Planning and Strategies to Support English Language Learners

Classroom and Lesson Preparation

- ❏ the entire class brainstorms a list of ways all students can make the classroom a welcoming place for any newcomers and how they can be helpful to ELLs
- ❏ practice and model the correct pronunciation of students' names
- ❏ learning materials are gathered for students to use independently or with a buddy, such as:
  - o picture books with audio support, math activities, interactive computer or tablet learning activities and/or word games
- ❏ objects in the classroom environment are labelled in English and in the students' first languages (where possible)
- ❏ timetables are posted for easy referral/viewing – with use of key visuals
- ❏ key visuals are provided to support themes, and to help bring language to life, such as:
  - o images from magazines, newspapers, posters, flyers, the Internet
- ❏ content objectives are clearly defined and written prominently on the board for students
- ❏ language objectives are clearly defined and written prominently on the board for students
- ❏ both content and language objectives are reviewed at the beginning and the end of a lesson
- ❏ concepts taught are age-appropriate and take into consideration the overall educational background of students
- ❏ supplementary materials are prepared to boost comprehension, such as:
  - o anchor charts, pictures, graphs, multimedia, manipulatives, demonstrations, models, illustrations, realia
- ❏ graphic organizers are used to show how ideas are related, such as:
  - o T-charts, Venn diagrams, flow charts, story maps, and timelines are examples of organizers that are not dependent on language knowledge and that promote the development of thinking skills
- ❏ content the students produce is adapted appropriately through the use of:
  - o adapted and/or highlighted text, graphic organizers, labeled images and/or illustration
- ❏ activities are meaningful and integrate lesson concepts, such as:
  - o opportunities for listening, speaking, reading and writing are integrated into lesson activities

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Building Background

- ❑ students' personal, cultural and/or academic experiences are taken into consideration
- ❑ information regarding students' interests is used to engage them and to encourage the learning of English
- ❑ participation in extracurricular activities is encouraged to increase opportunities for language acquisition
- ❑ concepts are linked to students' background experiences
- ❑ past learning and prior knowledge about a topic and new concepts are explicitly linked
- ❑ all lessons are designed to include a component which activates prior knowledge such as:
    - o adapted and/or highlighted text, graphic organizers, labeled images and/or illustrations
- ❑ new vocabulary is limited and presented in context
- ❑ key vocabulary is identified in advance and presented in a multisensory way, such as:
    - o see, say, write, act

Comprehensible Input

- ❑ teach the English for important personal information
    - o e.g., address, phone number)
- ❑ teach key survival phrases, such as:
    - o "Where is...?", "Hello," and "Goodbye." - use pictures and actions to reinforce meaning
- ❑ use speech that is appropriate for the students and their varying proficiency levels including:
    - o speaking at a slower rate, enunciating clearly, using simple sentence structures, using gestures, limiting use of idioms
- ❑ explain tasks clearly, simply and use step-by-step instructions that include visuals
- ❑ use a variety of techniques that make concepts clear, such as:
    - o gestures, demonstrations, modeling, multimedia, models, visuals, graphic organizers etc.
- ❑ pre-teach and re-teach essential vocabulary using a variety of support, such as:
    - o models, charts, pictures, diagrams, word cards, picture books, toys, posters, banners and real objects (e.g., articles of clothing, leaves and acorns, fruits and vegetables)
- ❑ have students match pictures to vocabulary or to draw pictures that go with the words

- ❏ recycle new words - reintroduce new words in a different context, or use recently learned words to introduce or expand a concept
- ❏ use simplified sentence structures
- ❏ ask bilingual peers and volunteers to help clarify instructions, as necessary
- ❏ learn and use words and phrases students' first languages to clarify instructions and key concepts (as necessary)

Strategies

- ❏ teach learning strategies through explicit instruction
- ❏ provide ample opportunities for students to use and apply learning strategies, such as:
  - o metacognitive, cognitive, problem solving, predicting, organizing, summarizing, categorizing, evaluating, self-monitoring
- ❏ use scaffolding techniques consistently throughout lessons, such as:
  - o think-alouds, paraphrasing, modeling, reinforcing, repeating, pausing
- ❏ vary question types, in particular those that promote higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), such as:
  - o literal, analytical, interpretive
- ❏ provide bilingual and picture dictionaries and visual aids to assist students in creating their own bilingual dictionary
- ❏ encourage the use of the first language for a variety of writing activities, such as:
  - o journal writing, personal dictionaries, word lists, prewriting activities, and when writing outlines or drafts
- ❏ create a word wall (with first language translations, where possible) with pictures to:
  - o introduce and reinforce topic-specific vocabulary
  - o teach students how to use a word wall as a tool to increase understanding
- ❏ teach students to use the computer with level-appropriate computer software, online tools and/or tablet applications
- ❏ provide a desktop picture alphabet for students whose first language alphabet differs from the alphabet used in English
- ❏ demonstrate procedures and provide related hands-on activities

Interaction

- ❏ provide continual opportunities for interactions and discussion between teacher and students
- ❏ assign buddies, mentors, and peers to support and encourage class participation
- ❏ group and seat students where they can hear and see well, and near classmates who will provide support and language modelling, as necessary
- ❏ encourage ELLs to ask for assistance from peers
- ❏ give new students classroom jobs to perform, to assist with socialization and orientation, such as:
  - o distributing classroom materials, monitoring attendance, going on errands
- ❏ encourage detailed responses
- ❏ consistently allow for sufficient wait time when waiting for student responses
- ❏ provide sufficient opportunities for students to clarify key concepts in their native languages though:
  - o aide, peer or text in native language (L1)
- ❏ give students positive feedback for their efforts

Practice and Application

- ❏ provide:
  - o hands-on-materials and manipulatives for practice of new content knowledge
  - o activities that apply content and language knowledge together
  - o activities that integrate all language skills (i.e., reading, writing, listening, speaking)
- ❏ allow students to demonstrate their understanding of a concept in alternative ways such as:
  - o demonstration, speech, picture, writing in the first language
- ❏ have students review main concepts and vocabulary by:
  - o working with partners in a Think-Pair-Share task
  - o participating in whole-class sessions at the end of each lesson or activity

Lesson Delivery

- ☐ give clear instructions, for example:
  - o number and label the steps in an activity
  - o use visual aids
- ☐ encourage students to retell instructions in their own words
- ☐ content objectives are clearly supported by lesson delivery
- ☐ language objectives are clearly supported by lesson delivery
- ☐ consistently engage students
  - o most students taking part or on task 90-100% of the time
- ☐ pace lessons appropriately in correlation to students' ability level
- ☐ check often for comprehension
- ☐ adapt lessons to the individual ELL's level of English proficiency
- ☐ make all students aware of phonetic structures through think-aloud questions, for example:
  - o "What sound does classroom begin with?"
- ☐ teach language structures by highlighting specific structures by using a variety of strategies, such as:
  - o flashcards, repetition, role play, charts with pictures, and guided reading and writing
- ☐ provide writing prompts to help students complete specific task, such as:
  - o letter writing, journal writing, reading responses etc.
- ☐ provide writing scaffolds, such as the cloze procedure, to help students use new words and phrases
- ☐ use which prompts when students are reading to encourage the use reading strategies to deepen comprehension.

Review and Assessment

Teachers should adjust their expectations according to the length of time students have been in Canada, students' previous educational and social experiences, and the amount of cultural adjustment required. Evaluation procedures should be clear and purposeful and should distinguish between ELL needs and program content needs.

- ❐ initial goals upon arrival are to learn the classroom routines and basic English phrases
- ❐ focus on improving student learning
- ❐ link directly to curriculum expectations (as modified for each ELL's degree of English language proficiency)
- ❐ recognize linguistic and academic progress
- ❐ take into account realistic and varying rates of second-language learning
- ❐ incorporate student self-assessment
- ❐ involve students and parents actively in assessment and progress
- ❐ include short-term goals for students based on observations
- ❐ provide extensive reviews of key vocabulary and concepts
- ❐ provide regular feedback to students on their output:
    - o language, content, overall work
- ❐ assess student comprehension and learning throughout an entire lesson/unit
- ❐ use a variety of assessment techniques:
    - o informal, authentic, group responses
- ❐ provide feedback in small chunks - one area of improvement or error at a time
    - o note specific, habitual errors and provide direct instruction later
- ❐ teach a "language feature of the week", based on students' needs
    - o teach them explicitly, and provide opportunities for practice
- ❐ encourage ELLs to keep an editing checklist containing examples of errors and corrections, for their reference

Assessment tools and strategies include:
- o student-teacher conferences
- o portfolio assessment
- o teacher observations (ongoing)
- o direct and timely feedback from the teacher
- o peer feedback
- o self-assessment checklist
- o reflective journal entries
- o paragraph frames to guide reflection