Classroom Instruction that Works with English Language Learners

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Helping educators flourish by turning research into solutions that transform teaching, learning, and leading.
Cheryl Abla

• 25 years as a classroom teacher
  • 1st–12th Grades
• ESL certification
• MA in instructional technology
• Director of Migrant/Even Start
• Director of Parents as Teachers
• Director of At-Risk Programs
• Managing Consultant
• Co-Author of *Classroom Tools for CITW*
What does an engaging classroom for learners of ALL cultures look like, sound like, and feel like?

Discuss with those near you.
Learning Retention Pyramid

- Lecture 5%
- Reading 10%
- Audiovisual 20%
- Demonstration 30%
- Discussion Groups 50%
- Practice by doing 75%
- Teach others/Immediate use of learning 90%

Average retention rate after 24 hours

Source: Adapted from David Sousa, *How the Brain Learns*, 2nd ed. 2001
According to multiple research studies

**Benefits of Student Engagement**
- Experience improved academic achievement and satisfaction
- Are more likely to persist through academic struggles
- Earn higher standardized test scores
- Have better social skills
- Are less likely to drop out of school
Why it Matters

In contrast, disengagement:

• Lowers cognitive performance
• Increases disruptive behaviors
• Causes academic avoidance behaviors
• Exacerbates learning, behavior, and emotional problems
• Increases absenteeism and dropout rates
2013 Gallop Poll

• Early grades
  • 8 out of 10 students are engaged
• Middle school
  • 6 out 10
• High school
  • 4 out of 10
Create the Environment for Learning

Setting Objectives & Providing Feedback
- Reinforcing Effort & Providing Recognition
- Cooperative Learning

Develop Understanding
- Cues, Questions, & Advance Organizers
- Nonlinguistic Representations
- Summarizing & Note taking
- Assigning Homework & Providing Practice

Extend & Apply Knowledge
- Identifying Similarities & Differences
- Generating & Testing Hypotheses

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Which strategies have the largest impact on English Language Learners?

• Nonlinguistic Representation
• Setting content and academic language objectives
• Cooperative learning
• Cues and Questions
The Knowing-and-Doing Gap

Knowing

We know that we need to use the strategies... every day

Doing

What keeps us from doing what we know needs to take place everyday?

Joyce and Showers, 2003
In high achieving classrooms, teachers talked about 55% of the time.

In low achieving classrooms, teachers talked about 80% of the time.

91% of instructional minutes in elementary classrooms were devoted to whole-class teaching or individual work.

(Flanders, 1970)

(Pianta, Belsky, Houts, & Morrison, 2007)

http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/nov14/vol72/num03/Speaking-Volumes.aspx
The person doing the talking is doing the learning...
Nonlinguistic Representations

enhance students’ ability to represent knowledge as mental imagery.
Recommendations for Classroom Practice
Nonlinguistic Representations

1. Use graphic organizers.
2. Use physical models or manipulatives.
3. Generate mental pictures.
4. Use pictures, illustrations, and pictographs.
5. Engage in kinesthetic activities.
Many psychologists believe that we store knowledge in two ways: *linguistically (words)* and *nonlinguistically (images)*. The more we use both systems of representation, the better we are able to think about and recall knowledge.
Generate mental pictures

Sounds

Smells

Tastes

Emotions
George Washington
Use physical **models** or manipulatives.
Show what you know…

Objective

• I can create, name, and explain the function of the various parts of a plant cell using the terms
  • Cell wall
  • Nucleus
  • Cell membrane
  • Cytoplasm
  • Vacuole
  • Chloroplast
Plant Cell
Groups of two or three

• TOGETHER create a plant cell out of Play-Doh
• Be sure to use the academic language as you make your creation
  • Each of you need to practice saying the various parts of a plant cell while pointing out the terms:
    • Cell wall
    • Nucleus
    • Cell membrane
    • Cytoplasm
    • Vacuole
    • Chloroplast
Please stand up…

Kinesthetic activities are those that involve physical movement.

Physical movement associated with specific knowledge helps generate a mental image of the knowledge in the mind of the learner.
Movement and Creating

• Kinesthetic Learning
• Up and doing something after 10 minutes of sitting
• Large gross motor skills
• Creating
• Drawing

Perimeter
Circumference
Congruent
What might you see if the teacher is intentionally using nonlinguistic representations?

- Story telling and/or multisensory experiences to create mental pictures
- Kinesthetic movement to help convey concepts
- Manipulatives and/or models in use
- Students creating sketches or drawings
- Graphs, pictures, or movies
‘Learning floats on a sea of talk.’

~ Jane Hill
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Engaging Vocabulary Games

• Heads up-Stand Up-7up
• 20 Questions
• Smack that Word
Questions that need clarified…
Thank you for your thoughtful participation!

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