LESSON MODIFICATIONS TO ACCOMMODATE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE BARRIERS

This Bulletin focuses on specific classroom techniques for assisting English Language Learners (ELLs) to comprehend content instruction. Following a discussion of general instructional considerations, there is a graphic display of specific suggestions to provide more embedded context and to lower the cognitive input as a bridge to grade-specific content.

MODIFYING LESSONS: GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Promote academic and personal growth by providing a classroom atmosphere of collaboration. Collaborative learning communities are consistent with the home culture of most ELLs and are more productive than traditional teacher-directed structures.
- Link students' experiential backgrounds and learning preferences to the curriculum. If there is resistance to planned activities and assignments, the disruptive behavior may be an indication of the need to adjust classroom practices.
- With regard to fostering more personable teacher-student relationships, allow students to choose their own groups or partners as a valid option.
- Create meaningful, relevant curriculum and learning experiences for ELLs by allowing them to choose partners and group members with whom they share common interests and compatible learning styles.
- Respect for students is essential. Avoid statements or actions that might publicly humiliate or embarrass.
- Acknowledge the unique qualities, accomplishments, and concerns of individual students. This provides a tremendous incentive towards building intrinsic motivation.
- In presenting content, proceed first from cognitively undemanding/context-embedded approaches to cognitively demanding/context-reduced approaches (see Bulletin Vol.2, No.1).
- In general, review, reinforce, and spiral content.
- Focus on the "core" of content lessons for key concepts and information.
- Incorporate specific teaching strategies to account for the multiple intelligences of the students. Some examples are cooperative learning, SQ3R (survey question, read, recite, review), language experiences, and total physical response, in addition to reading and writing tasks.
- Always think in terms of providing a language-sensitive, language-rich environment through integrated listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities with consistent, varied exposure to content vocabulary.
Lesson Modifications: Specific Suggestions

The following is a graphic display of modifications to assist ELLs in comprehending language:

Lesson Modifications to Accommodate for Language Barriers

Graphic Organizers
- Outlines
- Charts
- Equations
- Calendars
- Flow Charts
- Graphs
- Diagrams
- Maps
- Tables
- Timelines
- Pictures/sketches
- Highlighted Text

Speech Adaptations
- Repetition
- Gestures
- Slowed Speech
- Small units of language
- More expression
- Careful use of metaphors and idioms
- Longer wait time for responses
- Synchronization of speech w/visual
- Simplification of directions
- Modification of questions
- Paraphrasing of directions by students
- Sufficient explanation and example

Group Processing Formats
- Partner explanations
- Cooperative learning
- Group work
- Peer tutoring
- Cross-age tutoring
- Jig-saw
- Preferential seating

Assessment Adaptations
- Extended time for tests
- Spoken vs. written formats
- Recognition vs. recall formats
- Special assignments
- No penalty for grammatical errors
- No penalty for poor handwriting

Learning Resources
- Realia
- Manipulatives
- Visuals
- Reference materials in different levels of complexity
- Reference materials in the home language
- Calculators
- Computers

Study Aids
- Written directions/homework assignments
- Key points on individual sheets
- Prepared study sheets
- Extended time on major assignments
- Copied teacher notes
- Student scribe for notes
- Guided outline for note taking
- Homework notebook

Focus Materials
- Wall charts
- Large models
- Slides
- Filmstrips
- Key points on board
- Guided outlines
- Taped text
- Taped lectures