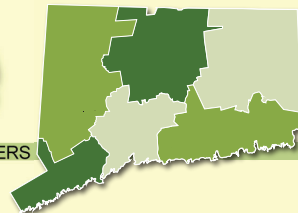


the RESC Alliance

CONNECTICUT ALLIANCE OF REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTERS



EL Strategies Desk Cards

(Tip Sheets for ALL Classroom Teachers)

Sponsored by the Connecticut Department of Education | Developed by the Connecticut RESC Alliance (2009); Revised (2015)



ENGLISH LEARNERS (ELS) ARE THE FASTEST GROWING POPULATION IN OUR COUNTRY.

According to the Connecticut State Department of Education (2011), 29,527 ELs in 164 Local Educational Agencies (LEA) spoke 139 languages other than English at home. The EL strategies desk card tool will help teachers support our EL students. In this desk card you will find a brief description of the characteristics of ELs at the different language proficiency levels, questioning techniques and teaching strategies for every level.

This content is also available in electronic format at www.ctlearning.net/ell.

<p>Provide explicit vocabulary instruction for unfamiliar vocabulary prior to and during lesson (e.g. word walls, personal bilingual dictionaries, word cards with pictures, games, etc.).</p>	<p>Use scaffolding techniques and adapted content for comprehensible input (e.g. jigsaws, think alouds, graphic organizers, answer frames, sentence starters, taped text, adapted text, etc.).</p>
<p>Use visuals as much as possible, such as pictures, gestures, pointing, graphic organizers.</p>	<p>Provide supplementary materials, such as graphs, models, realia (actual objects), visuals.</p>
<p>Provide background knowledge and connect to students' prior knowledge (e.g. KWL charts, anticipation guides, bilingual dictionaries, journal writing in native language, creating bilingual books, etc.).</p>	<p>Learn about students' culture and native language to better understand learning needs (e.g. what are similarities of the phonetic systems?).</p>
<p>Expect reading skills to come slowly. If the student has learned to read in his/her native language, this will probably help him/her to transfer reading skills to English. However, the student may be pronouncing words, but not really comprehending.</p>	<p>Use gentle correction to encourage use of correct patterns while at the same time encouraging risk-taking with the language (e.g. Student says, "I eated breakfast." Teacher responds, "I ate breakfast, too. I ate toast. What did you eat?").</p>
<p>Modify activities and assessments according to the EL language level.</p>	<p>Frequent opportunities for oral interaction (e.g. Think-Pair-Share, Partner Talk, Cooperative Learning, etc.).</p>

General EL Strategies

STUDENT LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS:

- Understands very little English
- Stage lasts six months to one year, typically
- May not talk at all; “silent period”
- Is learning to understand basic conversation & instructions such as “hello, how are you?”, “sit down, line up, etc.”
- Is beginning to speak in one and two word phrases
- May have cultural conflicts or misunderstandings

QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES:

- Ask “yes” or “no” questions (eg. “Is this a...?”, “Does this...?”)
- Use “point to”, “circle”, “find”, “show me”, “draw”
- Ask student to match pictures to words or objects
- Ask student to categorize objects

SPECIFIC TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR LEVEL 1:

- Teach basic survival English, such as “bathroom,” “lunch,” “home”
- Help the student to learn the classroom routines
- Use a student buddy, if possible someone with the same language
- Use visual clues as much as possible, such as pictures, gestures, pointing, graphic organizers
- Create “I need” cards for students to hold up when he/she needs something
- Label objects around the room and around the school in English and other languages
- Provide books and audiobooks with patterned sentence structure and pictures
- Provide books and audiobooks in native language
- Use bilingual picture dictionary and have student create personal illustrated dictionaries
- Be patient. Give student a few weeks or months to adjust
- Learn what you can about the student’s culture
- Use new vocabulary frequently in content areas. Emphasize key words and simplify grammar.
- Use seating arrangements to be conducive for cooperative (or collaborative) learning activities, seat EL students purposefully (near the teacher or next to a buddy)
- Modify your speech to aid comprehension, speak slowly and clearly
- When asking questions, allow for “wait time” more than typical (3-5 seconds)
- Allow EL students to talk to a peer in their native language when necessary to clarify understanding
- Make lessons visual. Use visual representations of new vocabulary and use graphs, maps, photographs, drawings, and charts to introduce new vocabulary and concepts with videos
- Use designated supports for EL for instruction, testing and assignments
- Teach explicit phonemic awareness, phonic rules and skills, depending on students literacy needs or literacy level
- Provide sentence and answer frames
- Provide ample opportunities for student to student interaction

STUDENT LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS:

- Follows most basic directions
- Can respond with one or two word answers
- Stage typically lasts six months to one year
- Uses English vocabulary that is still very limited
- Probably understands more than he/she can express
- May have cultural conflicts or misunderstandings

QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES:

- Ask literal questions – who, when, where, what
- Ask questions with 1- 3 word answers
- Ask questions with an either/or option
- Ask student to list, name, tell which, categorize, draw, label

SPECIFIC TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR LEVEL 2:

- Use visual clues as much as possible, such as pictures, gestures, pointing, graphic organizers
- Use a student buddy, if possible someone with the same language
- Teach explicit phonemic awareness, phonic rules and skills depending on literacy needs or literacy level
- Provide books and audiobooks with patterned sentence structure and pictures
- Label objects around the room and around the school in English and other languages
- Provide books and audiobooks in native language
- Use bilingual picture dictionary and have students create personal illustrated dictionaries
- Correct for grammar and spelling after the student has finished his/her writing
- Provide shortened text for reading and reading assignments with simplified language for grade level content
- Allow the student to verbalize or write what he wants to say, and the teacher can correct grammar and spelling later
- Give students a picture story without words and provide them with basic vocabulary for the story. Ask them to write sentences to describe each picture to create their own story
- Provide sentence and answer frames
- Introduce word study beginning in third grade
- Teach academic vocabulary and academic language explicitly in context
- Model correct usage; don't over-correct
- Provide content and language learning objectives for lessons
- Pre-teach vocabulary
- Provide needed background knowledge from the disciplines, along with connecting with students' own experiences
- Consider seating arrangements that are conducive for cooperative (or collaborative) learning activities
- Back up oral discussion with key words written on the board
- Teach organizational skills such as: text features, mnemonic devices, etc.
- Use anticipation guides
- Use list of key terms for previewing
- Accept simple written responses
- Use designated supports for EL for instruction, testing, and assignments

STUDENT LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS:

- Understands most *conversational* English vocabulary, but not necessarily *academic* vocabulary
- Speaks in simple sentences and has some incorrect grammar usage
- Stage lasts one year to two years, typically
- May not understand spoken or written English with complicated sentence patterns
- May not understand many idioms and homonyms
- May not grasp underlying meanings in a story because of vocabulary

QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES:

- Ask how and why questions
- Check for understanding by asking student to tell you what something means
- Check for understanding by asking student to explain the assignment to you
- Ask student to tell about, describe, explain
- Ask student to explain similarities and differences

SPECIFIC TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR LEVEL 3:

- Use bilingual picture dictionary
- Teach explicit phonemic awareness, phonic rules and skills through all grade levels as needed
- Encourage student to use full sentences
- Use designated supports for instruction, assignments and testing
- Provide shortened text
- Provide student with content and language learning objectives using student-friendly language
- Explain idioms and homonyms
- Model explicit writing skills, especially grammatical structure
- Provide sentence frames showing use of transition words
- Provide explicit instruction on academic vocabulary and academic language for units of study
- Focus on reading comprehension; use frequent comprehension checks
- Introduce expanded vocabulary
- Use models/charts/maps/timelines before, during, and after reading

STUDENT LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS:

- Approaching the use of fluent sentences using standard grammar
- May have difficulty understanding content-area materials where a high degree of literacy is required
- Has limited understanding of less commonly used words, idioms, and homonyms
- May have reading and writing skills below those of native English speaking students
- May not grasp underlying subtle meanings and nuances in a story because of vocabulary
- Stages 4 and 5 typically last three to five years

QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES:

- Ask how and why questions
- Check for understanding by asking student to tell you what something means
- Ask student to tell about, describe, explain
- Ask student to explain similarities and differences
- Ask student to tell:
 - “What would happen if ...?”
 - “Why do you think ...?”
 - “What would you recommend ...?”

SPECIFIC TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR LEVELS 4 & 5:

- Continue to use designated supports for instruction, assignments, and tests, if necessary
- Check for understanding of academic vocabulary and language
- Give the student a list of target vocabulary for each unit of study
- Provide student with content and language learning objectives
- Provide targeted mini-lessons on self-editing, syntax, and word usage
- Encourage use of English-English dictionary, as well as a bilingual dictionary to expand vocabulary
- Provide explicit instruction on the use of function words (e.g. “however,” “moreover,” “in contrast,” etc.)

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