

Suggestions for Supporting K-12 Newcomer ESL Students In The Mainstream Classroom

1. **Sensitize mainstream students to the newcomers' challenges.** Prepare English-speaking peers for the arrival of a newcomer. Ask your students to imagine that their parents took them to another country to live. Brainstorm with them how they would feel.
2. **Be aware of the effects of culture shock.** Children may demonstrate physical ailments or display a wide variety of unusual behavior such as tantrums, crying, aggression, depression, tendency to withdraw, and sleeplessness.
3. **Create a nurturing environment.** Give lots of encouragement and praise for what the students can do, and create frequent opportunities for their success in your class. Be careful not to call on them to perform alone above their level of competence.
4. **Establish a regular routine for newcomers.** At first, everything will be chaotic to your newcomers. Give them help in organizing time, space, and materials. Give them a copy of the daily schedule. Tape it to their desks, or have them keep it at the front of their ESL notebooks. Send a copy home so that parents can help their children feel more connected to the classroom.
5. **Engage newcomers in language learning from the beginning.** Here are some ways to actively engage your newcomers in language learning.
 - ❖ **COPY WORK** Have students copy alphabet letters, numbers, their name, your name, the names of other students in the class, and beginning vocabulary words. Have them draw pictures to demonstrate comprehension of what they are copying.
 - ❖ **ROTE LEARNING** While this is not popular in American schools, it is common in many other countries. Initially, parents and students often feel more comfortable if they can see some kind of end product. You may wish to have students learn sight words, poems, chants, songs, lists, and spelling words through rote learning.
 - ❖ **THE CLASS AUTHORITY.** Each newcomer has many strengths that he or she can share with the class. When appropriate include them as resources so they too can be seen as important members of the group. Areas of expertise might be computers, math, origami, or art work.
6. **Recruit volunteers to work with newcomers.** At first, many students will not speak at all. It is critical to provide students with plenty of aural input in order to familiarize them with the sounds of the English language.
7. **Use recorded material.** A word of caution about the use of tapes and tape recorders. The student using headphones is isolated from the rest of the class.

Essential Tips for K-12 Mainstream Teachers Working with English Language Learners

- ❖ **Learn how to pronounce the student's name.**
- ❖ **Don't assume he/she does not speak or understand English...take the time to find out.**
- ❖ **Students who are recent arrivals need time to adjust.**
- ❖ **Increase your knowledge.** Learn as much as you can about the language and culture of your students. Encourage students to express their points of view and opinions on different issues and share information about their culture.
- ❖ **Families generally speak their 1st language at home.** Encourage your students to continue to speak their 1st language.
- ❖ **Encourage students to read in their 1st language.**
- ❖ **Focus on vocabulary.** Pre-teach vocabulary and concepts; use realia, demonstrations, visuals, and multiple modalities when teaching. Illustrate, label, explain multiple meaning words.
- ❖ **Read aloud!**
- ❖ **Cooperative groups are effective!** "Buddies" are great for academics, playground, lunchroom, etc.
- ❖ **Simplify your language, not the content.**
- ❖ **Speak directly to the student, emphasizing important nouns and verbs.** Avoid slang and idiomatic expressions. New vocabulary should be presented, discussed and used prior to teaching content.
- ❖ **Prepare and provide focus questions before you start to teach the lesson.**
- ❖ **For beginners, adjust the amount of work or the performance standard to be reasonable.** Increase requirements as proficiency and comfort increase.
- ❖ **Announce the lesson's objectives and activities prior to the lesson.**
- ❖ **Write the objectives.** Use pictures, drawings, diagrams, charts, labels, etc. to illustrate what will be taught. Consider using a slower rate of speech (when appropriate), enunciate clearly, use less difficult words and/or explain vocabulary that may make the content difficult to understand.
- ❖ **Don't give inflated grades.**
- ❖ **Demonstrate; use manipulatives.** Whenever possible, accompany your message with gestures, pictures and objects that help get the meaning across. Use a variety of different pictures or objects for the same idea. MODEL, MODEL, MODEL.
- ❖ **Make use of all senses.**
- ❖ **Make use of visual clues and graphic organizers.** Create semantic webs, cluster vocabulary, use graphs, charts, maps, timelines, diagrams to help convey meaning and check for understanding.
- ❖ **Access prior knowledge.** Assess students prior knowledge and tap into their past experiences to make learning interesting and meaningful.
- ❖ **Write legibly.** Some students may have low levels of literacy or are unaccustomed to the Roman alphabet.
- ❖ **Teach note-taking.** For beginners, copying IS writing. Language experience is very appropriate.
- ❖ **Provide frequent opportunities for ELL students to speak.** Use small groups, pairs, cooperative groups and native language groups (when possible).
- ❖ **Develop a student-centered approach to teaching and learning.** Students can better acquire the language when activities are planned that actively involve students.
- ❖ **Ask inferential and higher order thinking questions.** Encourage students' reasoning abilities, such as hypothesizing, inferring, analyzing, justifying, predicting and allow them to demonstrate these abilities in non-verbal ways using charts, diagrams, drawings, etc.
- ❖ **Recognize that students will make language mistakes.** Model correct grammatical form in a supportive, friendly, respectful environment.
- ❖ **Do not force reticent students to speak.** Give students opportunities, increase wait time, respond positively to students' attempts, and model correct grammar.
- ❖ **Bring the student's home language and culture into the classroom.**
- ❖ **Create listening stations so they may listen and read at the same time.**
- ❖ **Fluent conversation skills do not necessarily indicate academic proficiency.** Continue to use all of these strategies for teaching academic content.

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION CHART

	STAGE I	STAGE II
OFFICIAL NAME	PREPRODUCTION	EARLY PRODUCTION
OTHER NAMES	NEWCOMER EMERGENT SPEAKER SILENT PERIOD STAGE	EMERGENT/BEGINNER ONE-TWO WORD SOCIAL LANGUAGE STAGE
DEFINITION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students not ready to actively produce language • Listening and responding in non-verbal ways to show understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0 – 500 receptive word vocabulary • Adjusting to U.S. culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can attend to hands-on demonstrations with more understanding • May initiate conversation by pointing or using single words • Very limited comprehension/vocabulary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Up to 1000 receptive word vocabulary • Adjusting to U.S. culture
STUDENT BEHAVIORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depends heavily on context • Has minimal receptive vocabulary • Comprehends key words only • Indicates comprehension physically (points, draws, gestures, etc.) • May not produce speech <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABLE TO: observe, locate, label, match, show, classify, categorize 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depends heavily on context • Produces words in isolation • Verbalizes key words • Responds with one/two word answer or short phrases • Indicates comprehension physically • Mispronunciation/grammar errors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ABLE TO: name, recall, draw, list, record, point out, underline, organize
TEACHING STRATEGIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use manipulatives, visuals, realia, props, games • Create climate of acceptance/respect that supports acculturation • Use cooperative learning groups • Require physical response to check comprehension • Display print to support oral language • Model activities for students • Use hands-on activities • Use bilingual students as peer helpers • Adjust rate of speech to enhance comprehension • Ask yes/no questions • Ask students to show/point/draw • Teach content area vocabulary/terminology 	<p style="text-align: center;">Continue Stage I Strategies PLUS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify language/not content • Lessons designed to motivate students to talk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students questions that require one/two word responses: who?, what?, which one?, how many? • Lessons expand vocabulary
RELATIVE TIME LINE FOR EACH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION STAGE	0 – 6 Months in U.S. School	6 Months – 1 Year in U.S. School

Please note students progress at independent rates depending on previous schooling, acculturation, and motivation. Students with no previous schooling will take longer to progress through these stages.

Please remember most English Language Learners students have extensive language ability in their first language.

2. Stages of Adjustment for Newcomers

Most of our language minority families are still adjusting to the mainstream culture and language of the United States. The lives of these families changed radically when they moved to this country. Relationships with kin and community were disrupted, as were culturally valued ways of connecting families to community life.

It helps to recognize that different stages of adjustment may elicit different responses from parents with respect to their willingness and/or availability to be actively involved in their children's education. For example, all newcomers to the school system need basic information

about school requirements, routines, schedules, and the like. For language minority newcomers, such information may need to be given in the home language and in a setting where there can be personal, face-to-face exchange and clarification. As families become more settled in the community and feel more familiar with how the school system operates, they may be more willing to participate in governance and advocacy activities.

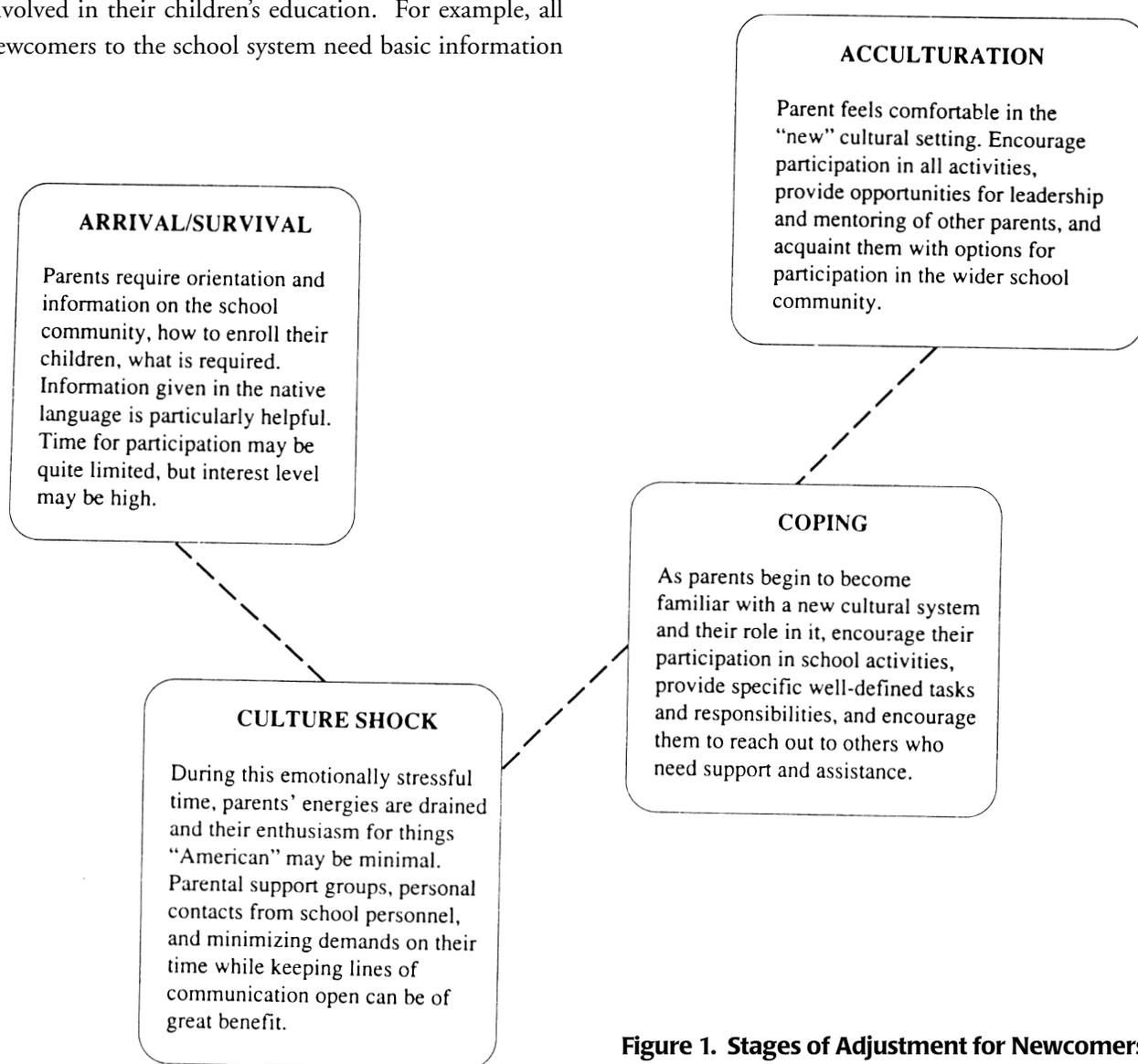
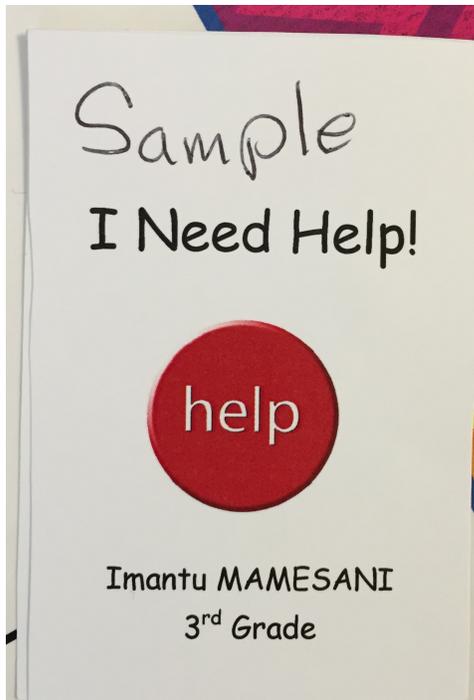


Figure 1. Stages of Adjustment for Newcomers

Differentiating Instruction and Assessment for English Learners

LEVEL 1	Instruction	Assessment
In General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide sensory supports for lessons: real objects, pictures, hands-on materials, nonverbal communication, demonstrations, modeling. Provide use of graphic organizers. Allow use of native language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on correct answers rather than errors and omissions. Allow students to work with bilingual/ELL teachers. Allow for alternative grading system (Pass/Fail).
Listening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach basic commands by modeling actions (Please close your book.) Use simplified, correct language, repeating or paraphrasing. Allow sufficient wait time. Employ think-alouds to model both process and language. During oral teaching simultaneously model the completion of the work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate comprehension by means of student nonverbal communication (pointing, thumbs up/down, gestures). Test orally using everyday language to elicit individual words or short phrases. All first language responses. Ask for understanding through matching or sequencing visuals with a verbal response.
Speaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage participation in discussion by eliciting nonverbal or brief communication (one word or short phrase answers). Prompt and scaffold oral language by modeling academic and content language (The rabbit has fur. The ____ has scales.) Concentrate on student meaning rather than on correctness. Build confidence by rewarding all attempts to communicate. 	
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since Level 1 students are typically unable to derive meaning from print alone, use visual supports. Support grade level content curriculum with high-quality, age-appropriate, lower-reading-level books. Teach pre-reading skills within the context of your content area. Access students' background knowledge to bridge their experience with the topic. Implement shared or guided reading. Incorporate native language. 	<p>Many level 1 students will not be able to independently read an assessment in English.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows students to demonstrate content knowledge without language mastery (sentence frames, word banks, graphic organizers). Test students with visuals (sequencing, matching).
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask students to communicate through cutting and pasting images or drawings. Prompt and scaffold written language by modeling content and academic language through providing sentence frames. Accept drawing, copying and labeling as a way to describe level of knowledge of topic. Concentrate on student meaning rather than on correctness of expression. Promote higher order thinking skills by modeling the use of graphic organizers such as Venn Diagrams, T-Charts, and concept maps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elicit beginning writing (drawings, labeling, production of words, phrases). Use visually supported graphic organizers that student complete with pictures, words, or short phrases to check for understanding. Allow native language or mix of native language and English.



Front



Back

Idea: Create cards like these for basic survival skills.

4. Recommended Classroom Strategies

Using a learner-centered approach to teaching provides LEP students with a greater opportunity to interact meaningfully with educational materials as they acquire English and learn subject matter.

Most of the following recommended strategies are

promoted as good teaching strategies for all students.

This is an important point because teachers don't usually have the time to prepare a separate lesson for their LEP students and/or to work with them regularly on an individual basis.

A. Total Physical Response (TPR)

TPR activities greatly multiply the amount of language input that can be handled by beginning LEP students. Students become ready to talk sooner when they are under no pressure to do so. TPR activities tie comprehension with performance by eliciting whole-body responses. Students build self-confidence along with a wide-ranging passive vocabulary base as they "learn by doing."

TPR activities help the student adjust to school. Teachers can prepare students to understand the behavior required and the instructions they will hear in mainstream classrooms, in the halls, during fire drills, on trips, etc. Teachers can develop their own scripts that provide students with the vocabulary related to everyday situations such as watching TV, using a pay telephone, getting ready for school, etc.

Seven basic steps outline the strategy:

1. **Setting up.** The teacher sets up a situation in which students follow a set of commands using actions, generally with props, to act out a series of events—for example, shopping for groceries, taking the school bus, or preparing a sandwich.
2. **Demonstration.** The teacher demonstrates or has a student demonstrate the series of actions. Students

are expected to pay careful attention, but they do not talk or repeat the commands.

3. **Group live action.** The group acts out the series as the teacher gives commands. Usually this step is repeated several times so that students internalize the series thoroughly before they produce it.
4. **Written copy.** The series is put on chart paper or on the blackboard for students to read and copy.
5. **Oral repetition and questions.** After students have made a written copy, they repeat each line after the teacher, taking care with difficult words. They have ample opportunity to ask questions, and the teacher points out particular pronunciation features such as minimal pairs (soap/soup or cheap/sheep).
6. **Student demonstration.** Students are given the opportunity to play the roles of reader of the series and performer of the actions. The teacher checks comprehension and prompts when needed.
7. **Pairs.** Students work in groups of two or three, one telling or reading the series, and the other(s) listening and responding physically. During the group work time, the teacher can work individually with students.

Examples for Early Elementary Classes

First example:

Stand up.
Sit down.
Raise one hand.
Put your hand down.
Raise two hands.
Put your hands down.
Touch your nose.
Touch your ear, etc.

Second example:

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn around.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, touch the ground.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, read the news.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, shine your shoes.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, go upstairs.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, say your prayers.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn out the light.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, say goodnight.

Examples for Upper Elementary Classes

First example:

Watching TV

1. It's time to watch your favorite show. Turn on the TV.
2. This is the wrong show. You hate this show. Make a terrible face. Change the channel.
3. This show is great! Smile! Sit down in your favorite chair.
4. This part is very funny. Laugh.
5. Now there's a commercial. Get up and get a snack and a drink. Sit down again.
6. The ending is very sad. Cry.
7. The show is over. Turn off the TV.
8. Go to bed.

Second example:

Good Morning

1. It's seven o'clock in the morning.
2. Wake up.
3. Stretch and yawn and rub your eyes.
4. Get up.
5. Do your exercises.
6. Enter the bathroom.
7. Wash your face.
8. Go back to your bedroom.
9. Get dressed.
10. Make the bed.
11. Go to the kitchen.
12. Eat breakfast.
13. Read the newspaper.
14. Go to the bathroom and brush your teeth.
15. Put on your coat.
16. Kiss your family good-bye.
17. Leave the house.

B. Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning has grown in popularity because it has proven to be effective for both academically advanced and lower achieving students. In addition to promoting learning, this system fosters respect and friendship among heterogeneous groups of students. For this reason, cooperative learning offers much to teachers who are trying to involve LEP students in all-English classroom activities. Also, some language minority students come from cultures that encourage cooperative interaction, and they may be more comfortable in an environment of shared learning.

Cooperative learning includes the following basic elements:

Heterogeneous groups of students with assigned roles to perform

Cooperative learning consists of student-centered learning activities completed by students in heterogeneous groups of two to six. Through a shared learning activity, students benefit from observing learning strategies used by their peers. LEP students further benefit from face-to-face verbal interactions, which promote communication that is natural and meaningful. When students work in heterogeneous groups, issues related to the capabilities and status of group members sometimes arise—cooperative learning addresses these issues by assigning roles to each member of the group. Such roles as “set up,” “clean up,” and “reporter” help the group complete its tasks smoothly. They provide all members with a purpose that is separate from the academic activity and enable them to contribute to the successful completion of the learning task.

Lessons structured for positive interdependence among group members

After establishing student learning groups, teachers must next consider structuring the lessons to create a situation of positive interdependence among the members of the groups. Several strategies encourage students to de-

pend on each other in a positive way for their learning: limiting available materials, which creates the need for sharing; assigning a single task for the group to complete collaboratively; and assigning each student only a certain piece of the total information necessary to complete a task, such as reading only a portion of an assigned chapter or knowing only one step in a complex math problem. Students are made responsible for each other’s learning and only through sharing their pieces of information will the group be able to complete the assignment.

Identification and practice of specific social behaviors

The third basic element in cooperative learning classrooms is the social behaviors necessary for success in working cooperatively. These behaviors include sharing, encouraging others, and accepting responsibility for the learning of others. They must be overtly identified by the teacher, practiced in non-threatening situations, and reinforced throughout the school year.

Evaluation through whole-class wrap-up, individual testing, and group recognition

The fourth feature of cooperative learning is evaluation, which can be done at three levels. The success of shared learning activities is judged daily in a wrap-up or processing session. At the end of the cooperative lesson, the entire class reconvenes to report on content learning and group effectiveness in cooperation. The teacher conducts a classwide discussion in which reporters tell what happened in the group activity, successful learning strategies are shared, and students form generalizations or link learning to previously developed concepts.

Even though students work collaboratively and become responsible for each other’s learning, individuals are still held accountable for their own academic achievement. The scores students receive on tests form the basis of class grades, as they do in a traditional classroom.

Examples for Early Elementary Classes

First example:

Numbered Heads Together

This is a simple structure, consisting of four steps:

1. Students number off.
2. Teacher announces a question and a time limit.
3. Students put their heads together to come up with the answer.
4. Teacher calls a number, calls on a student with that number, and recognizes the correct answer.

Second example:

Pairs-Check

Pairs-Check is one way of ensuring that there will be helping among students and that all students will stay on task when they are asked to complete mastery-oriented worksheets. The instructions on a math worksheet might read as follows:

“You are to work in pairs in your teams. Person one in the pair is to do the first problem, while person two acts as a coach. Coaches, if you agree that person one has done the problem correctly, give him or her some praise, then switch roles. When you have both finished the first two problems, do not continue. You need to first check with the other pair. If you don't agree on the first two problems, figure out what went wrong. When both pairs agree on the first two problems, give a team handshake, and then proceed to the next two problems. Remember to switch roles after each problem. Person one does the odd-numbered problems; person two the even-numbered problems. After every two problems, check with the other pair.”

Examples for Upper Elementary Classes

Roundrobin

Roundrobin and Roundtable (Kagan, 1989) are simple cooperative learning techniques that can be used to encourage participation among all group members, especially LEP students. Teachers present a category to students in cooperative learning groups, and students take turns around the group naming items to fit the category. The activity is called Roundrobin when the students give answers orally. When they pass a sheet of paper and write their answers, the activity is called Roundtable.

Good topics for Roundrobin activities are those that have enough components to go at least three times around the circle with ease. Therefore, with cooperative groups of four or five students, the categories should have 12 to 15 easy answers. Topics to use for teaching and practicing Roundrobin could include

- Things that are green.
- Things found in a city.
- Words beginning with A.

Students are usually given a time limit, such as one or two minutes, to list as many items as they can. However, each student speaks in turn so that no one student dominates the list. Roundrobin and Roundtable often help pupils concentrate on efficiency and strategies for recall. During the wrap-up, teachers can ask the most successful team to share strategies that helped them compile their list. Other learning groups will be able to try those strategies in their next round. Roundrobin or Roundtable topics are limited only by the imagination. Here are a few sample categories for various content areas. They are ordered here from simplest (or useful in lower grades) to most advanced (or useful at higher grade levels).

(continued)

C. Language Experience Approach

The Language Experience Approach has a number of features that enhance whole language learning for LEP students. Students learn that what they say is important enough to be written down; they learn how language is encoded by watching as their oral language is put into print; and they use familiar language—their own—in follow-up activities.

Suggested steps:

1. The “experience” to be written about may be a drawing, something the student brought from home, a group experience planned by the teacher (field trip, science experiment, party, etc.), or simply a topic to discuss.
2. The student is asked to tell about his/her experience. Beginning students might draw a picture of the experience and then label it with help from the teacher, aide, or volunteer.
3. The student then dictates his or her story or experience to the teacher, aide, volunteer, or to another student. The writer copies down the story exactly as it is dictated. (Do not correct the student’s grammar while the story is being written down.)
4. The teacher reads the story back, pointing to the words, with the student reading along. With young children at the very beginning levels, it may be necessary to read back each sentence as it is dictated.
5. The student reads the story silently and/or aloud to other students or to the teacher.
6. The experience stories are saved and can be used for instruction in all types of reading skills.
7. When students are ready, they can begin to write their own experience stories. A good way to introduce this is to discuss the experience, write a group experience story, and then have students write their own stories.
8. Students can rewrite their own previous stories as their language development progresses, and then illustrate them to make books for other students to read.

Follow-up activities

Select follow-up activities based on student levels. *Beginning students* might search for certain words and underline them, read the story in chorus, or participate in an oral close activity.

Intermediate students might unscramble sentences, choose words and make cards for a word bank, or match sentence strips to sequenced pictures from a story.

Duplicate the story and have students use small copies for reading, selecting, and practicing vocabulary words. Children may enjoy making covers for their own copies of the story, illustrating the pages, and taking the books home to read to family members.

For students who are in content-area classes but have limited literacy skills, the Language Experience Approach could be a strategy that an ESL teacher or other support staff could use to have the students dictate the main points of a lesson. This approach would not only help students focus on comprehension and retention of important subject matter, but would help improve their reading and writing abilities as well.

**Excerpt from a dialogue journal between a teacher and Claudia,
a sixth grade student from El Salvador:**

Claudia: The new teacher of helper in our class is very good. I like her, don't you like her? Today she helped me and us a lot. But Tony didn't want help. Why doesn't Tony want us to help him?

I will try & bring my lunch every day from now on because the turkey stew & other lunches put me sick. I hate them. When I am very hungry I have to eat them but when I get to my house my stomach hurts & I am sick for 3 days. Can't the teachers protest or say something about the food that they give here?

What do you feed chickens here? We have a hen that layd an egg.

Teacher: The lunches are not that bad! I've eaten them sometimes. You are wise to bring your own lunch. That is usually what I do too. You have such good food at home that nothing served here could taste so good!

Tony is embarrassed. He wants help, but he does not want anyone to know that he needs it. Offer to help him and if he says "no," then leave him alone.

Chickens will eat scraps of bread, wheat, seeds, water, and some insects.

E. Games

Games are a fun and effective way to promote language learning. Action games such as "Simon Says" and "Duck, Duck, Goose," along with finger games such as "Where is Thumbkin?" and "The Itsy Bitsy Spider," are appropriate for early elementary students. Index-card games based on categories and "Twenty Questions" or "What's My Line?" are examples of games that are suit-

able for upper elementary students. Games are especially helpful when the repetition of words or concepts is necessary to increase a student's knowledge of vocabulary and concepts that require memorization. It is recommended that competition be downplayed for most games, that the rules be few, and that they be clearly explained and demonstrated before play is begun.

Examples for Early Elementary Classes

First example:

Who Took the Cookie?

Group: Who took the cookie from the cookie jar?
(Children clap in rhythm)

Leader: Bobbie took the cookie from the cookie jar.

Bobbie: Who, me?

Group: Yes, you.

Bobbie: Couldn't be.

Group: Then who?

Bobbie: Maria took the cookie from the cookie jar.

Maria: Who, me? (Etc.)

Second example:

Five Little Monkeys (Finger Play)

Five little monkeys, sitting in a tree (hold up hand with fingers spread apart)

Teasing Mr. Alligator: "Can't catch me!" (wag pointing finger back and forth)

Along came Mr. Alligator, hungry as can be (rub tummy)

(Put hands together like an alligator mouth and snap shut quickly)

Four little monkeys, sitting in a tree . . . etc.

Three little monkeys, sitting in a tree . . . etc.

Two little monkeys, sitting in a tree . . . etc.

One little monkey, sitting in a tree . . . etc. (clap hands)

"Ooops, you missed!"

Third example:

A La Rueda De San Miguel

A la rueda de San Miguel
todos traen su caja de miel.
A lo maduro, a lo maduro,
que se voltee (student's name) de burro.

The children form a circle and join hands. After each verse, someone puts a student's name in the last line, e.g., "Que se voltee **Maria** de burro." **Maria** then has to turn and face away from the circle and join hands again. The game continues until everyone is turned facing away from the center of the circle. At the end, while still holding hands, everyone backs toward the middle of the circle and attempts to sit down.

3. Recommendations for Teaching Reading to LEP Students

Approach reading through meaningful text

Let the LEP student practice whole sentences useful for everyday life. Phrases that can be used with other children will interest the LEP student because of the need for them. Start with sentences, then go to individual words for phonics contrasts. Many LEP students have difficulty distinguishing one English sound from another—especially the sounds that don't exist in their native language.

For example, Spanish speaking students will have a particularly hard time with English vocalic contrasts because in Spanish there are only five vowel sounds while English has eleven. Spanish-speaking students may not hear the difference between: bit & bet, boat & bought, or bat & but. Students must be able to hear the vowel distinction before they are expected to produce it.

Read authentic literature, and minimize the use of worksheets

Phonics worksheets are often baffling and anxiety-producing for LEP students because they are processing the sounds through a different language “filter” than their English-speaking peers.

Don't automatically place the student in a low ability group

Good readers can provide better models, stimulation, and help for the LEP students.

Introduce words orally before incorporating them in to a reading lesson

The most effective teaching technique is to “go from the known to the unknown.”

Begin with pattern and predictable books

These are excellent for beginning readers of any language.

Teach individual words in context

This way, LEP students can relate new words to meaningful situations.

Don't ask a student to read aloud for purposes of testing comprehension

The danger is that a student may become a word caller and will not concentrate on meaning. LEP students who are forced to read aloud worry about pronunciation and what other classmates' reactions will be. A student who is self-conscious about pronunciation will not think about meaning.

Don't worry about “native-sounding” pronunciation

If the LEP student can be understood without difficulty, then correcting his or her pronunciation is not necessary. As they gain more exposure to English over the years their pronunciation will improve. There is some evidence that a LEP student who begins to study English after about 12 years of age is likely to retain for life some degree of a foreign accent when speaking English.

4. Suggested Resources and Activities to Help Promote Literacy

1. Predictable Books

A. Fairy Tales (These are fun to act out using simple props.)

Little Red Riding Hood

Little Red Hen

Goldilocks and the Three Bears

Three Little Pigs

Bilingual Fables (Fabulas Bilingues) such as *Tina the Turtle and Carlos the Rabbit* are available from National Textbook Company (1-800-323-4900).

B. Children's Literature

Goodnight Moon - Margaret Wise Brown

Brown Bear, Brown Bear - Bill Martin, Jr.

The Very Hungry Caterpillar - Eric Carle

Green Eggs and Ham - Dr. Seuss

Caps for Sale - Esphyr Slobodkin

C. Big Books

In a Dark, Dark Wood

Mrs. Wishy-Washy

One Cold, Wet Night

The Big Toe

2. Songs

Hokey-Pokey...great for teaching body parts

The Mulberry Bush

Ten Little Indians

Old MacDonald Had a Farm

She'll Be Comin' 'Round the Mountain

Three Blind Mice

I'm a Little Teapot

Itsy Bitsy Spider

“Skip to my Lou”

(for beginning consonant sounds)

Who has a word that starts with /k/?

Starts, starts, starts with /k/?

Who has a word that starts with /k/?

Skip to my Lou, my darling!

(Call on or toss a ball to a student who knows a word that starts with /k/. The word is repeated, and used in the song.)

Cat is a word that starts with /k/,

Starts, starts, starts with /k/.

Cat is a word that starts with /k/,

Skip to my Lou, my darling!

(Let's try it as a whole group with /b/)

“Skip to my Lou”

(for ending consonant sounds)

Who has a word that ends with /t/?

Ends, ends, ends with /t/?

Who has a word that ends with /t/?

Skip to my Lou, my darling!

Cat is a word that ends with /t/,

Ends, ends, ends with /t/.

Cat is a word that ends with /t/,

Skip to my Lou, my darling.

Hap Palmer records are highly recommended and make learning fun. One example is *Learning Basic Skills Through Music*.

Jazz Chants for Children by Carolyn Graham incorporate the rhythms of American English and repetition of words and sounds to make an entertaining and effective learning tool. Student books and cassettes of *Jazz Chants for Children*, *Jazz Chant Fairy Tales*, and *Jazzy Chants* are available from Delta Systems Co., Inc. (1-800-323-8270).

3. Poems

- 1, 2 buckle my shoe
- 3, 4 shut the door
- 5, 6 pick up sticks
- 7, 8 lay them straight

9, 10 a big fat hen.....have the students compose their own class poem.

4. Nursery Rhymes

Jack and Jill
Mary Had a Little Lamb
Little Jack Horner
Jack Be Nimble

Poetry that accompanies any classroom activity is fun and promotes language acquisition. Two suggested poetry books are *Where the Sidewalk Ends* and *A Light in the Attic* by Shel Silverstein.

5. Rhymes for Practicing Spanish Vowel Sounds

A

Mi gatita enferma está,
No sé si se curará,
O si al fin se morirá,
mi gatita enferma está.

E

A mí me gusta el café
No sé si lo tomaré,
o si, al fin, lo dejaré,
a mí me gusta el café.

I

Mi sombrero perdí,
Con un lazo de carmesí,
y un ramito de alhelí,
mi sombrero perdí.

O

Tengo un bonito reloj,
Mi papá me lo compró,
y ayer tarde se paró,
tengo un bonito reloj.

U

Ayer cantaba el cucú,
En el árbol de bambú,
¿Dime si lo oíste tú?
Ayer cantaba el cucú.

Tres Tristes Tigres

Tres tristes tigres tragaban trigo,
en tres tristes trastos en un trigal.
En tres tristes trastos en un trigal,
tres tristes tigres tragaban trigo.

¿Cuántos Cuentos?

Cuando cuentas cuentos,
cuenta cuántos cuentas,
porque cuando cuentas cuentos,
nunca sabes cuántos cuentas cuentas.

13 Things for K-12 Mainstream Teachers to Consider When **Teaching Newcomers to Read**

- 1. Read to newcomers every day.** Appropriate reading material for beginning English Language Learners (ELL) should include at least some of these characteristics.
 - ❖ Numerous illustrations that help clarify the text
 - ❖ Story plots that are action-based
 - ❖ Little text on each page
 - ❖ Text that contains repetitive, predictable phrases
 - ❖ High-frequency vocabulary and useful words
 - ❖ Text that employs simple sentence structures
- 2. Use reading strategies to increase students' comprehension.** When you read to beginning ESL students, be sure to make language comprehensible to them.
 - ❖ Point to the corresponding pictures as you read the text.
 - ❖ Act out, dramatize, and provide models and manipulatives for students to handle.
 - ❖ Read sentences at a slow-to-normal speed, using an expressive tone.
 - ❖ Allow time after each sentence or paragraph for students to assimilate the material.
 - ❖ Verify comprehension of the story by asking students to point to items in the illustrations and to answer yes/no and either/or questions.
 - ❖ Read the same story on successive days. Pause at strategic points and invite students to supply the words or phrases they know.
 - ❖ Point to the words in the text as you read them. This is particularly useful for students who need to learn the left-to-right flow of English text.
 - ❖ When students are familiar with the story, invite them to “read” along with you as you point to the words.
 - ❖ If appropriate for younger students, use Big Books, as both text and illustrations can be easily seen.
- 3. Teach the alphabet.** Preliterate students and literate newcomers who speak a language that does not use the Roman alphabet need direct instruction in letter recognition and formation as well as beginning phonics.
- 4. Use authentic literature.** Begin with materials that have easily understood plots, high frequency vocabulary and few idiomatic expressions.
- 5. Teach phonics in context.** Using authentic literature, you can introduce and reinforce letter recognition, beginning and ending sounds, blends, rhyming words, silent letters, homonyms, etc. Phonics worksheets are not generally useful to the newcomer since they present new vocabulary items out of context.
- 6. Make sure students understand the meaning.** Your students may learn to decode accurately but be unable to construct meaning out of the words they have read. Teach newcomers to reflect on what they have decoded and to ask questions to be sure they understand.

7. **Check comprehension through sequencing activity.** Check student comprehension with one or more of the following activities.
 - ❖ Write individual sentences from the text on separate sheets of drawing paper; then read or have the students read each sentence and illustrate it.
 - ❖ Informally test students' ability to sequence material from a story: print sentences from a section of the story on paper strips, mix the strips; have students put them in order.
 - ❖ Check students' ability to order words within a sentence; write several sentences from the text on individual strips of paper; cut the strips into words; have students arrange each group of words into a sentence.

8. **Provide for audio review.** Set up a tape recorder and record stories as you read. Newcomers then have the opportunity to listen to a story, and read along, as many times as they wish.

9. **Teach reading in the home language first.** Whenever feasible students should have an opportunity to receive reading instruction in their home language prior to receiving reading instruction in English. If you are a mainstream teacher and find yourself responsible for the developmental reading instruction of preliterate newcomers, allow newcomers time to develop some aural familiarity with English and build a vocabulary base before beginning reading instruction.

10. **Encourage reading outside of the classroom.** Stock your classroom library and encourage newcomers' parents to join the public library and check out picture books, books with read-along tapes, and home-language books, if available.

11. **Encourage newcomers to explore creative writing in English.** Students will learn to write faster when they have real reasons to write. Motivate students to write by providing them with meaningful reasons to write.

12. **Establish an English Language Learner Center.** Fill the ELL Center with activities for your new language learners.
 Here are some of the items you may want to include in your ELL Learning Center. It is not necessary to put everything in at once. Add to the Learning Center a little bit at a time.
 - ❖ Tape recorder and earphones
 - ❖ Copies of appropriate activity pages, and keep them in a loose-leaf binder, a large envelope, or a folder with pockets.)
 - ❖ Crayons, scissors, pencils, erasers, and paper
 - ❖ An ESL notebook
 - ❖ An ESL folder for Dictionary pages
 - ❖ Labels for classroom objects
 - ❖ A picture file (class-made or commercial)
 - ❖ Well-illustrated magazines for cutting out pictures
 - ❖ Blank 3"x 5" index cards to be used for flash cards or concentration games
 - ❖ A picture dictionary
 - ❖ Home-language books on your newcomers' reading levels
 - ❖ Home-language magazines with lots of pictures
 - ❖ Nonfiction picture books from the library that cover the same content material you

are currently teaching

- ❖ Beginning phonics books with tapes
- ❖ Taped music in both English and home language
- ❖ Picture books and well-illustrated beginning-to-read books with tapes
- ❖ Simple games: dot-to-dot activities, word searches, concentration games, sequencing activities, and jigsaw puzzles
- ❖ An “object” box containing small manipulative objects for beginning vocabulary or phonics learning.

13. Make up individualized Starter Packs for your newcomers. The Starter Pack enables entry-level students to work independently on activities suited to their specific needs. Encourage students to work on these activities when they cannot follow the work being done in the classroom. Remember, however, not to isolate the newcomers from their peers with separate work all day long. They, too, need to be a part of your class and should be integrated as much as possible.