

31 Jan 09

PSG—Working with ELL students

Things we know:

- Being familiar cultural groups better understand our students
- Communication is not just verbal
- Multiculturalism can be confusing
- ELL students have very different backgrounds from native speakers and from each other: Country, educational background, SES, malnutrition, developmental issues (resource)
- ELL students can be insecure about their status. They desire to “fit in,” not to be in “special” classes (especially high school).
- There is a difference between academic and social English (both teachers and students don’t always recognize this)
- Some kids enjoy small group interaction
- “Sheltered content” is sometimes void of critical thinking
- ELL students are capable
- Many ELL students are resilient, determined, and hardworking
- Experimentation with language is vital—mistakes are an important part of learning. Perfection isn’t important/need more professional development
- Teachers are not prepared.
- Using language in a safe environment is an important part of learning language.

Universal Principles from Judith Rance-Roney’s “Creating Intentional Communities to Support English Language Learners in the Classroom”

- Scaffolding/build schema/pre-teaching
- Rewarded peers for their help
- Worked hard to build classroom community
- Making her content multicultural
- Valued ELL students as “experts”
- Used lots of oral communication
- Modeled expectations and gradually increased independence
- Teacher developed personal relationships with ELL students, knew students needs
- Observed/watched interactions before/after class
- Individualized education
- Audio-taping
- Clearly defined standards-based objectives (teaching beyond the test)—high expectations
- Learning is meaningful
- Uses all 4 components of language—reading, listening, speaking, writing
- Project-based assignments and assessment to capitalize on student strengths
- Authentic, inquiry-based learning
- Intentional

Addressing issues and concerns using “Fostering Second Language Development in Young Children”

Important principles

#6 Language is used to communicate meaning

- Repetition is essential
- Repeat sentence patterns
- Leveling questions (starts with the higher order question and then scaffolds down gradually:
 - What is _____?
 - Is it _____ or _____?
 - Is it _____? Yes/no

#7 Language flourishes best in a language-rich environment

- Processing Time/Verbal Exchange
 - Write first (older students)
 - Think→Pair→Share
 - Think→Write→Pair→Share
 - Say something to a partner→partner shares with the group

#1 Bilingualism is an asset and should be fostered.

- Putting students in homogenous language groups for activity
- Allowing students to organize/think/take notes in native language
- Allowing students to read in native language