Differentiation

ADAPTING CONTENT LANGUAGE TO DIFFERING LEARNING STYLES

This Bulletin provides a variety of strategies, activities and techniques for mastery, problem-solving, inter- and intrapersonal, and creative learning with content language as discussed in the Vol. 8, No. 4 Bulletin.

MASTERY LEARNING
(Remembering facts and details)

- Story Reading with 'wh' questions:
  Teacher reads content-related stories or vignettes to students, with follow-up factual questions.

- Typographical Enhancement:
  After students are familiar with a text, copy a portion of it with a highlighted, bolded, or italicized aspect of language (e.g., S at the ends of words; past tense forms; transition words; articles; etc.) for them to read aloud.

- Note-Taking:
  Have students take notes on orally presented content using an appropriate graphic organizer.

- Cloze Activity:
  Explain some problematic language features to students (e.g., transition words, vowel diphthongs, etc.). Then have students complete a cloze paragraph that focuses on the feature.

Reference Materials:
Students practice looking up word definitions and information by using a dictionary, encyclopedia, or the internet.

Report-Writing:
Students summarize information about a topic using sticky notes. Then they place them on appropriately designated subcategories on a piece of folded paper.

Text-Retelling:
Students provide an oral summary of a story or content information.

Memorizing Formulas, Tables:
Students memorize basic information such as math tables or chemistry formulas.

PROBLEM-SOLVING
(Reasoning)

- Dialogue Journal:
  Students react in writing to information presented in class.

- Debate:
  Students orally discuss pros and cons of a particular issue.

- Oral Report:
  Students prepare a presentation on a given topic.
**Reciprocal Teaching/Questioning.** Students "teach" or pose questions to each other about a topic.

**Dictoglos.** Teacher selects a text to be read aloud three times. Using notes taken during the reading, students work in pairs to recreate the text. Two pairs of students then meet to improve the recreated text.

**INTRA/INTERPERSONAL**

*(Personal Reflection or Interaction)*

**Carousel Graffiti.** Students, in groups, respond to different questions about content on large pieces of paper. They move from one station to another adding to previous group’s responses.

**Colorful Grammar.** Students volunteer words in each of the following grammatical categories: noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition. They then make up correct nonsense sentences.

**Collaborative Reading.** Using several sources on a given topic, students collect information and place it on a KWL chart.

**GIST.** With difficult text, make magnified transparencies of important sections. For each paragraph or section, help students identify key words for understanding the text. List the key words on the board and with students write a summary statement or two using as many of the listed words as possible. When completed, write a summary, or "gist", for the entire text.

**CREATIVE**

*(Using information creatively)*

**Imagery.** Students visualize what they are reading or listening to and draw a visual or symbolic representation.

**Manipulate/Act out.** Students either use tangible items or role play to demonstrate what they are learning.

**Exhibits/Projects.** Students create a representation of what they are learning with different resource materials.

**THE NECESSITY FOR LANGUAGE-FOCUSED CONTENT LEARNING**

*For English Language Learners, it is about language first; then it is about concepts. This has two important implications for mainstream teachers:*

1) They must examine the language surrounding the concept to ensure comprehension as they engage in delivery of instruction. Sentence complexity needs to be periodically scaffolded by having students identify the central action, i.e., the verb(s); pronouns need to be identified with their specific referents; transition words need to be explained; and vocabulary needs to be identified and discussed, and derivative forms taught so that ELLs have a better predictive sense of English and an expanding knowledge of word definitions and word forms.

2) Teachers must model - and model repeatedly, if necessary - so ELLs can be guided with how language and content are used academically. The procedure is I DO, YOU WATCH; I DO, YOU HELP; YOU DO, I HELP; YOU DO, I WATCH. When ELLs do not comprehend, it often is because they have not been given enough opportunity to observe and practice content language with guidance.

The purpose of varying activities described above is to accommodate the differing learning styles of students. In this way, students learn how to use language with activities they are confronted with, as well as use content language beyond their comfort zone.

**SOURCES:**
