

Helping ELLS in the Mainstream Classroom

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Effective Staff Development

Effective staff development is crucial for classroom teachers who are working with English language learners. A good staff development program provides:

- strategies and information to classroom teachers so that they can meet the social, educational, and affective needs of ELLs
- effective English language instruction as a part of a district wide comprehensive effort which will help ESL students meet state and federal content standards
- information for classroom teachers about second language acquisition, diverse cultures, and differentiating instruction for ELLs.

What Affects English Language Learning

- ☑ First language
- ☑ Cultural background
- ☑ Language distance
- ☑ Personality
- ☑ Motivation
- ☑ Age
- ☑ Learning style
- ☑ Quality of instruction

What is.....? **(Quiz for Classroom Teachers)**

How many of the following terms can you identify. Work with a partner.

1. LEP
2. ELL
3. Bilingual
4. Affective Filter
5. Realia
6. Culture Shock
7. L1, L2
8. Silent period
9. Comprehensible input
10. BICS & CALP

Challenges in Content Area Learning for ELLS

Challenges for ELLs in Reading

English language learners face many obstacles when reading literature in English. Most literature is culture bound. We expect students to have prior knowledge of literary genres such as fairy tales, myths, legends, and tall tales. If the teacher has not activated prior knowledge or built background information, knowing the vocabulary will not solve the problem. ELLs may be able to read the words but it doesn't mean they will understand the text. They are not aware of information that the author left unsaid; the information that "everyone knows."

Here are some specific challenges that ELLs face when learning to read material in English:

- * an abundance of idioms and figurative language in English texts
- * density of unfamiliar vocabulary
- * use of homonyms and synonyms
- * grammar usage especially the "exceptions to the rules"
- * word order, sentence structure and syntax
- * difficult text structure with a topic sentence, supporting details and conclusion
- * unfamiliarity with the connotative and denotative meanings of words
- * expressing an opinion about text may not be practiced in the reader's culture
- * use of regional U.S. dialects
- * fear of participation and interaction with mainstream students,
- * story themes and endings can be inexplicable
- * literary terms for story development are not understood
- * unfamiliarity with drawing conclusions, analyzing characters and predicting outcomes
- * imagery and symbolism in text are difficult.

**Judie Haynes, everythingESL.net, 2004
adapted from audience response, TESOL 2003**

Challenges for ELLs in Mathematics

Mathematics is not just arithmetic. There are considerable challenges for English language learners in math. There are challenges for teachers of mathematics, too. We may find that our ELLs use a different processes to arrive at answers. Many teachers do not validate other systems and prior mathematical knowledge. Problem solving is not just language but a thought process. Students from other cultures may be more concerned with getting the correct response than with the process. They may not be able to justify their answers.

Difficulties that ELLs face when learning mathematics:

- * formation of numbers varies from culture to culture
- * use of decimal point and comma vary from culture to culture
- * Students have no experience with our measurement system, It is an abstract to them.
- * Math is not spirally taught in many cultures. So students may not know a lot about geometry, for example.
- * Many students have never seen or worked with manipulatives. They may not take a lesson using manipulatives seriously.
- * Students learn math by rote memory.
- * Math curricula in their countries may be primarily calculation.
- * Word problems may not be introduced until much later.
- * Estimating, rounding, and geometry are not often taught as early in other cultures.
- * Mathematical terms do not always translate well.
- * Mental math may be the norm. Students may not show work in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division or they may show work in a different way.

**Judie Haynes, everythingESL.net, 2004
adapted from audience response, TESOL 2003**

Specific Challenges for ELLs in Science

ELLs may lack of background knowledge in science. Our "hands-on" approach is different from what they are used to. Drawing conclusions on their own may be difficult for ELLs. In their own culture students may not have been trained to make guesses.

Challenges that ELLs face when studying science:

- * The vocabulary of science presents a huge difficulty. There are a special set of terms for the student to learn. Even simple words that the student may know, could have another meaning in science.
- * Material is covered very fast
- * Directions are often multistep and difficult.
- * There are too many concepts explained on each page of a science text.
- * Cooperative learning may not fit in with students experiences in learning.
- * Visuals may be confusing and difficult to understand.
- * Sentence structure is complex and the passive voice is used in textbooks.
- * What was taught in class does not always match the assessment.
- * ELLs are not used to science labs or equipment
- * Students lack background in scientific method
- * There is no standard form of delivery of information

**Judie Haynes, everythingESL.net, 2004
adapted from audience response, TESOL 2003**

Challenges for ELLs in Social Studies

Social studies and U.S. history provide the biggest challenge to ELLs in their content classes. They have very limited background knowledge to activate. ELLs lack prior knowledge of U.S. and U.S. history, geography, and current events needed. Many students will memorize information for a test, but it has no relevance for them so the information is quickly forgotten.

ELLs' difficulties when studying social studies.

- * Use of higher level thinking skills for reading and writing.
- * Lack of familiarity with historical terms, government processes, and vocabulary.
- * Social Studies text contains complex sentences, passive voice, and extensive use of pronouns.
- * ELLs may not be used to expressing their personal opinions.
- * Nationalistic and cultural focus of maps.
- * Concepts which do not exist in all cultures are difficult. This includes privacy, democratic processes, rights of citizens, free will.
- * No concept of movement within the structure of a society.
- * ELLs are seldom asked to contribute an alternate view that reflects conditions in other countries.
- * Use in our schools of "timeline" teaching vs. learning history by "dynasty" or "period."
- * Difficulty with understanding what is said by the teacher and being able to take notes.
- * Amount of text covered and the ELLs' inability to tell what is important in the text and what is not important.

Qualities of Effective Practice for English Language Learners

- Customized learning environment
- Supportive school-wide climate
- School leadership
- Articulation and coordination within and between schools
- Systematic student assessment
- Staff development
- Home and parent involvement
- Use of native language and culture
- Balanced curriculum
- Explicit skills instruction
- Instructional strategies that enhance understanding
- Opportunities for practice

Establishing An Effective Classroom for ELLs

- Involve students as active participants
- Make classroom activities structured and predictable
- Focus on communication, not errors
- Give students responsibility for their own learning
- Develop the use of a discovery process
- Include the use of cooperative student efforts
- Make learning relevant to the students' experience
- Provide opportunities to work with peers
- Use thematic integration of content across subject areas
- Use native language when possible
- Integrate diversity into content
- Monitor and adapt speech to ELL students
- Combine your expertise with that of other teachers
- Build linkages with other classrooms and support within the school

Teacher Speech

- Use facial expressions, gestures, body language
- Speak slowly and clearly
- Use more pauses between phrases
- Use shorter sentences with simple syntax
- Stress high frequency vocabulary; repeat and review
- Watch for comprehension and be ready to repeat or restate

Testing Modifications for ELLS

1. Let ELLs know exactly what they are expected to learn.
2. Make a study guide using key vocabulary, important concepts and connections.
3. Use graphic organizers to increase comprehension
4. Reformat the test - Use more space.
5. Provide a word box with answers
6. Allow more time to complete the test
7. Allow students to do fewer items. Star the items you want them to do.
8. Eliminate some of the responses on multiple choice tests.
9. Highlight key words or clue words on math tests
10. Read questions for your more limited ESL students - show sample responses.
11. Don't take off points for misspelled words.
12. Simplify the language for essay questions or break the question into manageable parts.

Appert & Green, River Edge Public Schools, 2000

Adapting Materials

- teach most important unit concepts
- reduce non-essential details
- focus on the concrete
- relate materials to students' experience⁴
- use visuals
- put information in graphic organizers
- simplify vocabulary but keep key concepts
- check word choice and sentence order

Judie Haynes, 2004

Agree or Disagree?

After reading the statements below, decide whether you agree or disagree with the conclusions drawn

- _____ 1. The concept of privacy is the same in Puerto Rico as it is in the United States.
- _____ 2. The parents of your student from Brazil show that they don't care how their child is doing in school when they arrive 45 minutes late for a conference with you.
- _____ 3. Your Dominican students are always in your face. This shows that they don't respect your space.
- _____ 4. You have learned the appropriate gestures for traveling in Bolivia. You can apply this knowledge all over South America.
- _____ 5. Your Mexican parents keep their children out of school on the flimsiest of pretexts. They don't care about their children's education.
- _____ 6. You arrive at dinner an hour late in Costa Rica. Your hosts will be insulted.
- _____ 7. When you go to a bank in Colombia you would have no trouble cashing a check. Just stand in line and wait your turn. Colombians have great respect for a line.
- _____ 8. Your new student from Argentina stares at you all the time. The student is belligerent and wasn't taught any manners.

Summary:

Most Northerners supported the **Union**, because they didn't think any states should leave the Union. Most white Southerners supported the **Confederacy** because they thought the North was trying to change the South. Some Americans lived on **border** states which were between the North and South. Some of them fought for the North and some fought for the South.

General Robert E. Lee became the leader of the Confederate army. They wore gray uniforms. Later, **General Ulysses S. Grant** became the leader of the Union army. They wore blue uniforms.

The first major battle of the Civil War took place near **Manassas Junction, Virginia**. It was called the **Battle of Bull Run**. The North had more weapons and supplies, more people, and more money but the South won the battle which really surprised the North. The South wanted to win very badly.

The North tried to block the South from trading with other countries. They set up a **blockade** of ships along the southern coast. The South thought that countries like England and France would help them because they needed their cotton to make cloth.

Even though only men fought in the war, women like **Clara Barton** worked as nurses to help the soldiers. Clara Barton started the American branch of the

American Red Cross.

The blockade was working because the South was getting weaker but the North still had not won the war. President Lincoln knew the only way he could win the war was with more men. Lincoln wanted to free the slaves because he knew this would:

1) hurt the South since they would have no one to work on their plantations,

2) help the North because it would give them more men to fight on their side

3) convince Britain to help the Union because they were against slavery but needed the cotton and they wanted to see the war end.

He wrote the **Emancipation Proclamation** which was an order to free the slaves but he was afraid to give this order because he had said he was not going to stop slavery in the South. He decided that he didn't want to look like he was freeing the slaves because he was losing the war. He waited until the North had a big **victory** over the South. When the North defeated the South at the Battle of Antietam, President Lincoln **issued** the Emancipation Proclamation which freed all the slaves.

