

Strategies for ESL Teachers

ESL teachers work with students in a variety of conditions: pull-out classes, core classes where children start in the ESL class for all or part of the school day and are gradually mainstreamed into content-area classes, and newcomer centers where language and social/cultural skills are developed before the students are moved into school settings with native speakers. Each of these settings requires the teacher to use different ways of organizing the classroom, designing a curriculum, and presenting lessons.

However, some basic elements underlie all good language instruction:¹

- Interactive lessons with hands-on activities and cooperative learning,
- Encouragement of creativity and discovery,
- Versatility and flexibility,
- Enhancement and support of the mainstream curriculum,
- Opportunities for all students to feel successful,

- Accommodation of the needs of students at different levels of ability, and
- Integration of language skills, thinking skills, and content knowledge.

The review of various theories, methods, approaches and strategies on the following pages is intended to be a resource for ESL teachers in providing ideas for ways to incorporate these elements into their lesson plans.

¹ Adapted from *The Art of Teaching ESL*, Leader's Guide to Video.(1993). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

BICS/CALP²

A person's proficiency in a language refers to the degree to which that person is able to use the language. Language is used for various purposes. In education we can classify the uses of language into two dimensions: the social dimension and the academic dimension (Cummins, 1981). We can compare language to an iceberg. The portion that is visible on the surface, usually the social dimension, is only a fraction of the total iceberg. In order to use a language in academic work, the speaker must have an extensive foundation related to the language. This foundation is acquired through using the language over an extensive period of time in settings designed to build that foundation.

Cummins refers to the skills necessary for social interactions involving language as Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). They involve listening comprehension and speaking skills sufficient to understand and respond to social interactions.

BICS can be compared to the visible portion of an iceberg. They demonstrate the learner's ability to understand and use spoken language appropriately. Most non-native English speakers acquire sufficient BICS in English within a two-year

period to meet their needs in social situations.

Cummins refers to the language skills necessary to function in an academic situation as Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). These skills encompass listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities, specifically in relation to learning in content academic areas. Students generally require from five to seven years to acquire CALP skills. These can be compared to the portion of an iceberg that is not visible because it is under the surface of the ocean. CALP refers to all experience associated with language, both concept development and linguistic development.

Definitions

BICS-Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills: The skills involved in everyday communication - listening, speaking, carrying on basic conversation, understanding speakers, and getting one's basic needs met.

CALP-Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency: The skills that are needed to succeed in the academic classroom, including problem solving, inferring, analyzing, synthesizing, and predicting. They go beyond the BICS, demanding much greater competence in the language.

² Adapted from Law, B. and Eckes, M. (1990). *The more than just surviving handbook: ESL for every classroom teacher*. Winnipeg: Peguis Publishers.

Characteristics of Students' Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills³

Listening Comprehension:

Students generally understand non-technical speech, including conversation with teachers and classmates. Since they sometimes misinterpret utterances, native speakers of English must adjust their vocabulary and rate of speech.

Speaking:

- Grammar and word order - students have a fair command of basic sentence patterns. They avoid constructions which demand more control of grammar and word order. They also begin to over-generalize, applying grammar rules they have learned in inappropriate places. For example, students often apply the -ed past tense ending to irregular pasts, resulting in formations such as "bringed" instead of "brought".
- Vocabulary - The vocabulary which students use is adequate for social conversation, but not for successful participation in discussion of subject-area content. The fact that students can carry on a social conversation, often in relatively unaccented speech, often persuades observers that the student

is in greater command of the language than is actually the case.

- Pronunciation - Although students may have a noticeable accent, their pronunciation is understandable. Younger students, especially, may begin speaking with almost no accent though their command of vocabulary, grammar and syntax may be slight.
- Fluency - Students' fluency is smooth, although the length of their utterances is somewhat limited by difficulties with English. Their speech may be marked by restatements, repetitions, and hesitations.

Reading: Reading skills improve, and students profit greatly from inclusion in basal reading groups. Although students may now prepare some assignments independently their performance in content classes is usually adequate.

Writing: Students use more complex sentence structure in their writing. The introduction of many irregular word forms adds to the difficulty of learning English and students need assistance with them.

³Adapted from *Help! They Don't Speak English Starter Kit*. Virginia: Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training, 1992.

Range of Contextual Support and Degree of Cognitive Involvement in Communicative Activities⁴

Cognitively Undemanding	
I	II
TPR Demonstrations, Illustrations Following directions Art, Music, PE Face-to-face conversations Simple games Answering lower-level questions	Telephone conversations Notes on refrigerator Written directions (without diagrams or examples) Writing answers to lower-level questions
Context-embedded	Context-reduced
III	IV
Mathematics computations Science experiments Social studies projects (map activities, etc.) Developing academic language Understanding text through discussion, visuals Answering higher-level questions	Subject content (without diagrams or examples) Mathematics word problems (without illustrations) Explanations of new abstract concepts Reading for information in content areas Writing compositions Writing answers to higher-level questions
Cognitively Demanding	

⁴ From Cummins, J. (1981) "The Role of Primary Language Development in Promoting Educational Success for Language Minority Students." *Schooling and Language Minority Students: A Theoretical Framework*. Los Angeles: Evaluation, Dissemination, and Assessment Center, California State University.

The Natural Approach

“... (language) acquisition is a subconscious process that is identical to the process in first language acquisition in all important ways. While acquisition is taking place, the acquirer is not always A-Ware (sic) of it, and he or she is not usually A-Ware of its results. Learning is conscious know-ledge, or knowing about language.”
Stephen Krashen, 1985

Krashen claims that this subconscious process of acquisition is superior to direct classroom instruction. This claim is controversial, but several of the concepts of the Natural Approach have proven useful for language teachers.

Comprehensible Input: Students learn best when exposed to samples of the target language that are at or just above the student's current level of acquisition of the language. Teachers can ensure that the language used in the classroom is comprehensible by evaluating the students on the Stages of Language Acquisition chart on the next page and can design activities that ensure input and output at an appropriate level for the student.

Low Affective Filter: Students are best able to absorb and mentally process the language input they receive when they are in an environment where they are relaxed and their anxiety level is low. The teacher can

provide this by making the classroom a warm, supportive place where students feel free to take risks with language.

The Monitor: Krashen hypothesizes that language instruction results in the creation of a mental monitor through which the learner filters spoken and written output. The monitor aids learners in achieving accuracy, but may hinder the development of fluency. The ideal is a balance where the student has opportunities for unrestricted fluency and for using the monitor to "edit" and develop accuracy.

Meaningful Communication: Research shows that more learning takes place when students are engaged in communication that is meaningful to them because more of the content and structure of the communication enters long-term memory. Communication is meaningful when it touches on the students' real lives or centers on topics chosen by and of interest to the students. Teachers can ensure that meaningful communication happens in the classroom by allowing students to choose books, materials and topics that interest them when appropriate.

Stages of Language Acquisition: Students go through predictable stages in acquiring a language. The following chart shows characteristics of each stages:

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4
Pre-Production	Early Production	Speech Emergence	Intermediate Fluency
Students comprehend simple language but cannot produce language yet.	Students comprehend more complex language and can make one or two word responses.	Students can speak in phrases and sentences.	Students can combine phrases and sentences into longer passages of language, oral and written.
Characterized by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> minimal comprehension no verbal production 	Characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> limited comprehension one/two word responses 	Characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> increased comprehension simple sentences some basic errors in speech reading limited to what can be comprehended orally writing limited to brief responses 	Characterized by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> good comprehension use of complex sentences some errors in written language
Students can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> listen point respond with action draw choose act out 	Students can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> name label group answer yes/no discriminate list categorize count 	Students can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> retell define explain compare summarize describe role-play restate contrast 	Students can: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> analyze create defend debate predict evaluate justify support examine hypothesize
Teacher should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use visual aids modify speech focus on key vocabulary ask for physical responses 	Teacher should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use yes/no questions ask for single-word answers use cloze exercises expand on student answers 	Teacher should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> use games incorporate language from TV, radio, movies conduct writing exercises use readings for language input use problem-solving activities 	Teacher should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> help students develop academic skills, especially in reading and writing use activities that require analysis, hypothesizing, justifying and supporting.

Resources on the Natural Approach

Hadley, Alice Omaggio. *Teaching Language in Context*. Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1993.

Krashen, Stephen D. *Inquiries and Insights*. Hayward, CA: Alemany Press, 1985.

_____. *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. New York: Pergamon Press, 1982

_____. *Second Language Acquisition and Second Language Learning*. New York: Pergamon Press, 1981.

Terrell, Tracy D. "A Natural Approach to Second Language Acquisition and Learning." *The Modern Language Journal* 61(1977): 325-37.

_____. "The Natural Approach to Language Teaching: An Update." *The Modern Language Journal* 66 (1982) 121-32.

_____. "The Role of Grammar Instruction in a Communicative Approach." *The Modern Language Journal* 75 (1991): 51-63

Total Physical Response (TPR)⁵

Total Physical Response (TPR) is a language teaching strategy which introduces new language through a series of commands to physically enact an event. The student responds to the commands with action. Research on this strategy shows that more efficient learning with fuller student involvement occurs when students actually move than when they do not. For beginning students, an advantage of TPR is that students are not required to make oral responses until they have achieved and demonstrated full comprehension through physical actions.

Seven basic steps of TPR:

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. These events should be appropriate to the age level of the students.

Suggestions for K-5

- Making a salad, peanut butter sandwich or other simple dish
- Building something with blocks or Legos
- Drawing a picture

Suggestions for 6-8

- Baking a pie
- Changing a light bulb

- Washing a car

Suggestions for High School:

- Shopping for groceries
- Ordering and serving food in a restaurant
- Changing a tire

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 orally, or, when appropriate, read the series of actions.

4. Written copy. The series is put on chart paper or blackboard for students to read and copy.

5. Oral repetition and questions. After the 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 that may be causing problems.

⁵ Adapted from McCloskey, M.L. & Nations, M.J. (1988). *English Everywhere: An Integrated Curriculum Guide*. Atlanta, GA: Educo Press.

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.

Several authors have developed TPR scripts on a variety of topics for teachers' use. (See Resource List) Develop your own activities around familiar situations or around school experiences that might be frightening or confusing to students from other cultures (e.g., an earthquake or tornado drill, or a job interview).

TPR can also be an effective tool for student assessment. You can observe students who are not yet producing much English as they participate in TPR activities and determine just how much the student is able to understand.

Sample Scripts

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.

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear (A Jump Rope TPR Game)

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 lights.
Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear,
say goodnight.

Resources for Total Physical Response

- Asher, J. (1977). *Learning another language through actions: The complete teacher's guidebook*. Los Gatos, CA: Sky Oaks Productions.
- Enright, D.S. & McCloskey, M.L. (1985). Jump-rope games. *Branching Out: TESOL Newsletter Supplement No. 2*. 29(3), 12-13.

- Hadley, Alice Omaggio. *Teaching Language in Context*. 2nd ed. Boston: Heinle & Heinle, 1993.
- Linse, C. (1983). *The children's response: TPR and beyond toward writing*. Hayward CA: Alemany Press.
- Nelson, G. & Winters, T. (1980). *ESL Operations: Techniques for learning while doing*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Romjin, E. & Contee, S. (1979). *Live Action English*. New York: Pergammon Press.
- Veitch, B. (1981). *Cook and learn: Pictorial single portion recipes*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Cooperative Learning in Multicultural Classrooms⁶

In cooperative classrooms, students find value in helping one another learn. They don't see educational goals as attainable by the few: only three As per class. Rather, they see them as attainable by all: everyone accomplishing a set of goals. The classroom is organized so that the goals are most likely to be attained when students cooperate and collaborate. When the class works together toward a goal, they become a cohesive, powerful, and positive force.

Research shows that using peers as collaborators, teachers, and tutors results in better academic achievement, ethnic relations, pro-social development, and attitudes toward school, learning, and self in multicultural classrooms. It also increases a sense of student-ownership of the classroom environment and activities.

In the cooperative classroom, language learning is enhanced by the use of peers as co-teachers and of language as a medium of communication rather than a separate subject. When small groups of students collaborate on a common task, they must clarify and negotiate meaning with one another which results in complex language input, including low-level input (repetition of information), middle-

level input (stating of new information), and high-level input (integrating information and creating rationales for its use). All of these types of language input are crucial to second language acquisition.

In cooperative learning settings, students can use higher level cognitive processes as they compare contrasting views in order to come to a consensus and jointly synthesize information to present it to the rest of the class. Throughout this process students of all levels of language proficiency gain practice in the use of the language necessary to carry on these negotiations -- practice that is more varied, purposeful, and directed to students' proficiency levels than group-paced worksheets, which are usually inappropriate for young children.

Many other rewards come with the cooperative learning environment. Discipline improves, freeing the teacher from the role of maintaining social control in favor of the role of consultant to individuals and small groups. Since what students like to do, i.e., talk, is put to productive use toward their academic achievement and language development, students spend more time on task. At the same time, students become more active, self-directed, and communicative

⁶ Adapted from McCloskey, M.L. (1990) *Integrated Language Teaching Strategies*. Atlanta, GA: Educo Press, pp. 4-5.

learners as they work cooperatively together.

Common Questions about Cooperative Learning⁷

What is cooperative/collaborative learning?

Cooperative learning is a form of indirect teaching in which the teacher sets the problems and organizes the students to work it out collaboratively. (Kenneth Bruffee, 1984)

Cooperative learning means more than merely putting students in groups for discussion or completion of tasks. Johnson and Johnson (1984), two of the most prominent researchers on cooperative learning, have defined the four elements crucial to effective cooperative activities:

1. Positive interdependence among learners in respect to resources, task accomplishment, or reward;
2. Face-to-face interaction in small groups (although computers and computer networks may allow cooperation that is not face-to-face.);
3. Individual accountability for participation or internalization of the relevant knowledge or skills; and
4. use of interpersonal and small group skills in the learning process.

But notice that cooperative learning involves more than just working in small groups. The elements of group reward and individual accountability are crucial to the success of a cooperative learning task. In a meta-analysis of 46 studies that compared cooperative and competitive learning strategies carried out over an extended period of time in elementary and high school classrooms, 63 percent reported significant differences in favor of the cooperative structure. However, when only those studies which included group rewards for individual achievement were considered, 89 percent resulted in superior performance under the cooperative mode (Slavin, 1983).

How can you give a group reward based on individual achievement?

A study by Johnson, Johnson, and Stanne (1986) illustrates one way to accomplish this. Seventy-five 8th graders were assigned to three conditions in groups of four to work on a computer simulation teaching map reading and navigational skills. In the first condition, students were told that they would be completing individual worksheets every day, but their grade would be determined by the average scores of the team members on the worksheets and the final exam. In the competitive condition, students worked in groups and completed daily worksheets, but were told that their grade would be

⁷ Adapted from Thrush, E.A. (1990) "Working Together: Cooperative/Collaborative Learning." *TESOL in Action Monograph Series*, 5 (2). Atlanta, GA: GATESOL.

determined by their rank within the group. In the individualistic condition, students were told that their scores would be compared to preset standards to determine the grade. After the simulation was completed, all student were tested individually on the map skills they had learned. Students in the cooperative condition scored higher on the computer simulation and on the tests of concepts learned than students in either of the other conditions. In addition, students in the cooperative condition engaged in significantly more task-oriented verbal interaction and indicated greater acceptance of females as work partners. Knowing that their grades depended not only on their own learning but on how much each of their group members learned about map skills, students were highly motivated to teach each other and ensure that every group member learned as much as possible.

The idea is to have the students work together while learning the skills, then test them individually but have their final grades dependent on the average of the group. If this is not possible within your academic structure, perhaps a certain percentage of their grade could be determined by the average of the group scores, the rest by their individual test scores. Another, relatively simple way, is to give the group a task, and tell them that you will ask one student from the group at random to report orally or that you will choose one paper from the group to grade. That individual's grade becomes the group grade.

Knowing this, the group members will see to it that everyone in the group has mastered the task.

In some cases it may work better to assign a group project in which each individual is responsible for a part of the project, but a single grade is given. Work in class should be structured so that the students in the group can discuss and plan together, and advise each other on their segments of the project, but not do another student's work. See the Suggested Activities section for possible assignments.

Won't students object to getting a group grade?

The Johnsons have conducted over 70 studies of cooperative learning in classroom settings. Their observation is that once students become accustomed to the concept of group rewards, it seems logical to them, and indeed, the only way to grade a task that all have contributed to. Even at the college level, students are increasingly required to work in project groups and are accustomed to having their grades based on a combination of group work and individual tests.

Research shows that high achievers do not lose anything by working in groups with students of lesser abilities. If anything, they learn more from teaching and explaining to others.

What are the benefits of cooperative/collaborative learning?

Carol Ames (1984) has elaborated on the motivational processes that underlie the effectiveness of different learning situations as follows:

1. When learners receive some indication of success, they feel more successful and competent. The indication of success or failure is usually a grade or other external evaluation, comparison with previous performance, or comparison with others' performance. Competitive situations, by their nature, reduce the number of learners who can be given "successful" external evaluation, or who can see their performances as superior to others', thus limiting the number of learners who will feel competent and will rate their own performance as successful. Cooperative settings, on the other hand, increase the possibility for success as it is measured by completion of the group task, allowing more learners to feel competent.
2. Success in competitive settings tends to result in exaggerated inflation of self-esteem while failure results in exaggerated deflation. Self-esteem and feelings of competence strongly influence the individual's motivation to engage in an activity, so cooperative learning, by providing more learners an opportunity for success, motivates the majority to engage in further learning, while competitive learning motivates only the few who receive high evaluations.
3. The perception of failure in cooperative settings depends on the group outcome. Those who are in successful groups perceive their own performance as successful even though they may have low abilities, but those in unsuccessful groups may see themselves as unsuccessful and experience feelings of low self-esteem. For that reason, it is important that the teacher structures the task and monitor group performance to provide the support needed to make the experience successful for everyone.
4. Cooperative settings reduce the perceptions of differences among individuals. Students who have participated in cooperative groups tend to see other students as more similar to themselves than students in competitive settings.

The result is that cooperative learning results in higher achievement levels for all students, not just those top few who would also be successful in competitive settings. Naturally enough, cooperative learning helps students develop better interpersonal skills. Perhaps most importantly, cooperative learning has been shown to be an extremely effective way of mainstreaming handicapped, minority, and LEP students. Study after study shows better acceptance of these students by the majority after cooperative learning experiences. Some male students express a greater willingness to work with female

students after a cooperative experience as well.

Who benefits the most from collaborative learning?

“One of the most important findings to emerge from the cooperative learning research is the strong achievement gains among minority pupils in cooperative classrooms.. . Anglos show equal or somewhat greater academic gains in cooperative classrooms compared to traditional classrooms, but minority students show far greater gains in the cooperative compared to traditional methods. ” Spencer Kagan (1986)

Kagan explains that this is an effect of bringing the social organization of the classroom more in line with that of the home environment. Many of our students come from cultures which value the group, especially the family and the community, over the individual. The traditional American classroom, with its emphasis on competition and individual achievement, is not an environment in which members of these groups can flourish.

What is the teacher's role in cooperative learning?

“Teacher roles in cooperative learning classrooms are quite different from those of traditional classrooms; along with the changed social structure comes a changed pattern of teacher attention, expectations, and discipline. The need for discipline, especially

individual discipline, is reduced, and the ability of teachers to consult with individual students is increased.”

Spencer Kagan (1986)

Frank Smith (1986) suggests that teachers model collaboration for their students by writing with them: brainstorming, composing, and editing together. This doesn't mean that teachers ask for ideas from students with a set of acceptable answers already in mind, but that they actually work through the process of a new writing task with the students. Teachers are often hesitant to do this, thinking that they shouldn't put themselves in the position of being tentative, of starting and backing up, of rethinking and revising in front of their students. They are afraid they will be seen as not fully competent in their own language skills. But this is how all writers really write. When students do not have a model of how advanced writers work, they tend to assume that good writers never falter, never make mistakes, never change what they have written. Judging their own efforts against this impossible goal, they see little chance of ever becoming good writers.

Also, collaborating with students provides them with a model for collaboration. They learn how to create the kind of give and take necessary for good collaboration. They learn how to negotiate differences in concepts.

Suggested Cooperative Learning Activities and Projects⁸

Dyad Activities

Dyad Activities help students practice some aspect of English structure without the presence of the teacher. The students work in pairs. Each student has the answers for the other student, and can provide immediate correction. The teacher can prepare the exercises ahead of time, or the students can write exercises in pairs and exchange them. The teacher should check them for accuracy first.

Sample Dyad Activity

Instructions: The exercises for Student A and Student B are cut apart so that Student A sees only the first four sentences and Student B sees only the last four sentences. They sit facing each other. Student A reads sentence 1, filling in the blank with the correct form of the word in parentheses. Student B checks the answer and tells Student A whether the answer was right or wrong. Then Student B reads sentence 2, filling in the blanks, and Student A checks the answer. They continue until they have done all the sentences.

Student A:

1. My car is _____ than yours (fast)
2. My car is the same make as his.
3. His car is _____ color _____ mine. (different)
4. His car is more expensive than hers.

Student B:

1. My car is faster than yours.
2. My car is _____ make _____ his.
3. His car is a different color from mine.
4. His car is _____ hers. (expensive)

⁸ Thrush, E.A. (1996) Preface to *Modules for English Learning*. Rome, Italy: Italian Ministry of Education.

Information Gap Activities

In an Information Gap activity, each student (in a pair or group of 3-4) has some information that the others in the group need in order to complete a task. The students must ask each other questions to get the missing information.

Sample Information Gap Activity:

Instructions: The charts below are cut apart so Student A sees only the first chart and Student B sees only the second chart. They sit facing each other and ask each other questions to fill in the missing information in the charts. This can also be done for groups of 3 or 4 students, but every student's chart must have different information. When the charts are completed, the students can look at each others' chart to check their information.

Student A:

Car Model	Ford Taurus	Nissan Altima	Ferrari
Country of Origin	U.S.		Italy
Price		\$15,000	
Type	sedan	sedan	

Student B:

Car Model	Ford Taurus	Nissan Altima	Ferrari
Country of Origin		Japan	
Price	\$13,000		\$50,000
Type			sports car

Interview Grid

This is a structured way of having students ask and answer questions about topics meaningful to them. It ensures that they use the grammar points relevant to the day's lesson.

Instructions:

The students work in groups of 4-5. The teacher provides them with a grid like the following:

	Mary Smith	Teacher	Student	Student	Student	Student
live now?	Memphis					
live..last year?	Mexico					
watch on TV..last night?	Simpsons					
do..last weekend?	movies					
eat...for breakfast?	beans , cheese , eggs					

First, the teacher models the questions, writing them on the board and having the students repeat them. Then the teacher points out how “Mary Smith” answered the questions and how those answers are indicated with just a few words. Then the students ask the questions of the teacher. The teacher answers, and the students note down the answers in the appropriate spaces. This shows the students how to do the exercise. Then they work in their groups, taking turns asking each other the questions and jotting down the answers. Afterwards, the teacher asks for a report from each group on what the members watched last night, etc.

Notice that the cue words can be changed to elicit whatever language point the teacher wants the students to practice. The sample grid focuses on irregular past tense verbs.

Jigsaw Listening

Jigsaw Listening activities give students practice in listening to information in English, then conveying that information to someone else. In a Jigsaw exercise, students work in groups of 4 or 5. Each student in each group has a number from 1 to 4 or 5. The teacher gives each group a different text, cut into the same number of pieces as the number of students in the group. For example, if there are 4 groups of 4 students each, the teacher might choose 4 different texts about computers and cut each into 4 pieces. Each student would read one piece of one text. Within the groups, students would tell each other what they read, so that each group would then have all the information from one of the 4 texts. Then the students would form new groups -- all the number 1s would be in one group, all the 2s in another, and so on. Each member of the new group would give the information from the text read by the old group. The result is that each person in the class would get all the information from all 4 texts.

Alternative: The students in the new group would have a task to complete using the information provided by the group members. For example, they might have to fill out a grid that classifies the information in some way.

Sample Jigsaw Activity

This activity is a little different because the students gather information rather than reading it. This works well as an introductory activity for a new class.

1. The students are divided into groups - 4 groups of 4 or 5 groups of 5 work best.
2. Each student in the group is assigned a number, from 1 to 4 or 5.
3. The students interview each other to fill in a grid like the one below.

	Student's name	Student's name	Student's name	Student's name
Hobbies				
Pets				
Sports				

4. The students form new groups: all the 1s together, all the 2s together, and so on. Between them, each group now has information about all the students.
5. The students in the new groups choose some information about the class that they find interesting, and design a graphic display for the information. For example, they might draw a bar chart showing how many students in the class have dogs, how many have cats, and so on. They can present their graphs to the class or display them in the room.

Memory Games

These games are usually played with index cards, but pieces of any stiff paper can be used. Either the teacher or the students make up sets of cards with matching information. For example, one card might have the infinitive form of a verb; the matching card would have the irregular past form. Or one might have the English word for a computer keyboard; the matching card would have a picture cut out of a magazine, or the word in another language. When several pairs of cards are ready, they are mixed up and placed face down on a table. The students (usually in groups of 4 or pairs) take turns revealing 2 cards. If the cards match, the student keeps the cards. If the cards don't match, they are replaced on the table and the next student takes a turn. When all cards have been turned over, the student with the most matches wins the game.

Alternative: When a card is turned over, the student must say what the matching card will say before turning over the second card. This promotes active memory instead of passive and is more advanced.

Numbered Heads Together

The Numbered Heads Together technique solves several problems with group work; it forces the group to take responsibility for the learning of each member, it ensures that one student in the group does not do all the work while the others sit passively by, it prevents a few students from volunteering all the answers to the teacher's questions, and it guarantees that all students have an equal chance of being called on. Numbered Heads Together is often used to check comprehension of a text students have read or something they have listened to.

Instructions:

1. Students work in groups of 3 or 4.
2. Each student has a number from 1 - 3 or 4.
3. The teacher asks a question about a text the students have read or about some topic they have studied.
4. The groups discuss the question for a few seconds, decide on an answer and make sure everyone in the group knows the answer.
5. The teacher calls a number between 1 and 3 (or 4) at random and indicates a group.
6. The student with the indicated number in that group gives the group's answer. If the answer is wrong, the teacher goes to another group.

Alternative: The teacher assigns each member of each group a letter in a word - W I N for groups of 3 or T E A M for groups of 4, for example. Then the teacher can call a group number and a letter to designate the student to answer. For example, if the teacher calls “5W” then the student in group 5 with the letter W answers the question. Or the teacher can give out cards in a deck - each group would have an Ace, King, Queen, and Jack. Then the teacher calls “6Jack” for example.

Role Plays

Role plays help students use language fluently. They also help them learn to be creative, imaginative, and resourceful. In a role play, unlike a dialogue, the teacher provides only a brief description of the characters and situation of the role play. The students then improvise the words and actions.

In a guided role play, the teacher may write out a few hints of the dramatic action which is to occur. For example, a guided role play of a formal introduction might look like this:

Student	Visitor to the School
Say hello and give your name	Say hello and give your name
Welcome the visitor to the school	Say you're happy to be there and give your purpose
Offer to help if needed	Thank the student

Strip Story

A strip story is simply a text that the teacher has cut into strips. The students work in groups to put the text back together in the right order. To do this, students have to look for clues, including sentence beginnings and endings, and coherency cues. The students must read the text closely to be able to reconstruct it. The teacher should elicit from the class what cues they used to reconstruct it so they become aware of strategies to use in their own writing. There should also be some follow-up activity using the information from the reconstructed text.

Question and Answer Game

This game is particularly useful in getting students to practice question forms. It can be used to check comprehension of a text students have read or something they have listened to.

Instructions:

1. The teacher writes on the board several pieces of information from the text. For example, if the text were about computers, the teacher might write the categories and answers below.

Software	Hardware	Abilities
word processor spreadsheet database	CPU monitor mouse	RAM ROM 33 mhz

Each student should choose a category and an answer and try to form an appropriate question. For example, if the student chose the category ‘hardware’ and the answer ‘monitor’, the question might be, “How does the computer display information to the user?” Notice that there may be many correct questions for each answer.

Alternative: The teacher might cover the answers on the board with sticky notes. Different amounts of money can be written on the sticky notes. Then the students might choose ‘Hardware for \$1,000.’ The teacher would take off the sticky note that says \$1,000, revealing the answer behind it. If the student forms an appropriate question, the teacher gives the sticky note to the student. The student who finishes with the most money wins the game.

Resources on Cooperative Learning

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The Language Experience Approach⁹

The language experience approach is readily adaptable to second language learners and students in bilingual programs at a variety of levels. This approach has a number of features which enhance whole language learning for LEP students. Students learn that what they say and think 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 which investigate language structures they have learned, including left-right, top-bottom progression, letter-sound correspondence, spelling patterns, sight vocabulary, and conventions of print.

There are six basic steps in the approach:

1. **Share and discuss an experience.** This can be a trip, an activity such as cooking, playing a game, or role playing, a book (wordless or with words), a story, a trip, a science experiment, a personal narrative, a film, or a video.
2. **After the discussion, elicit dictation from individuals or the group.** Write students' suggestions on the blackboard, chart
3. **With the students, read and revise the story together.** Periodically, read back the dictation, asking if it is what the students intended. Encourage students to suggest changes to improve the piece. In the context of taking dictation and helping students with revision, you can teach and reinforce such skills as letter-sound correspondence, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and word endings and parts. You can also teach such composition skills as using a strong lead and organizing a story chronologically. The revised story is copied to be saved and re-used.
4. **Read and re-read the story together.** Individuals may read with or without you, and the class may read in chorus. Invite students at various levels to participate in different ways. Having students of different proficiency levels work together can be very helpful.
5. **Have students use the piece in many follow-up activities,** including matching activities, writing activities, copying, unscrambling words or sentences

paper or overhead projector for all to see, using the students' exact words without correcting or changing.

⁹ Adapted from McCloskey, M.S. & Nations, M.J. (1988). *English Everywhere: An Integrated Curriculum Guide*. Atlanta, GA: Educo Press.

from the story, etc. Students can illustrate the parts of the story that they dictated, making a cover and turning the story into a class small or big book. 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 cloze activity. (In a cloze activity, every nth word is left out of a passage for students to fill in.) Intermediate students might unscramble sentences, choose words and make cards for a word bank, or match sentence strips to sequenced pictures from the 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. Older students may enjoy 'publishing' their books on the computer, editing each others' stories and collaborating on page layout and design.

- 6. Students may move from reading their own or class pieces to trading and reading one another's work.** They may also move from dictating to the teacher to writing their own pieces.

Resources for The Language Experience Approach

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Integrated Language Teaching¹⁰

The principles of Integrated Language Teaching can be incorporated into ESL classes, where integrated lessons will prepare students for the content area classes as well as improving their English skills. They can also be used by the content area teacher to help all students build literacy skills while learning the subject matter of the class.

These principles are:

1. Language should not be taught in the discrete chunks of reading, writing, speaking and listening, but as a whole.
2. Language skills are developed when language is being used as a tool to accomplish a task or reach a goal, not when the language itself is the subject of study.
3. For language skills to develop, students need to be exposed to large amounts of language that is interesting and useful to them.
4. If students use the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing naturally in the process of solving problems and completing tasks, they will develop these skills better than if the skills are isolated.
5. Students already have knowledge and experiences that they can bring to

their exploration of a topic through the use of the target language.

6. Students need practice in all the varieties of ways that native speakers use the language to develop their proficiency.
7. A supportive environment is important for the full development of language proficiency.

Sample Integrated Language Project:

1. Together, the students and teacher identify a topic to explore. In a content area class, this topic will be related to that area.
2. Brainstorming produces ideas related to the topic. Web diagrams, Venn diagrams, and other methods of semantic mapping can be used to stimulate thinking and develop subtopics. (See Strategies for Mainstream Teachers for examples of visual devices.)
3. The teacher helps the students draw on their background knowledge, experience, and cultural heritage in developing the topic.
4. Students use all the skills of language -- reading, writing, speaking and listening -- in exploring the topic and communicating about it. They may read literature related to the topic, use reference books, draw pictures and write about them, etc.

¹⁰ From Enright, D.S. & McCloskey, M.L. (1988) *Integrating English: Developing English language and literacy in the multilingual classroom*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Whole Language

Whole Language has been widely adopted in the teaching of reading to native speakers of English. It has been somewhat controversial, partly because of some misinterpretations and misapplications of its underlying principles. Many schools now supplement Whole Language teaching with more traditional approaches to reading such as instruction in phonics.

Phonics instructions, widely used in elementary schools in the 70s and 80s, focused on teaching students to decode written language by sounding out words letter by letter. Phonics instructions was replaced by whole language in many areas, but has recently been reinstated in some school systems.

Phonics instruction can be of value to native speakers by helping them convert the written words to the spoken forms they already know. However, it is not particularly helpful to LEP students with little or no spoken English. Knowing how to sound out a word is of no use if the student doesn't know the meaning of that word. Also, until speakers of other languages have acquired the full sound system of English, sounding words out may not be possible. For example, Spanish has five vowel sounds while English has thirteen. Children who have only heard Spanish while growing up will not be able to

distinguish the additional vowel sounds in English for quite some time.

However, Whole Language as a tool in teaching LEP students incorporates many of the same ideas and strategies as the Natural Approach and Integrated Language Teaching. The basic principle is that literacy is developed through engagement with meaningful, interesting language rather than study of discrete units such as grammar, vocabulary, or phonics. The emphasis is on function rather than form.

In Whole Language teaching, as in Integrated Language Teaching, students work on completion of a task or project which requires the use of all language skills. There is often a product at the end of the project: an oral or written report, a poster display, a brochure, a recipe book, or a class newspaper, for example. The preparation of this product may involve students in reading or interviewing people to gather information, talking to each other in planning, and designing the product, and speaking or writing in delivering the final product.

Note: There is a common misperception that because Whole Language Activities do not start with the teaching of grammar, vocabulary, spelling or punctuation, these elements of language can never be dealt with. In fact, while the primary focus of a

Whole Language Activity is the content, not the form, all the mechanics of the language are important in the final stages of production of the project, just as professional writers do a final edit on their texts. As much as possible, students should rely on sources other than teacher correction in doing a final edit. These sources of help can include the dictionary, the spelling checker on the computer, other students, grammar reference books, and other tools appropriate to the students' age and skill level. This helps encourage good habits that they will use outside the classroom when the teacher is not available.

Examples of Whole Language Activities

Student Newspaper - The classic whole language activity, creating a student newspaper requires students to use all language skills to gather information, write, and edit articles for a newspaper. Students can work in groups to write sports and news articles and write movie, book, and TV reviews. Either the teacher or the students may produce the final newspaper using a typewriter or computer, and distribute it to the class. The students' motivation to read the newspaper will be high because the articles will be on subjects of interest to them and written by their classmates.

Fashion Show - Fashion shows are especially fun for pre-teen and teen students. Students have to read and

research the names and types of clothing, styles, and materials. Then they organize and rehearse the presentation of the fashions. Groups might be assigned a particular season or type of clothing such as sportswear, formal, professional, etc. They can choose the music and write the narrative that one student reads as the others parade in the clothing.

Cookbook - the students can create a class cookbook with recipes - perhaps for specialties from their native country or culture. They need to learn measurements and standard ways of giving cooking instructions. They can do research to provide information on the nutritional value of the dish they have chosen. If possible, older students might prepare the dish for the class and invited guests. Some high school classes have been able to take over their school cafeteria for a day and prepare lunch for all the teachers and staff of the school. Their teachers have found that this increases acceptance of the students by the school community.

Resources for Whole Language

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The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach -- CALLA¹¹

The Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach is specifically designed to help students make the transition from ESL classes to mainstream, content-area classes. It is based on the theoretical assumptions of BICS - that the development of social/conversational language skills are not sufficient to ensure success in the academic environment. It is also based on the belief that content-rich lessons will be more interesting and motivating for students.

CALLA lessons have 3 parts:

1. Content: The content should come from the social science, science, math or other content area curriculum at the appropriate grade level.
2. Language: The language of the lesson is the vocabulary, grammar, and function (describing, defining, classifying, etc.) of the content area.
3. Strategy: Specific learning strategies are explicitly taught and practiced during each CALLA lesson. Strategies include organizing, planning, attending to specific types of information, self-monitoring for progress, self-evaluation, grouping, note-taking, using imagery to

understand and remember new information, transferring what is known to new situations, elaboration, making inferences to guess meanings or fill in gaps, using resource materials such as dictionaries and encyclopedias, and working together cooperatively.

Important Elements of CALLA

1. Hands-on activity that leads to discovery learning.
2. Use of realia, visuals, and other non-textual material to reinforce the language of the lesson.
3. Explicit discussion of the strategies students are using to learn and discover.
4. Use of note-taking, outlining, and other academic skills.
5. Encouragement of high-level cognitive skills such as analyzing, synthesizing, and hypothesizing in addition to memorization of facts.

Resources

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¹¹ From Chamot, A.U. & O'Malley, J.M. (1987). "The cognitive academic language learning approach: A bridge to the mainstream." *TESOL Quarterly*, 21 (2). Washington, DC: TESOL