

Comprehension, Grades K-1

English Learner

EL Considerations for Teaching Comprehension

Understanding a reading selection can be particularly difficult for students who must interpret each word. These students should be provided with opportunities for concept development and for the development of reading strategies and skills at a rate comparable to that of English-speaking students.

The following suggestions can help to increase the comprehension of English learners:

- Use Workshop time to read the selection to English learners a day or so in advance of when they will read it with the entire class. Model strategies and skill use, and encourage students to participate actively in the reading by asking questions, seeking clarification, making predictions, and so on.
- As you read each selection, repeat key words and phrases, pronounce words clearly, and explain idioms and complex sentences.
- Use body language, props, and other visual aids to convey meaning.
- Provide concrete examples and explanations of vocabulary, as well as of target strategies and skills.
- In addition to modeling, encourage students to have you stop when something is unclear, ask questions, and identify words and ideas that they wish to discuss. By clarifying unfamiliar concepts and words and by forming their own ideas and opinions in advance, English learners will then be able to contribute more to whole-class discussions and activities.
- To help them understand comprehension strategies and skills, pair English learners with English-speaking students in Workshop.

EL Considerations for Activating Prior Knowledge

Some students whose first language is not English may think that they do not have the background knowledge needed to understand English reading selections. Let them know that this is not true. Have them draw from their first language and culture to make connections to concepts and topics in an English selection. For example, for a selection about the wind, you might ask English learners to tell stories or folktales from their country about the wind or to say in their first language the names they know for different kinds of winds, such as tornadoes, hurricanes, and breezes.

Build background and expand students' ideas by reading selections to them from the ***Open Court Reading*** and ***SRA Imagine It! Classroom Libraries***. Help them develop prosodic understanding by having them listen to the ***Big Book*** selections in the ***Listening Library***.

EL Considerations for Building Vocabulary

English learners will need maximum support as they build their English vocabularies. To do this:

- Use graphic organizers, such as the one with pictures that Ms. Echeverri used to organize various words related to different types of winds. Also use picture cards, such as the ***Open Court Reading Pocket Chart Picture Cards*** or the ***SRA Imagine It! Photo Library*** to help students associate words with pictures.
- If you have ***Open Court Reading*** ©2002, use the ***English-Language Development Guide*** and ***Workbook*** to preteach vocabulary and text concepts. ***SRA Imagine It!*** users should refer to

the **English Learner Support Guide** and **Workbook** for lesson-specific vocabulary support, the **English Learner Glossary**, and the **Newcomer English Language Development** BLM and CD-ROM.

- Read stories related to the unit themes during Workshop to build vocabulary and help English learners develop an understanding of book language.

EL Considerations for Knowledge Building/Discussion

Students who are learning English, like all other students, should be encouraged to take an active part in discussions. Let them know that fluent English is not necessary for participation. Do not correct language errors, such as incorrect tense, word order, or word endings, during discussions. Rather, restate or model correct language, always maintaining the students' original content and focus.

Encourage students to share insights from their first cultures and countries as a way to offer the entire class new perspectives on selections, concepts, and topics.

Additional Resources:

August, D., and K. Hakuta, eds. *Educating Language-Minority Children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1998.

Brown, H. D. *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. New York: Longman, 2000.

Delpit, L. D. *Other People's Children: Cultural Conflict in the Classroom*. New York: New Press, 1996.

Websites

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Inc. (TESOL)
<http://www.tesol.org>

National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS)
<http://www.nbpts.org>