

Engaging ESL Learners – Providing Every Learner With a Reasonable Chance at Success

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The Teacher

“Concerning a teacher’s influence, I have come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It’s my personal approach that creates the climate. It’s my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or deescalated, and a child humanized or dehumanized.”

--Haim Ginott

The Culture Quiz

by Judie Haynes

1. You are a 4th grade teacher with a new boy in your class from Syria. He speaks very little English. He is having a problem getting along with the other students. He has fights on the playground every day which he seems to provoke by constantly touching the other boys.

2. You have a new Korean girl in your 4th grade class. The other students in your class don't want to sit next to her because they say she smells funny. You have a bad allergy and can't tell. She appears to be a clean, well-dressed child and you don't understand your students' objections.

3. You are a 3rd grade teacher who is having a parent conference with parents of an Asian student in your class. You explain to the parents that the child needs to spend more time working on his homework. The parents keep nodding and saying "yes" as you explain your reasons. You are disappointed when there doesn't seem to be any follow-up on the parents' part.

4. You are a 5th grade teacher who is using a lot of cooperative learning strategies in your classroom. In the middle of the year you get a new Syrian boy in your class. The student doesn't follow any of the rules you have explained through a bilingual classmate. He is very disruptive in your class.

5. You are a 6th grade teacher with your first student from China. She came with an excellent report card from her school in China. She is outstanding in math but can't seem to learn to read.

6. You are Ms. Smith, a 3rd grade teacher. You don't think your new student from Egypt is placed in the correct grade. You set up a meeting with the parents to discuss placing the child correctly. The student's father comes in to see you but doesn't seem to take your concerns seriously.

7. You are a first grade teacher. A Korean student comes into your class in April. During a discussion of age and birthdays, this student says that she is 8 years old. The other students in your class are turning seven. The office tells you that she has been correctly placed.

8. Guadeloupe is a smiling 3rd grader from Argentina. She seems well-mannered and eager to please. However, when you speak to her she refuses to look at you.

9. You are a 4th grade teacher who wants to write a quick note home to an ESL student's family. You pick up the pen that you use to mark papers and write the note. When you hand the note to the student, she looks upset.

10. The Japanese mother of one of your 1st graders picks up her child every day at your

door. You are upset because this mother seems unfriendly. She never smiles at you and you wonder if you have done something to offend her.

11. Haitian brothers Jean-Baptiste and Jean-Pierre are often late for school. They are also each absent about once a week but on different days.

12. Your new Kurdish student seems to be sick all the time. He is lethargic and doesn't seem to even try to learn what you are teaching him.

13. A Russian student, who has learned English and is able to do much of the work in your 4th grade classroom, copies work from other students during tests. When you talk to him about this, he doesn't seem at all contrite. His parents act like you're making a big deal about nothing.

14. You have a Puerto Rican student in the 3rd grade who speaks English fluently. She participates orally in your classroom and socializes well with her peers. She even translates for other students. However, she is doing very poorly in her content area schoolwork.

15. Your 4th grade Malaysian student seems to be very good at Math. He gets "100" on his spelling tests. No one in your class knows the names of the state capitals better than he does. However, he seems to have a hard time comprehending a simple reading passage.

16. Some of your most advanced ESL students do not understand many of the geometric concepts which are taught in American classrooms from kindergarten.

17. Thi Lien is a new student from Viet Nam. She seems bright and alert but gets no help from home. The papers you send home are still in her backpack the next day. Important correspondence is never acknowledged. She doesn't do homework and forgets to bring back library books. Her home life appears to be very disorganized.

18. Pablo is a well-mannered boy from Colombia. He insists on calling you "Teacher" instead of your name which you are sure he knows.

19. Hung is a bright ESL student in your 3rd grade class. He listens to you attentively and follows directions well. However, he is very rude when a classmate is speaking. He either talks to his neighbor or day dreams. He never joins in any class discussions.

20. You are a 3rd grade teacher. Your new Syrian student speaks Arabic. He seems to hold his pencil in a very clumsy way and has a great deal of difficulty even copying work in English.

21. Maria is a Mexican student whose attendance in your 6th grade class is very poor. It is affecting her academic performance. After an absence of several days, you ask her why she was out and she explains that her aunt was sick and her family went to help her. Although you explain the importance of good attendance in school, the same thing happens a few weeks later. You wonder if Maria's family considers education important.

22. Mei, a new student from China, is scheduled to begin your 4th grade class in the middle of the school year. On the day she registers, she is been introduced to your class and shown where she will sit. She is to begin school the next morning. You arrive in your classroom at 7:45 a.m. for a day which begins at 8:30. Mei is waiting at her desk in the dark. The custodian tells you that she arrived at 7:00 a.m.

23. Korean parents bring you a gift because you have helped their child. You open it and thank them profusely for their generosity. The parents look uncomfortable.

24. You notice that a Muslim child in your classroom refuses to take a sheet of paper from a classmate. This isn't the first time this has occurred.

25. You have applied for a cultural trip for teachers to China. You know that you will be meeting other teachers along the way. You buy small gifts for them and wrap them in white tissue paper. At your first stop during the trip the recipients of your gifts upset.

26. Thu is a 6th grade girl from Thailand. She becomes hysterical when the other girls tease her by playfully mussing up her hair. Her parents have to come to school and take her home. While you understand her need to look tidy, you think she has over-reacted.

27. During a parent conference you tell the parents of your Colombian ESL student that their child is having difficulty in learning English. You suggest that they only speak English in their home. The parents look confused. When you relay this conversation to the ESL teacher in your school, she is very upset.

28. You are a 4th grade teacher. You have a friendly boy in your class from the Dominican Republic. He speaks very little English in the classroom and doesn't seem to be making much progress. When you give him directions, he seems to be confused. You are sure he is putting one over on you by pretending not to understand because you have heard him speak with the other children on the playground.

29. You are a fourth grade math teacher. Ayumi is one of the brightest students in your class. She has been in the country for 2 years and it is obvious her background in math is superb. She can not seem to understand the units on

fractions. You don't know what to think.

30. As a reward for good work in your class you give students a packet of 4 pencils with decorative erasers. Your Japanese students take two and leave two behind.

31. Jean Pierre is a 5th grade student from Haiti. Your class is studying long division. Jean-Pierre hands in his completed paper in a short time. You are upset because he has not completed the work. There is no work showing. You think the problem is written backwards. Maybe the student has a perceptual problem.

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32. A Egyptian student in your 3rd grade class is a good math student but becomes disruptive when you teach a math lesson using math manipulatives.

33. You have a new 3rd grade student from Bosnia. During recess time, the child hides under a bench and can not be persuaded to come out.

34. You have a new sixth grade student from Asia. The student appears to have an attitude from the first day. Now he is out of his seat fooling around and you've just motioned to him to come over to talk to you. He glares at you and seems even more angry. What happened?

35. As your second grade class lines up for a field trip, you count your students as you walk down the line touching each of them on the head. You notice that several students pull back from you.

36. You take photographs of your students working in small groups for a Back to School Night. The grandmother of one of your Chinese students is very upset when she sees your photo of her granddaughter.

37. You signal "O.K." by making a "O" with your thumb and forefinger to a student who has done a good job. Your 8th grade newcomer from Brazil looks very shocked.

Self-Efficacy

It influences:

SELF-EFFICACY AFFECTS

- The **choices** we make
- The **effort** we put forth (how hard we try)
- Our **perseverance** (how long we persist when we confront obstacles)
- Our **resilience** (how quickly we recover from failure or setbacks)



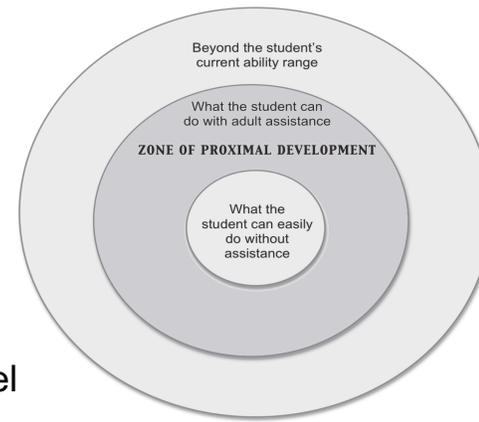
Albert Bandura (1925 -) popularized the term *self-efficacy*. He defines it as the part of our "self system" that helps us to evaluate our performance. Perceived self-efficacy refers to one's impression of what one is capable of doing. This comes from a variety of sources, such as personal accomplishments and failures, seeing others who are similar to oneself, and verbal persuasion.

Verbal persuasion may temporarily convince people that they should try or avoid some task, but in the final analysis it is one's direct or vicarious experience with success or failure that will most strongly influence one's self-efficacy. For example, a teacher may "fire-up" her students before a standardized test by telling the kids how great they are, but the enthusiasm will be short-lived if the test is completely beyond their ability or their perceived beliefs that they can actually do well.

People with high-perceived self-efficacy try more, accomplish more, and persist longer at a task than people with low perceived self-efficacy. Bandura speculates that this is because people with high-perceived self-efficacy tend to feel they have more control over their environment and, therefore, experience less uncertainty.

Zone of Proximal Development...ZPD

Zone of Proximal Development, an idea developed by Lev Vygotsky over one hundred years ago, seeks to define the process through which students effectively learn in cooperation with a teacher.

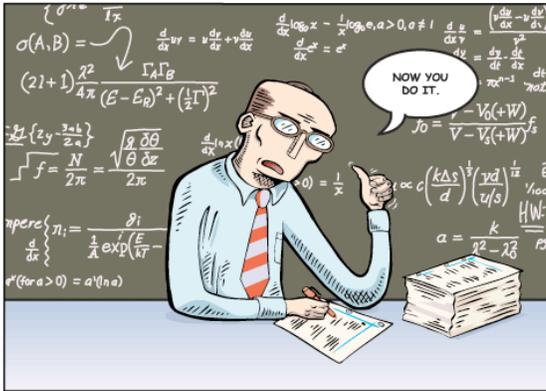


A student's Zone of Proximal Development, or ZPD, is defined as the student's range of ability with and without assistance from a teacher or a more capable peer. On one end of the range is the student's ability level without assistance. On the other end of the range is the student's ability level with assistance.

A classroom that makes the best use of all of its students' ZPDs should follow the following guidelines:

- 1 The teacher should act as a scaffold, providing the minimum support necessary for a student to succeed. The idea is to assist without denying the student's need to build his or her own foundation. The challenge for the teacher, then, is to find the optimal balance between supporting the student and pushing the student to act independently. To effectively scaffold the student, the teacher should stay one step ahead of the student, always challenging him or her to reach beyond his or her current ability level. However, if instruction falls outside of the zone (above or below a student's ZPD), no growth will occur.
- 2 To effectively scaffold students within their ZPDs, a teacher should also have an awareness of the different roles students and teachers assume throughout the collaborative process. The roles roughly resemble the following:
 - teacher modeling behavior for the student
 - student imitating the teacher's behavior
 - teacher fading out instruction
 - student practicing until the skill is mastered.

What lies behind us and what lies in front of us
are but tiny matters as compared to what lies within us.
—Ralph Waldo Emerson



SCAFFOLDING INSTRUCTION GUIDELINES

Teachers can use many proven effective teaching strategies including the following:

1. Assessing accurately where the learner is in knowledge and experience.
2. Relating content to what the learner already knows or can do.
3. Giving examples of the desired outcome and/or showing the learner what the task *is* as opposed to what it *is not*.
4. Breaking the larger outcome into smaller, achievable tasks with chances for feedback along the way.
5. Giving students a chance to orally elaborate (“think out loud”) their problem-solving techniques.
6. Using appropriate verbal clues and prompts to assist students in accessing stored knowledge.
7. Recognizing specific vocabulary that emerges from the exploration of the unit (emphasizing its meaning within the context of the lesson).
8. Regularly asking students to hypothesize or predict what is going to happen next.
9. Giving students time and opportunity to explore deeper meanings and/or to relate the newly acquired knowledge to their lives.
10. Providing time for students to debrief their learning journey and review what worked best for them.

ESSENTIAL EIGHT



Name- _____

Instructions: Sign your name by the one task that would be easiest for you to do. Then find a different person to perform one of the remaining tasks and sign his/her name by the task he/she demonstrates. You must have your own signature and those of 7 different people in order to complete the activity.

- _____ 1. **recite a poem from memory.**
- _____ 2. **finish this numerical sequence: 64, 1, 49, 4, 36, 9, 25, _____, and explain the logic behind it.**
- _____ 3. **within 30 seconds name 6 ways to sort rocks into categories.**
- _____ 4. **recall at least one dream from the last 3 weeks.**
- _____ 5. **with hands on head, stand on one foot with eyes closed for at least 7 seconds.**
- _____ 6. **hum the first line of a popular song on key.**
- _____ 7. **honestly say that he/she has more strengths than weaknesses and name 6 strengths in less than 15 seconds.**
- _____ 8 . **name five very close friends in less than 10 seconds.**

Checklists for Assessing “How Students Are Smart”

Adapted by Debbie Silver

from *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom* by Thomas Armstrong

Name of Student- _____

Check all the items that apply:

Linguistic Intelligence (Word Smart)

- 1. Is a good reader.
- 2. Enjoys word games.
- 3. Is a good joke teller/ storyteller.
- 4. Has a good vocabulary for age.
- 5. Enjoys listening activities.
- 6. Likes to write stories and/or poems.
- 7. Communicates with others in a highly verbal way.
- 8. Appreciates rhymes, puns, and/or nonsense words.
- 9. Has a good memory for words, stories, details.

Other linguistic strengths:

Logical-Mathematical Intelligence (Number Smart)

- 1. Asks a lot of questions about how things work.
- 2. Has a good sense of cause and effect.
- 3. Finds math games interesting.
- 4. Can see and repeat patterns easily.
- 5. Enjoys working puzzles and brain teasers.
- 6. Understands computer programming.
- 7. Is a logical thinker.
- 8. Can estimate things involving numbers with relative ease.
- 9. Can work math concepts in head.

Other logical-mathematical strengths:

Visual-Spatial Intelligence (Picture Smart)

- 1. Reports clear, visual images (or dreams).
- 2. Can envision objects from more than one perspective.
- 3. Daydreams more than peers.
- 4. Likes to draw and/or create art projects.
- 5. Has a good eye for detail and color.
- 6. Is good at spatial games like chess and Tetris.
- 7. Likes movies, slides, or other visual presentations.
- 8. Can move between 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional representations with ease.
- 9. Can read and/or create maps.

Other visual-spatial strengths:

Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence (Body Smart)

- 1. Is very coordinated.
- 2. Exceptionally mobile: moves, twitches, fidgets, taps when seated for long.
- 3. Enjoys working with clay, finger-paint, and other tactile media.
- 4. Can mimic others' gestures, posture, and movements.
- 5. Must touch anything new or interesting.
- 6. Loves to take things apart and put them back together.
- 7. Uses dramatic body movements for self-expression.
- 8. Enjoys running, hopping, climbing, wrestling, or similar activities.
- 9. Exhibits fine motor control (crafts, painting, etc.).

Other bodily-kinesthetic strengths:

Musical Intelligence (Music Smart)

- 1. Can detect music that is off-key, off-beat, or disturbing in some way.
- 2. Remembers melodies of songs.
- 3. Taps rhythmically as he/she works or plays.
- 4. Sensitive to environmental noise (rain on the windows, etc.).
- 5. Plays a musical instrument and/or sings in a choir.
- 6. Has a good singing voice.
- 7. Responds favorably when music is played.
- 8. Sings songs that he/she has learned.
- 9. Unconsciously hums much of the time.

Other musical strengths:

Interpersonal Communications Intelligence (People Smart)

- 1. Establishes meaningful peer relationships.
- 2. Seems to be a natural leader.
- 3. Empathizes with others.
- 4. Likes to play with others.
- 5. Shows good teamwork skills.
- 6. Others seek this student's company.
- 7. Has two or more close friends.
- 8. Frequently acts as a mediator and/or peace maker.
- 9. Enjoys teaching others.

Other interpersonal communication strengths:

Intra-personal Awareness Intelligence (Self Smart)

1. Displays a sense of strong will.
2. Enjoys playing or working alone.
3. Has high self-esteem.
4. Has a good sense of self-direction.
5. Does not mind being different from others.
6. Has a realistic view of his/her strengths and weaknesses.
7. Is able to deal effectively with successes and failures.
8. Has an interest or talent that is not readily shared with others.
9. Seems to “march to the beat of a different drummer.”

Other intra-personal awareness strengths:

Naturalistic Intelligence (Nature Smart)

1. Likes to identify and classify living and nonliving things in nature.
2. Cares for pets or animals.
3. Understands repeating patterns in nature and the universe.
4. Seems more “in tune with nature” than peers.
5. Would rather be outside than inside.
6. Has a demonstrated appreciation for a part of the natural world (i.e. dinosaurs, clouds, rocks, etc.).
7. Likes to garden and/or appreciates plants.
8. Understands and appreciates the environment.
9. Loves to collect things from nature.

Other naturalistic strengths

What does a differentiated classroom look like?

- Teacher responds to the variations in students’ readiness.
- Teacher responds to the myriad of students’ interest.
- Teacher respects the various students’ learning style.
- Learning experiences are based on student readiness, interest, or learning profile.
- Assessment is ongoing.
- Tasks are adjusted based on assessment data.

- 🧠 Teacher is primarily a coordinator of time and activities.
- 🧠 Students work in a variety of groups & configurations.
- 🧠 Time is flexible and is based on student needs.
- 🧠 Teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies to help target instruction to student needs.
- 🧠 Clearly established criteria used to support student success.

Cartesian Diver

Introduction:

The Cartesian Diver was made popular in the 1800's by the philosopher René Descartes. It is commonly found in science classrooms or perhaps you have seen the *Diving Tony* toy distributed in boxes of Frosted Flakes. The Cartesian diver offers an eloquent demonstration of the most unique property of a gas, its compressibility.

Materials:

- One 2-liter plastic bottle with cap
- One glass eyedropper

Procedure:

- 1) Fill the bottle with water.
- 2) Fill a glass with water.
- 3) Draw water into the dropper until it is 2/3 full.
- 4) Place the dropper into the glass of water. If it sinks, adjust the water level until the dropper floats.
- 5) Place the dropper into the 2-liter bottle and screw the cap tightly in place.

Activity:

Hold the bottle in one hand and squeeze. What do you observe?
Release the pressure with your hand and observe again.

Questions:

Why does the dropper sink when you apply pressure to the bottle?

As you squeeze the bottle the pressure inside increases. Liquids are not compressible but gases are. Therefore, the air in the dropper compresses and allows more water to flow into the dropper. This increases the weight of the dropper. As the weight increases, the density increases until it becomes greater than the density of water. Objects that have a density greater than water will sink.

Why are gases compressible and liquids not?

In gases the molecules are very far apart compared to their size. In other words, gases are mostly empty space. When put under increased pressure, the gas molecules can move closer together and the gas will occupy less volume.

On the other hands, in liquids the molecules are already crowded very close together. Since there is no empty space between the molecules, an increase in pressure cannot cause a decrease in volume.

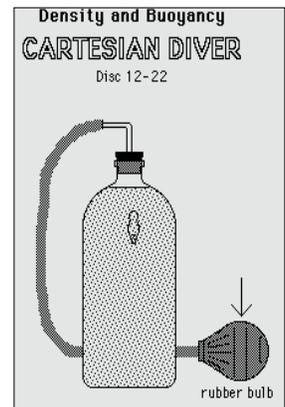
Remote Control Cartesian Diver

By Dr. Bill Deese, Louisiana Tech University

You can amaze your students by operating your Cartesian Diver by "remote control." Start with the standard Cartesian Diver set-up. Drill a hole in the bottle top just large enough to accommodate a piece of aquarium tubing. Use another bottle (any size, but smaller is usually more convenient). Drill a hole in its cap also large enough to accommodate the aquarium tubing. Fill the second bottle with water and insert a piece of aquarium tubing 3 or more feet long inside each bottle.

By squeezing the small bottle, you will increase the pressure in it. The increased pressure in the small bottle will result in an identical increase in pressure in the large bottle, thus sending the Cartesian Diver to the bottom of the large bottle by a "remote control" device.

Some sneaky teachers we know even hide the "remote control" so that they can seemingly command the Cartesian Diver to dive by voice control alone. We highly recommend this procedure! It really causes the students to think about what is happening.

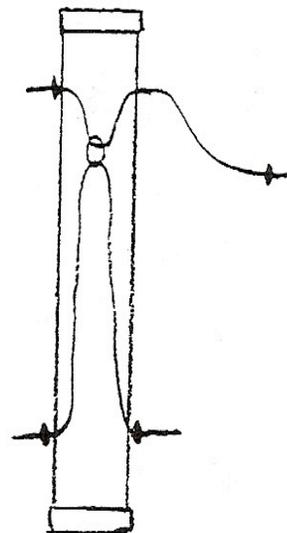


This activity demonstrates the principle that pressure is the same throughout a fluid.

Critical Thinking and the Magic Tube

By William Deese
Louisiana Tech University

Description: A large cylinder with cords protruding from four holes is shown to the audience. When each cord is pulled, sometimes surprising results are obtained. The audience is challenged to explain how the magic tube is constructed.



Materials: 2-foot section of 2-inch PVC pipe
(2) 2-inch caps for the PVC pipe
7-foot section of 1/4-inch cord
(1) 1-inch metal ring

Construction:

- 1) Drill a 1/4 inch hole in the tube 3 inches from one end. Rotate the tube 180 degrees and drill another hole exactly opposite to the first one.
- 2) Drill two holes at the other end in analogous positions.
- 3) Cut the cord into 4-foot and 3-foot lengths.
- 4) Thread the 4-foot cord through a hole, through the metal ring, and out the hole on the opposite side.
- 5) Tie knots near each end of the cord.
- 6) Position the ring in line with the holes at the other end of the tube and thread the 3-foot cord through both holes and the ring.
- 7) Tie knots about 3 inches from each end of the second cord.
- 8) Pull one end of the long cord out and cut about 12 inches off. Tie knots about 3 inches from each end.

Procedure:

- 1) Display the magic tube to your audience and pull one of the Cords. Then pull the end exactly opposite the first one you pulled.
- 2) Now pull one of the cords at the other end and observe.
- 3) Continue to pull various ends of the cords while your audience tries to figure out how the magic tube works.
- 4) If your audience is a class, ask them to design their own tubes. There may be more than one design that works.

Hazards: Be careful when drilling the holes in the PVC pipe.

Reference: A hand-out by Bruce Hogue, Dustan Middle School

How We Act When We Don't Understand What Is Said In Class

- We cry when we are scared.
- We make a face – roll our eyes.
- We put our heads down and sleep.
- We get angry – we kick the chair; we say bad words.
- We interrupt and talk loud.
- We cut class.
- We daydream in class, don't pay attention, think of other things.
- We ask the counselor if we can drop the class, because we are afraid.
- We bite our nails.
- We listen to music.
- We feel hungry.
- We fight with other students.
- We bother the other students.
- We flirt with the other students.
- We stay home.
- We run away.

*Cushman, Kathleen. 2003. *Fires in the Bathroom: Advice for Teachers from High School Students*. New York: The New Press.

Teachers Who Want to Help ESL Students:

Mainstream teachers and students can communicate with new non-English speaking students from the very first day. ESL and bilingual teachers will find it worth their time to help them learn to communicate. When classroom teachers communicate with newcomers, that communication must be comprehensible. Show them how to use drawings, gestures, actions, emotions, voice variety, chalkboard sketches, photographs, and visual materials to provide clues to meaning. Adding visual and kinesthetic support along with the language will provide additional comprehensible input.

Encourage mainstream teachers and students to allow your new learners of English translation time when listening and speaking. Explain that newcomers are translating the language they hear back to their native language, formulating a response and then translating that response into English.

Remember that there will be times when you will not be able to get an idea across to newcomers. Give each classroom teacher a list of students in your school who speak the newcomer's language. You will be able to call on these students to act as translators if necessary.

Provide clues to meaning

- Use drawings, dramatic gestures, actions, emotions, voice, mime, chalkboard sketches, photographs and visual materials to provide clues to meaning.
- If necessary, repeat your actions using the same simple structures and actions.
- Simplify your message as much as possible breaking them into smaller, manageable parts to give newcomers a chance at comprehending.
- Make sure the student's attention is focused.
- Don't insist, however, that students make eye contact with you when you are speaking to them. This is considered rude in many cultures.

◦

Modify your speech

- Talk at a slow-to-normal pace, in short sentences.
- Use a pleasant tone
- Use simple sentence structure (subject-verb-object) and high-frequency words
- Use names of people rather than pronouns.
- Pause after phrases or short sentences, not after each word. You do not want to distort the rhythm of the language.
- Avoid using the passive voice and complex sentences.
- If you have something important to convey, speak one-on-one to the newcomer rather than in front of the class. The anxiety of being in the spotlight interferes with comprehension.
- Ask simple yes/no questions so that newcomers have an opportunity to respond.
- Accept one-word answers or gestures.

◦

Be an active listener

- Give full attention to your newcomer and make every effort to understand his / her attempts to communicate
- Smile
- Talk in a calm, quiet manner. Raising your voice does not help comprehension
- Demonstrate your patience through your facial expressions and body language.
- Give your ESL students extra time to respond.
- Encourage new learners of English to act out or to draw pictures to get their meaning across.

- Don't jump in immediately to supply the words for the student.
- If the student response is heavily accented, correct by repeating the words correctly. Do not ask the student to repeat the correction. This can be very embarrassing.
- Resist the urge to over correct. This will inhibit newcomers so that they will be less willing to speak. Allow students to use a bilingual dictionary for words that can not be acted out.

Check comprehension frequently

- Don't ask "Do you understand?" unless you have taught it. This is not a reliable check since many students will nod "yes" when they don't really understand.
- Teach the phrases (or have a bilingual volunteer teach them) "I don't understand," "Slowly, please," and "Please repeat."
- Write down messages so students have a visual as well as auditory input. Make a list of phrases you want your student to learn and to understand. Ask a bilingual volunteer to work with the student on those phrases.

Related Links

[Newcomers in the Community](#)

In the Spring my district always welcomes newcomers to the United States into our E.S.L. program. Finding activities for these new students is a challenge. Combine your students' natural interest in environmental print with a tour of the neighborhood for this thematic unit.

[How to Develop Questioning Strategies](#)

Involving English language learners in the discussions in their content area classes can be frustrating if teachers do not develop strategies for asking questions.

[Meeting the Challenge of Content Instruction](#)

Discover how the standards movement currently sweeping the US will have a positive impact on the education of ESL students, while also presenting instructional challenges to ESL and mainstream professionals.

[Organizing and Assessing in the Content Area Class](#)

How do you help mainstream teachers accurately monitor for student comprehension, organize the content class, and design realistic assessments? These questions will be addressed in this article, which is the second part of "Meeting the Challenge of Content Instruction."

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STEPS IN DELIBERATE PRACTICE

■ **Remember that deliberate practice has one objective: to improve performance.** “People who play tennis once a week for years don’t get any better if they do the same thing each time,” Ericsson has said. “Deliberate practice is about changing your performance, setting new goals and straining yourself to reach a bit higher each time.”

■ **Repeat, repeat, repeat.** Repetition matters. Basketball greats don’t shoot ten free throws at the end of team practice; they shoot five hundred.

■ **Seek constant, critical feedback.** If you don’t know how you’re doing, you won’t know what to improve.

■ **Focus ruthlessly on where you need help.** While many of us work on what we’re already good at, says Ericsson, “those who get better work on their weaknesses.”

■ **Prepare for the process to be mentally and physically exhausting .** That’s why so few people commit to it, but that’s why it works. (*Pink, 2009, p. 159*)

Attribution Theory

- Task Difficulty
- Luck
- Innate Ability or Talent
- Effort

External (Controlled by other than Self)

- Task Difficulty
- Luck
- Innate Ability or Talent

Internal (Controlled by Self)

- Effort

Responses to Culture Quiz by Judie Haynes

1. American boys in grades 4-6 do not touch each other except during contact sports or when fighting. This is the way they are socialized. In Middle Eastern countries boys playing on a playground are constantly touching each other. When a Middle Eastern child does this on an American playground, he is will end up in many fights. The American boys see this as “sissy” behavior.
2. Different diets produce different body odors. Americans smell bad to some people in other cultures because they eat a lot of meat and drink milk. In the case of the Korean child, a diet heavy in garlic could be the reason for the odor.
3. Nodding and saying “yes” does not mean the parent agrees with you in Asian cultures. It means that they hear what you are saying. Most Asian parents would be too polite to disagree with the teacher.
4. This student could come from almost any culture. The organization of a cooperative learning classroom may look chaotic and undisciplined to new students. They can't tell what the rules are. This student probably came from a class where the teacher lectures and. the student's role is more passive.
5. Unlike Japanese or Korean, the Chinese language has no sign/symbol correspondence. This basic reading concept is very difficult for students learning to read in English. Students need to go back to the beginning and learn to decode beginning phonics.
6. Often males from Middle Eastern countries have difficulty accepting a female teacher as a decision maker. Even if the family is not Muslim, very traditional roles for females are prevalent.
7. Everyone gains a year on the Lunar New Year. If a child is born in September, they will turn one in January or February, depending on the date of the Lunar New Year. This student has counted her birthday as of January 25th . Many Asian children lose a year of their age when they come to the U.S. and this needs to be explained to them.
8. In many cultures it is considered rude to look directly at an adult or a person considered of a higher status. This is so instilled in some students that they find it very difficult to learn to maintain eye contact.
9. Oops! You have used a red pen and written a note to the parents. This is very upsetting in many cultures where red is the color of death. Pay attention to this especially with your Korean students.

10. Japanese adults smile at friends and other people they know well. They do not use a smile as a way to say hello. Some Asian people seem to smile at everything. They feel it is correct to smile a lot like Americans but they don't really know culturally when a smile is appropriate in American culture.

11. They may be staying home on different days of the week to baby-sit for a younger sibling who does not yet attend school. They may be late because they have family obligations to help parents who are working. They may not have clean clothes for two that day.

12. Lethargy and illness are signs of culture shock. A student coming from a totally different culture and environment is going to be in shock. The greater the difference between the home culture and the American culture, the more severe these culture shock symptoms may be.

13. In many other cultures, copying from someone's paper does not receive the same reaction as it does in American culture. There is a lot of pressure on students to achieve any way they can. Many cultures in the previous "communistic block" countries see copying as a way of putting one over on the government. It is not considered "bad." American standards for academic honesty must be clearly explained.

14. This student has acquired BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) but has not yet acquired CALPs (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) needed to learn in content areas. Many of our second language learners are exiting ESL programs at the BIC level. We need to work on CALPs before these students are exited. Good BIC skills also fool mainstream teachers, who think that a child speaking with friends on the playground, is just being lazy when not doing his/her work.

15. The skills this student excels at are all "rote memory" skills. This reflects the education of the students country where memorization and regurgitation are the way students learn. Asian students may become excellent at decoding words. Their parents think that they can read and they may even fool their teachers for a long time. They may not have good reading comprehension skills.

16. Math is not taught in a spiral manner in many other countries. American first grade math curricula introduces terms such as "cone" and "rectangular prism." Geometrical concepts are taught each year. Students from other countries may not learn much geometry before the 5th or 6th grade.

17. Many parents are working long hours to give their children a better life in America. They may get home very late. They may be overwhelmed with their day-to-day routine .If your correspondence is in English, parents may not be able to read in English even if they speak it. Some parents may not be literate in their

first language. It is important to keep this in mind.

18. In many cultures, it is rude to use the teacher's name. Respect is shown by addressing the teacher as "Teacher." When Pablo has enough English to understand, explain the American custom of using your name without the preface "teacher."

19. In many cultures the teacher is the center of all learning. Other students are not seen as a source of information. These students need to be directly taught to listen to others, to express their own opinions, and join class discussions. One way to do this is to ask Hung what his classmate just said. If he doesn't know, have the classmate repeat it. Ask him if he agrees with an opinion.

20. This student is used to reading and writing from right to left, back to front. It will take longer to relearn this and to hold the pencil in a way that is appropriate for English writing.

21. Maria's family considers education important but family obligations have a higher priority. Keep up a constant communication with the parents.

22. Schools in many countries begin much earlier. Some schools in China begin at 7:00 or 7:30 in the morning. You need to have a translator or Bilingual Parent Volunteer tell her and her parents what time school starts.

23. Koreans consider it rude to open a gift in front of the giver. Gift giving is very serious business. You don't want to show any signs of a lack of appreciation for the gift. In order to avoid this, gifts are not opened in the presence of the giver.

24. The student is probably handing the paper with her left hand. In many cultures the left hand is seen as "unclean." You don't hand people objects with it.

25. White is a sign of death or a funeral. Rewrap those gifts in red paper.

26. In Thai culture the head is where a person's soul resides. It is very important not to touch a child's head.

27. It is better for parents to speak a rich native language than a fragmented English. Remember that any concept taught in native language will eventually translate to English. It is never appropriate to tell parents to speak only English in their home. If you moved to Japan, would you be able to speak only Japanese in your home.

28. This child has learned some of his BICs (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills). He has not yet mastered academic language which takes much longer.

29. Fractions are not very important in the rest of the world where the metric system is used. A fraction would be expressed in decimals.

30. Two is considered very lucky and four is very unlucky. Give gifts in twos.
31. This is the way division problems are written in Haiti and in many South American countries. Students in other parts of the world figure the problem out mentally. They do not write down the work.
32. Students from many other cultures will not be used to working with manipulatives. Students may become disruptive because they do not take this type of lesson seriously.
33. Children from war torn countries may be very sensitive to town whistles for ambulance or fire or even the school bells. School staff members need to be aware of how frightening these bells and whistles may be. Fire drill bells may cause a problem for any new student from countries where fire drills are not practiced.
34. The student is probably angry because he has had to move away from all that is familiar. Culture shock plays a part in this behavior. How did you motion for the student to come over to you? Beckoning with one finger is rude in many cultures. It can be a gesture reserved for animals.
35. This is something primary teacher do all of the time. To be on the safe side refrain from touching any Asian students on the head.
36. For conservative Chinese people, it is very bad luck to have a picture taken with an odd number of people. Three people in a picture is considered especially unlucky, especially for the person in the middle.
37. This typical American sign for "O.K." is recognized in most of the world. However, it is very crude in a handful of countries, Brazil being one of them.

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The Power of Quality Technology in the ESL Classroom
Retrieved from: <http://www.mastersinesl.org/blog/instructional-technology-tools-in-the-esl-classroom/>

Instructional technology tools can reshape your curriculum, or they can be a way to reinforce concepts and address gaps in language skills. According to Jeff Wiseman's presentation, "English Language Learners as Digital Natives: 21st Century Tools for Sheltered ESL Classrooms," there are many benefits to integrating technology in an ESL setting:

- They can individualize and customize curriculum.
- They can promote cooperative group work.
- They can impart English skills while also providing technology skills essential for 21st century learners.
- They can increase the percentage of time students stay on task during independent practice.

When using technology in the classroom, consider that this is the generation of “digital natives,” students who have grown up with the Internet and who are familiar with technology for entertainment. An ESL or EFL educator’s job is to guide students to use high-quality instructional tools for learning or practicing English skills. In locating such resources, consider:

- How does this tool engage users?
- Does this tool provide targeted support in a necessary skill?
- Does this tool address listening, reading, reasoning, creating, or writing in English?
- What degree of language proficiency does this tool support?
- Is there a way to assess skills mastery?

ESL Instructional Tech Tools for Listening Skills and Verbal Interaction

According to Renee Ybarra and Tim Green’s “Using Technology to Help ESL/EFL Students Develop Language Skills,” published in The Internet TESL Journal, teachers in ELL classrooms can use computers to enhance listening skills and verbal interaction, and to support a variety of language functions. The authors highlight the power of software, apps, and websites that feature interactive stories. These stories have built-in visual and audio aids to support comprehension and often feature activities and assessments that reinforce learning and assess comprehension. Resources for teachers include:

Story Time For Me

A free library of stories featuring animation, narration by professional actors, and word-by-word highlighting. These stories are best suited to children in the primary grades.

Starfall

This site has free resources suitable for individualized development of pre-reading skills, teaching reading, and refining reading skills. The “I’m Reading” section (<http://www.starfall.com/n/level-c/index/load.htm?f>) has a diverse library of reading materials, accompanied by illustrations and audio, including fiction, nonfiction, comics, plays, Greek myths, Chinese fables, and other folk tales.

Many Things

Geared toward teenage and adult ELLs at the intermediate and advanced levels, this site features short reports on current events, news items, and social issues. Students listen and read along.

Voxy

Subscribers to this app listen to and read short news stories on various themes. Afterward, they play games to practice skills and complete quizzes to test their comprehension.

ESL Instructional Tech Tools for Practicing Literacy Skills

Ybarra and Green also find that software and online games can promote students' skills in spelling, phonics, grammar, and sight word vocabulary. Here are a few computer literacy games that support ESL instruction:

Building Language for Literacy: Early Reading Activities

Scholastic has developed three online games that teach beginning ESL students in the primary grades with phonemic awareness, phonics, and vocabulary.

ESL Interactive Grammar Games

Short, simple games address skills such as English vocabulary, spelling, and verb tenses.

Learn English Kids

The British Council sponsors this website, which includes kids games, listening activities, reading games, online writing practice, and grammar games.

ESL Instructional Tech Tools for Developing Writing Skills

Ybarra and Green highlight how teachers can use computers to support beginning ELLs in guided writing activities. The graphics, prompts, and templates available from technology-based ESL writing activities keep writing interesting and reduce students' frustration. Some tech-based ESL writing tools available to teachers include:

Interactive Writing Games

Fun English Games presents highly structured activities that guide students to write for different purposes. The interactive lessons and writing templates include formulating an argument for a debate, designing advertising materials, writing newspaper pieces, composing a letter, creating stories in different genres, and writing step-by-step instructions.

Learn English Kids

The British Council's site features quite innovative interactive writing activities. These games ask students to use English to style a superhero, make a comic strip, create finger puppets to act out a fairytale, compose a story, design a monster, and customize a dangerous animal.

Constructing the Paragraph

English Online France has a tutorial and self-test for adult learners on how to

write a paragraph. Other writing activities in this series include topic sentence, supporting sentences, using transitions, and ordering principles.

ESL Instructional Tech Tools for Vocabulary Support

As pointed out in the research paper “Integrating Technology: Best-Use Practices for English Language Learners in Content-based Classrooms,” by Ruth Ban, Li Jin, Robert Summers, and Kristina Eisenhower, instructional technology allows teachers to customize instruction to match student needs. The authors provide the example of a language arts lesson that requires students to comprehend English text. Beginners might use translation tools or online picture dictionaries to aid comprehension, while more advanced ELLs can use electronic dictionaries without graphic support. Here are some ESL Dictionary and Translation Tools:

Online Picture Dictionary

ESOL Help has created a free picture dictionary with simple images. Words are organized thematically.

Google Translate

One of the most prominent free online translation tools has boxes for plugging in text to translate.

ESL Instructional Tech Tools for Practicing English Communication

Ban, Jin, Summers, and Eisenhower also cover ways ESL teachers can use technology-based communication tools in class. The authors highlight instructional strategies such as:

- blending oral and written language with Instant Messenger
- sending emails to classmates to practice informal writing
- participating in course components on a class discussion board
- creating a webquest to address an inquiry or theme
- designing a class webpage

LIST OF RELATED CITATIONS

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