



STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING TO LANGUAGE LEARNERS

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Cite This Article: J. Radhakrishnan, "Strategies for Effective Teaching to Language Learners", International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research in Arts and Humanities, Volume 2, Issue 2, Page Number 191-194, 2017.

Abstract:

Language is viewed not only as a tool for communication but as a key zooms in on for the development of thinking, identity and personal growth. The development of the child and the growth of language go hand in hand in what is often perceived as a fair and natural process. Learning strategies are defined as "specifications, behaviors, steps, or techniques-- such as seeking out conversation partners, or giving oneself encouragement to tackle a difficult language task -- used by students to enhance their own learning"(Scarcella&Oxford,1992,p. 63). Learning strategies can be classified into six groups: cognitive, metacognitive, memory-related, compensatory, affective, and social. These help to observe record and analyze the strategies and techniques. The intent of a Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS), Right Question (RTI) model is to offer levels of interventions for addressing student failure as it is occurring and without waiting for a special education evaluation (Hamayan et al., 2007). English Language Development (ELD) is the systematic use of instructional strategies designed to promote the acquisition of English by students whose primary language is not English. English Language Learners (ELLs) of diverse backgrounds may struggle to grasp content and may approach the content from very different perspectives. Drawing on the students' background knowledge and experiences, can be an effective way to bridge gaps and to make the content more accessible. This paper discusses the effective strategies that can be adopted to teach and learn foreign language and to create a society that deal with language skill without flaw.

Introduction:

Indeed, language learning strategy research has faced a barrage of criticism in recent years, much of which is justified. The unfortunate result, however, is a field of research that once garnered much attention in the academic community becoming a field that many new scholars are hesitant to enter.

A *learning strategy* in language learning has been defined as conscious mental activity that contains a goal or intention, an action to reach this goal, and a learning activity (Cohen, 2007). However, Cohen also notes contention among academics over this definition, in that not all learning strategies necessarily reflect these three factors. *Self-regulation* in language learning refers to the processes the learner uses to exercise control over learning. This term has also caused contention in the field, and some researchers use the term synonymous with *autonomy* and *self-management* (Cohen, 2007). There are obvious connections that link both learning strategies and self-regulation to self-access learning, as they share core notions of independent learning settings, learner-centeredness, and the raising of awareness and knowledge necessary for a learner to exercise responsibility for their learning (White, 2008).

ELD & the Natural Approach:

ELD is an acronym for English Language Development. According to Dr. Stephen Krashen, an expert in the study of second language acquisition and the co-author of The Natural Approach, the best way to learn a second language is through total immersion. ELD strategies support this learning method, enabling students to acquire English language in a manner similar to the way they learned their native language, naturally and through regular interaction with others who already know the language. In the natural process of language acquisition, students first develop basic communication skills in English. The focus is on fluency and learning to speak English in a social context with native speakers, which is why heterogeneous cooperative grouping is so important to the Natural Approach.

- ✓ Use visuals that reinforce spoken or written words.
- ✓ Employ gestures for added emphasis
- ✓ Adjust your speech: Speak slowly; enunciate; use longer natural pauses; repeat words or phrases; include shorter sentences, fewer pronouns, and simpler syntax.
- ✓ Exaggerate intonations at times.
- ✓ Stress high-frequency vocabulary words.
- ✓ Use fewer idioms and clarify the meaning of words or phrases in context.
- ✓ Stress participatory learning.
- ✓ Maintain a low anxiety level and be enthusiastic.

ELD Focuses on Four Skill Areas:

- ✓ **Function:** Functions are the purposes of communication. This includes social conversations, jokes, and inquiry.

- ✓ **Form:** This refers to the structure of the English language such as grammar, sentence structure, and syntax. These are used as building blocks.
- ✓ **Fluency:** Fluency is the ease in speaking the language. English language learners need ample amount of time just practicing speaking English in order to become fluent.
- ✓ **Vocabulary:** The development of a wide and varied vocabulary is essential. Research shows that English language learners should be taught key vocabulary, or brick words, prior to a lesson in order to assist them in their language development. For example, whatever concept you are teaching, it is recommended that you include vocabulary words that will make the content more comprehensible to the learner.

Differentiating Instruction for Ells:

With the recent emphasis on standards-based instruction, there has been much discussion about what constitutes appropriate content, instruction, and assessment for English language learners. As educators have grappled with this issue, it has become clear that educational parity can only be achieved if ELLs have an opportunity to learn the same rigorous academic content as native English speakers. The best way to achieve that goal is through differentiated instruction that takes into account ELLs' English language proficiency, as well as the many other factors that can impact learning (Fairbairn & Jones-Vo, 2010). Differentiated instruction, by definition, is instruction that is designed to support individual students' learning in a classroom of students with varied backgrounds and needs. Teachers are successful at differentiating instruction for ELLs when they:

- ✓ **Get to Know as Much as Possible About Each Student** - ELLs represent a wide range of academic skills, interests, languages, English language proficiency levels, and cultures. The more a teacher can learn about each student's background, the better prepared s/he is to provide appropriate instruction for that student.
- ✓ **Have High Expectations for all Students** - Content should not be "watered down" for students who are still developing English language skills. Creative teachers think of ways to help students understand key material and "show what they know" in ways that match their language proficiency levels.
- ✓ **Have a Variety of Research-Based Instructional Strategies at Hand** - experienced teachers know that "one-size-fits-all" instruction is rarely successful. There are many different learning profiles in any given classroom, and students learn best when instruction matches their needs and learning styles.
- ✓ **Use Ongoing Assessment to Guide Instruction** - Ongoing, informal assessment is vitally important to matching instruction to students' changing needs.
- ✓ **Provide Multiple Types of Assessment** - matching assessment to students' learning profiles and language proficiency ensures that every student has an opportunity to demonstrate what he/she knows.
- ✓ **Differentiate Homework** - If all students have the same homework assignments, some are doing busy work while others are struggling with work that they cannot possibly complete successfully (Tomlinson, 2005).
- ✓ **Collaborate** - Instruction is most successful when all of the professionals who work with ELLs work together.
- ✓ **Use Flexible Grouping** - Small group instruction is a very effective way of making sure that all students can access important content, and keeping groups flexible allows teachers to match students with different peers for different types of activities.

Peer Learning and Ells:

Classmates are a valuable resource in helping English language learners succeed, whether by showing students around the school on their first day or serving as a buddy in the classroom. Peers can help build student confidence and also act as language models, giving ELLs a chance to practice their new language skills in a low-stress setting. Here are some popular strategies that can be used with all students to learn content (such as science, math, social studies, language arts, and foreign languages). However, they are particularly beneficial to ELLs for learning English and content at the same time. Most of these strategies are especially effective in teams of four:

- ✓ **Round Robin** - Present a category (such as "Names of Mammals") for discussion. Have students take turns going around the group and naming items that fit the category.
- ✓ **Roundtable** - Present a category (such as words that begin with "b"). Have students take turns writing one word at a time.
- ✓ **Write Around** - For creative writing or summarization, give a sentence starter (for example: If you give an elephant a cookie, he's going to ask for...). Ask all students in each team to finish that sentence. Then, they pass their paper to the right, read the one they received, and add a sentence to that one. After a few rounds, four great stories or summaries emerge. Give children time to add a conclusion and/or edit their favorite one to share with the class.
- ✓ **Numbered Heads Together** - Ask students to number off in their teams from one to four. Announce a question and a time limit. Students put their heads together to come up with an answer. Call a number

and ask all students with that number to stand and answer the question. Recognize correct responses and elaborate through rich discussions.

- ✓ **Team Jigsaw** - Assign each student in a team one fourth of a page to read from any text (for example, a social studies text), or one fourth of a topic to investigate or memorize. Each student completes his or her assignment and then teaches the others or helps to put together a team product by contributing a piece of the puzzle.

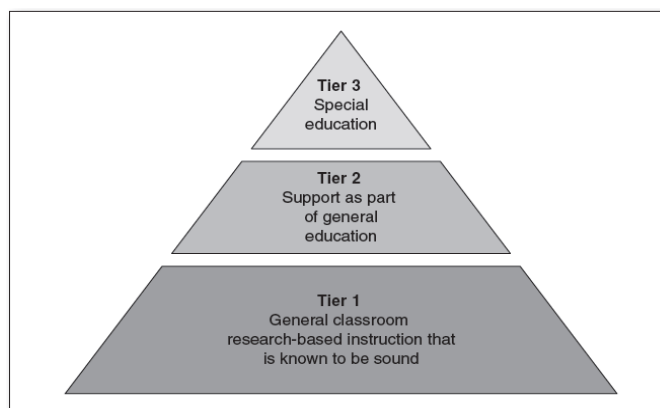
Visual Thinking Strategies:

It is a very simple activity designed to build students' background knowledge and develop thinking skills that use detail to enhance understanding. Many educators have used this method as a precursor to working on a literary passage because the thinking skills used to analyze artwork can be transferred to literature as well. The Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) method was created by *Abigail Housen*, a cognitive psychologist in the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The teacher selects an interesting picture or painting, one that relates to the topic of the story to be read, in this case the picture above.

- ✓ A copy of this picture is placed on the overhead projector. There are many sources of pictures on the Internet, including museum and library websites. (See the Hot Links section).
- ✓ The students are asked, "Please look at the picture silently for a minute and think about what you see. What's going on in the picture?"
- ✓ After a minute the teacher opens up the question to the room, "What do you see in the picture?" The students' responses often start out with the obvious - "There's a man walking a dog and another man riding a bike. The picture looks old. I think it was taken in a city."
- ✓ When a student offers a qualitative statement, the teacher asks for more information. "You said the picture looks old. What makes you say that?"
- ✓ The students justify their answers by providing evidence from the picture. They may say, "It's in black and white, and the cars in the back all look like they were made a long time ago."
- ✓ Next the teacher asks students to share differing opinions and provide justification. One student may say, "The man on the bike is wearing a suit. I think he is going to work on his bike because he doesn't have a car." The teacher then asks, "Does everyone agree? Is that why this man is riding his bike in a suit?"
- ✓ The discussion goes on until students have shared all they can about the picture.

Effective Use of RTI:

RTI is a means by which school systems systematically provide interventions when they are needed to prevent students from failing. Generally, an RTI model includes three levels of intervention. The first two occur in the general classroom, and the third, the most intense, occurs when a student has been identified as having disabilities and special education services are provided. Li was provided with the first two tiers of interventions. These were part of the general classroom and included various specialists' responses to what was believed would be effective.



Conclusion:

It is realized that in today's world of education, our curriculum must meet the needs of our multi-leveled students. The days of having all materials and activities prepared at the beginning of the school year are over. Our curriculum must be dynamic, and our instruction must be research-based. Our assessments must monitor skill development and mastery. The ideas discussed above will pave a definite platform for learning language without difficulty.

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