead projector or capture them as digital files by searching the Internet that can then be easily shared with a digital projector or computer interface with an **interactive whiteboard** during teaching. Using a **document camera** allows the teacher to project either transparencies or hard copies of visuals. Arranging visuals and files in sequential order works well for a specific lesson, but you may want to organize your growing picture file alphabetically so that you can easily access the pictures for future lessons. Since pictures to be projected using an overhead projector need not be large, they can be stored in a shoe box or binder for easy access or on a file in the computer.
- **Engage the students**—Encourage students to use the picture files in their presentations as a way to encourage asking and answering questions. They can even be taught to help build or use a classroom picture dictionary on the computer.

**FIGURE 4.1** Visual Scaffolding Resources

- Internet image resources—for example, [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) (select *images*) or [www.Altavista.com](http://www.Altavista.com) (select *image*)
- Teacher-, student-, parent-taken photos
- Illustrations in old textbooks
- Line drawings from old black-line masters or workbooks
- Line drawings from children's coloring books
- Illustrations from big books
- Children's artwork  
(all of the above can be converted to color transparencies or digitized)
- Vacation videos
- Commercial videos
- Class-made videos

*To make color transparencies and/or projectable illustrations:*

- Scan the picture into your computer using an inexpensive flatbed scanner and print it out. Most printers require special transparency film.
- Take photos using a digital camera, download them to your computer, and print them out as hard copy or transparencies. The use of photo-quality printing paper will greatly enhance the quality of the hard copy.
- Download illustrations and photos from the Internet and print out as needed.
- Take standard photos and have them converted to picture CDs at your local photo shop or take them to a local copy and print center to have them converted to color transparencies, posters, calendars, and so on.
- Use a document camera to make projectable images.

*Storing Resources*

- A three-ring notebook with clear plastic sleeves can be used to store and organize transparencies. They can be projected without removing them from the sleeve.
- Small transparencies of individual pictures can be stored alphabetically in a shoe box (plastic or otherwise) and be kept near the overhead projector for quick access.
- Digital material may be stored on the hard drive of your classroom computer, on flash drives, or on picture CDs for quick, organized access.

- **Build the file**—Continue to build your file on an ongoing basis. Involve the students in finding pictures to add to your files and picture dictionary.

## Applications and Examples

Visual scaffolding can be used effectively at all grade levels and across curricular areas. Mr. Chavez is teaching a social studies unit on community to his second-grade class. Because his students all walk to school and their parents often use the city buses for transportation, many of the students have never been more than a few blocks away from the school. Mr. Chavez tries to plan the community unit to build the students' sense of pride in their community. Since Mr. Chavez recognizes the importance of visuals for his English learners, he takes digital photographs of local community helpers such as postal workers, crossing guards, firefighters, and police officers, and of local institutions like the post office and the neighborhood grocery store. These are all places and people with whom his students are familiar. Mr. Chavez then downloads the photographs to his computer and organizes them in files by category so that they can be easily accessed, projected, and manipulated using the classroom interactive whiteboard.

As he leads a discussion about community helpers, including where they work and what they do, Mr. Chavez uses his collection of photographs to connect the discussion to local people and places so that the new vocabulary is identified with those people and places that the students are familiar with. Hard copies of the original photographs are printed and displayed in the room with labels so that the students can begin to learn and practice the written forms of the words on the labels.

Mr. Chavez and his students then take a field trip into the central part of town where the students are introduced to a supermarket. Mr. Chavez provides some digital cameras from the school, and the students work in small groups finding, photographing, and cataloging vocabulary words. He explains that they are doing this in preparation for a discussion back in their classroom where they will compare the pictures of the supermarket with the ones of their neighborhood grocery.

“So many food!” exclaims Mercedes as she looks at the photo of the supermarket produce aisle piled high with fruit and vegetables. “Mr. Santos have only some,” she says as she points to the picture of Mr. Santos’s small store.

Mercedes’ observations are just the beginning of the conversations Mr. Chavez hears among his students during the next few days. He has placed the photos in the writing center, and the students are writing about the sights they have seen on their bus trip to the supermarket. The photographs have expanded the students’ understanding of their community. Using the photos in the writing center also provides a source of verbal stimulation and comparison that helps clarify correct usage, both spoken and written, for many days.

\* \* \* \* \*

In Ms. Hammond’s high school history class, the students are studying ancient Egypt. Ms. Hammond has transferred her vacation pictures of Egypt onto a picture CD, which she downloads to her classroom computer and shares on the interactive whiteboard. The students are enthralled as she describes her feeling of being extremely small when she posed for a photograph in front of the pyramids. The students are particularly interested in how the pyramids were built, and they listen intently as Ms. Hammond displays and discusses photographs she has scanned from David McCauley’s book *Pyramid* (1975). The students begin a **glossary** of words they are learning as they study ancient Egypt. They illustrate their glossary using sketches they make of the pictures she displays to support their discussion. As a follow-up to their discussion of the pyramids, the students form groups to research various segments of daily life in ancient Egypt. They add to their glossaries, work together to give oral presentations, and prepare displays of their own to demonstrate the facts they are learning about their area of research.

As the students present their reports, Ms. Hammond finds they have followed her example. All of the groups have searched the Internet for pictures and illustrations of costumes, artifacts, and reproductions of Egyptian art to support their presentations. These have been downloaded and reproduced as hard copy and digital photographs to share with others in the class. These visuals support English learners as they present their sections of the group report.

## Conclusion

Although visual scaffolding requires some planning, there are abundant resources for visuals and it’s an extremely powerful tool for English learners. Photos can be copied or scanned from books, magazines, and the Internet, and transferred to transparency film for use with overhead projectors or used as digitized visuals on the computer or with interactive whiteboards. If technology is limited in your classroom, then simply printing pictures or other visuals and passing them out to the students can be equally effective. Sharing these “visual clues” will lead to clearer understanding of concepts and ideas while the students are gaining content and language knowledge.

All of these enable you to build a picture file for use in scaffolding vocabulary and concept understanding. Photos taken on vacations can often be used in classroom teaching and may even make part of your trip tax-deductible. Parents can contribute photographs that you can copy or



scan for your growing file. Send out a request for photos of hard-to-find items to give the parents an opportunity to lend support.

Line drawings, photographs, maps, and realia are not the only visuals that can be used in scaffolding. Video is another useful visual support. It is often possible to find brief video clips online so that students get a real-life, moving scaffold while a topic is discussed. Again, vacation video is a rich source of support and adds a powerful personal connection to the learning.

### Examples of Approximation Behaviors Related to the TESOL Standards

*PreK–3 students will:*

- retell interesting events.
- ask questions to satisfy personal needs.

*4–8 students will:*

- work in cooperative groups and follow task roles.
- paraphrase directions given orally or in writing.

*9–12 students will:*

- use verbal communication to identify expectations for class assignments.
- assist in oral presentations as appropriate.

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# 5

## Realia Strategies

### Connecting Language Acquisition to the Real World

**Realia** is a term for real things—concrete objects—that are used in the classroom to build background knowledge and vocabulary. Realia provide students with opportunities to build on their learning using all their senses (Echevarria, Vogt, & Short, 2010). Though using realia in the classroom is not always possible, it is usually the best choice for students to learn all they can about a topic. Realia allow students to see, feel, hear, and even smell the object being explored. In this video a teacher discusses the use of realia and shows examples of the importance of blending realia into all lessons that contain new or challenging vocabulary.

If the real thing is not available, a teacher must move down the continuum from the concrete (real thing) to a **replica** (such as a model) to a **semi-concrete** object (such as a photograph or illustration). However, each move down the continuum causes the loss of some sensory information that could be helpful in comprehension. Multiple opportunities to explore new vocabulary in different contexts deepens vocabulary knowledge (Nation, 2005). See Figure 5.1 for suggestions of classroom realia that are helpful in the presentation of powerful learning experiences.

### Step-by-Step

The steps in implementing the use of realia are the following:

- **Identify opportunities to use realia**—Be aware of opportunities to include realia in lessons as you plan. Pre-read any stories that will be read aloud or used for reading instruction in order to identify vocabulary that may be unfamiliar to the students. Once the vocabulary is identified, locate realia that will be helpful in enhancing their understanding.
- **Collect realia**—Begin to collect items that can be stored in the classroom and organize them so that they can be easily accessed for instruction. Plastic tubs or large, clear plastic bags are often used for this purpose. Some items will be appropriate for only one theme or book and should be stored with that theme's materials or book. Yard sales and end-of-season sales at craft stores are good sources of realia for classroom use. Parents are often helpful in locating and supplying useful items.
- **Build a library of realia**—Collaborate with other teachers at your school or in your grade level to build a library of realia that can be shared for major theme studies. Locate local merchants, farmers, and other resources that may loan your large items, such as farm equipment or animals.

**FIGURE 5.1** Realia for Powerful Learning

Category	Realia	Uses
Household items	Eating utensils, kitchen appliances (from different cultures), miniatures such as household furniture, old-fashioned items no longer commonly seen	Active experiences, vocabulary development, role-playing, story reenactment, prereading activities, oral language practice, story problems in math
Food	Fruit, vegetables, unusual items unfamiliar to children; many plastic food items are available for classroom use	Sensory experiences, vocabulary development, acting out stories, grammar activities (singular, plural)
Clothing	Different kinds of hats, gloves, sweaters, jackets, boots, any examples of ethnic clothing to support understanding	Vocabulary development, story reenactment, writing support, oral language practice
Literacy materials	Books, magazines, newspapers, encyclopedia, reference books, checkbooks, bank books	Role-playing, vocabulary development, easy access for research, exposure
Farm or occupational items	Rakes, plows, harnesses, tools, baskets, hay, nails, models of barns, silos, scarecrows, wagons, farm carts	Prereading activities, role-playing, vocabulary development, knowledge of size and weight
Flowers and plants	Examples of flowers and plants being studied or read about; unusual plants such as large sunflowers, pumpkins	Vocabulary development, sensory experiences, size comparisons
Animals	Classroom pets, house pets, farm and zoo animals, birds	Sensory experiences, vocabulary development
Crafts	Knitting, crocheting, tatting, sculpting clay, potter's wheel, spinning wheel, loom	Vocabulary development, role-playing, sensory experiences, prereading activities
Ethnic items	Piñatas, chopsticks, wok, tortilla press, tea sets, clothing	Vocabulary development, cross-cultural experiences