



Biliteracy Strategies

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This description of strategies is meant to accompany and enhance the use of the Biliteracy Unit Framework.

Big Idea (<i>One language until the Bridge</i>)		Formative Assessment
Comprehensible Context (Background Knowledge & Oral Academic Language)		
Reading Comprehension		
Writing		
Word Study	Fluency	
<i>The Bridge (Both languages side by side)</i>		
<i>Extension Activities in the Other Language</i>		

Effective Biliteracy Strategies

- Allow for the active and meaningful participation of ALL students, regardless of language proficiency or academic achievement.
- Build on and enlarge both receptive and productive content area vocabulary and language structures.
- Build on and expand background knowledge.
- Increase student interaction and decrease teacher talk.

Strategies that develop oracy and background knowledge	Strategies that develop and practice reading comprehension and writing
• Adapted Reader's Theater • Concept Attainment • Field Trip, Experiment, Movie • Fish Bowl • Informal and Formal Word Walls • Pictures • Realia • Sentence Prompts • TPR (Total Physical Response) • Word and Picture Sort	• Anticipation/Prediction Guide • Dialectical Journal • Graphic Organizers • Language Experience Approach • KCN (Know, Confirmed, New Information) Chart • Narrow Reading • Picture Walk • Read Aloud • Say Something/Write Something • Word/Phrase Sequencing

Visit www.teachingforbiliteracy.com to see videos of biliteracy strategies in action

Adapted Reader's Theater –*Oracy and Background Knowledge*

Purpose:

- To make a text or big idea comprehensible by acting it out.
- To introduce new academic language within a context that is risk-free and highly comprehensible.

Description:

Adapted Readers' Theater, or ART, is, as the name implies, an adaptation of readers' theater.

- The teacher summarizes or paraphrases a text while the students act it out. In some ways, it is very similar to TPR (see below, Total Physical Response).
- The difference is that there is not as much of an emphasis on associating specific vocabulary with a specific movement.
- Through the teacher's narration and the interaction and movement of the students, the concepts and vocabulary are previewed.
- Students act out the story with the teacher either silently or joining into the narration using the key academic vocabulary.

Example:

Using immigration as a theme, the teacher would paraphrase the text – the social studies book or other resource – that the students will be reading. As she narrates, she uses language that will be comprehensible to her students, and introduces new vocabulary supported by pictures or realia. The students can be engaged in acting out gestures associated to the big ideas of the theme.

Concept Attainment - *Oracy and Background Knowledge*

Purpose:

- To provide students with an experience where they describe and identify a concept through an interactive, teacher-led process that is deductive.
- To elicit student language about a concept they know, and to use that language to describe a new concept.

Description:

Concept attainment is a constructivist strategy wherein students construct an understanding of a new concept through a series of hints or examples of the concept. This is in contrast to the more teacher-centered – and abstract - approach, where the teacher tells the students the concept they will be studying, and then describes the concept to the students.

Example:

- The teacher shares illustrations in two columns, Column A and Column B.
- As she shares these illustrations, students use sentence prompts to identify the shape (What is it? It is a square), and to identify what happens to it (What happened to it? Its border changed colors) from Column A.
- The same happens with Column B where the shapes are filled in. Students talk in pairs using these prompts, and the teacher records their descriptors of what has happened to the shapes.
- Once enough descriptions have been shared, the teacher explains that Column A is called Perimeter, and Column B is called Area.
- Because the students described and identified each concept, they understand its meaning without the teacher having to explain or lecture.

- TPR can be added after the concept has been attained (all students “show” perimeter by drawing a square in the air, and area by coloring it in.)

Example of sentence prompts used along with Concept Attainment
• <i>Creo que todos los elementos del Concepto A se refieren a...</i> • <i>Lo que tiene en común los elementos del Concepto B es...</i> • <i>Estoy de acuerdo porque...</i> • <i>No estoy de acuerdo porque...</i>
• I think that all the examples in A refer to... • The thing that all the examples in B have in common is... • I agree because... • I disagree because...

Dialectical Journal (*Comprehension and Writing*)

Purpose:

- To help readers focus on comprehension.
- To create a meaningful purpose to read.
- To provide students with choice in terms of what they respond to in a text.
- To help students view writing not as a product, but as a tool that they can use to increase their own understanding.
- It encourages students to stay in the target language - students are required to read, think, and write in the language of instruction, and to connect the language domains.

Description:

A dialectical journal is a conversation between the reader and the text, or between the reader and the author.

- Students need to have pages with two columns.
- On the left hand side, the student writes down passages h/she selected and that make him/her think, mad, perplexed or that were especially interesting.
- To the right of the passages, the student writes his/her thoughts or reflections.

Adaptations:

- For younger students, this activity can be as a role-play first, and then as whole class interactive writing activity.
- Students can simply cite the page and paragraph number so that they do not have to type the entire passage from the text.

Adult Example:

<i>...we consider literacy to be an activity involving all interrelated aspects of language - listening, speaking, reading, and writing - with the purpose of constructing or conveying meaning. (p.87)</i>	Yes, I know this. But my principal doesn't. When he comes in my room during the literacy block, he only wants to see guided reading. He needs to read this book!
<i>Regardless of the age or proficiency level of students, teachers must actively develop students' oral language to insure their overall comprehension of language and support their literacy activity. (p. 88)</i>	This is what I always say, a noisy classroom is a learning classroom.

El Dictado / Dictation - Word Study and Fluency

El dictado is a universal strategy – one that can be used in Spanish or in English – used in the teaching the various components of word study and mechanics, including spelling, punctuation, and fluency. Below is an outline of the process of implementing this strategy in the primary grades.

1. Based on a review of student writing, the teacher chooses one or more sentences (see suggestions on length of *dictado* below) that reflect a spelling pattern and/or element of writing mechanics that the students are ready to learn. It is important to remember that the content of the *dictado* must come from content known and studied by the children. The students must know and understand all of the words in the *dictado*.

Suggested length of *dictado*:

- **Kindergarten:** Several key words or a single sentence
- **First:** One simple or complex sentence.
- **Second:** Two sentences
- **Third:** Three sentences or a simple paragraph.
- **Fourth and higher:** Complex text

2. The same *dictado* is used throughout the week, as each day focuses on a different element of spelling, mechanics or fluency. A sample week is provided below. There are many ways to use the *dictado* to teach various elements of spelling and fluency, and the outline below is provided as a suggestion only. It is important, though, to keep in mind that the focus of the *dictado* should match the children's developmental level. Visit <http://www.teachingforbilitacy.com/metodos-autenticos/> for videos and more information.

Fishbowl- Comprehensible Context and Modeling (can be adapted to different parts of the framework)

Purpose:

- To model both the language and behavior you expect of students in pair or group work
- To provide the teacher with a tool for teaching students how to do an activity or how to apply a new skill without a long, drawn-out explanation by the teacher.

Description:

- Students are selected to be in the center of the class, and the other students gather around the selected students and observe their actions - as if they were in a fishbowl.
- Rather than explain to the students how to do a cooperative activity or a center activity, the teacher puts the selected students in the “fishbowl”.
- All the other students gather around to observe these students as she walks the “fish” through the activity. In addition to modeling the behavior, the “fish” also model the language the teacher wants the students to use.
- The teacher narrates the students through the activity, posting sentence prompts where necessary. At this point the students, with help from the teacher, are modeling both the language and the behavior that the other students are to emulate when they participate in the small group or pair activity once the fishbowl has concluded.
- After the students observe their peers participating in the fishbowl, they return to their places and begin the same activity. The “fish”, along with the teacher, walk around the room and help students with the activity.

- Selecting students who usually seek negative attention and may not do well in semi-supervised pair or group work to be the fish turns them into teacher's helpers and directors of good behavior.

Language Experience Approach (Reading Comprehension and Writing)

Purpose:

- To help students learn to read using their own words.
- To teach writing conventions
- To focus on reading skills while building on student oral language.
- To develop comprehension

Description

- Students experience something meaningful together (go on a field trip, conduct an experiment, read a story).
- The students tell the teacher about the meaningful experience.
- Using sentence prompts and elbow buddies, the teacher asks pairs to suggest sentences as part of the telling.
- The teacher writes down what they say.
- The transcription is then used as a literacy source. For example, students retell group experiences such as a field trip, a science experiment, a story, or a project in which they all participated.
- The LEA is based on personal experiences and is developed by students, resulting in highly meaningful and comprehensible reading materials.
- Applications of LEA can be used with many different kinds of activities and are applicable for all proficiency levels.

Sentence Prompts and Turn and Talk - *A very versatile strategy that can be used at any point in the Unit*

Purpose:

- Help to structure student-student interactions
- Provide students with the opportunity to practice speaking (and later writing) in complete sentences
- Give students practice with academic language
- Encourages the use of the target language and elevates the status of Spanish when Spanish is the target language

Description:

Whenever the teacher wants students to process information and use academic language examples, she provides students with a prompt to guide the thinking, the interaction, or the writing. This can be both planned ahead of time and/or developed as needed.

Read aloud (Comprehension)

Purpose:

- To promote comprehension.
- To integrate the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading and writing).

Description:

Read aloud may be done in several ways.

- Read aloud may be done in the more traditional manner, in which the teacher has the only copy of the book and reads aloud to students, only showing the pictures – if there are any - after having read a section of text.
- Read aloud may be done as the students view the pictures and the text as the teacher is reading. This can be done with a big book or as the teacher projects an image of the book on a screen with a document reader or other form of technology.
- Read aloud may also be done as shared reading, in which the teacher reads aloud as the students follow in their own copies of the same text.

Whichever method for read aloud is used, read aloud follows these steps:

- Teacher chooses text or texts that are of high interest, that are culturally relevant, and that support the learning of content
- Teacher provides the students with a highly interactive, comprehensible, concrete activity designed to provide the background knowledge and vocabulary necessary to comprehend the text(s)
- Students use an active reading strategy as teacher reads aloud
 - Some **active reading** strategies that can be used during read aloud include the following:
- **Turn and Talk** - Teacher strategically sits students in cooperative partnerships directed to interact in specific way during the read aloud. These partnerships are flexible, and change depending upon the strategy used or the content of focus.
- **Sense Imagery** - As the teacher reads aloud, she stops and first models, and then asks students to share with their elbow buddies what the text is making them see, hear, smell, taste and feel.
- **Sentence prompts** to accompany sense imagery
 - *Ahora, yo puedo ver...*(Now I can see...);
 - *Ahora, puedo escuchar...*(Now I can hear...)
 - *Siento el olor de...*(Now I can smell...)
 - *Eso me hace sentir...*(This makes me feel...)

TPR – Total Physical Response – *Developing Oracy and Background Knowledge*

Total Physical Response (TPR) developed by James Asher (1982) *Learning another language through actions: The complete teachers' guidebook*.

Purpose: To make academic vocabulary comprehensible by attaching a kinesthetic gesture to key words or phrases.

Description: Initially, the method was designed primarily for students in the early stages of language acquisition. Since commands can be made comprehensible to students with very limited language, Asher used commands as the basis for TPR. The teacher or a more proficient student gives a command, demonstrates the command, and then students respond physically to the command. Because students are actively involved and not expected to repeat the command, anxiety is low, and student focus is on comprehension rather than production. Hence, they demonstrate comprehension before their speaking skills emerge.

1. Students watch a demonstration of key words and gestures.
2. Students listen again and watch as the teacher performs the action.
3. The teacher demonstrates again, this time having students perform the actions simultaneously.
4. The teacher demonstrates without modeling the action.

5. The teacher models variations & combinations for the groups.
6. Students perform variations & combinations.
7. If some students are ready, they demonstrate to classmates.

TPR is very versatile and can be adapted to many different language proficiency levels, including use with highly proficient students where the focus is on comprehension of academic language. Adaptations include having students come up with a gesture that matches a key vocabulary word (revolution, setting, upper case, exclamation mark...)

Say Something/Write Something (*Comprehension and Writing*)

Purpose:

- To support student comprehension by structuring their discussions and/or writing about the text they are reading.

Description:

- Students choose a selection to read.
- Students select their reading partner.
- Partners decide (or the teacher does ahead of time) how much of the text to read silently before stopping to “Say Something”.
- Students comment on what was read, author’s style or tone, comprehension problems, personal connections, what the passage made them think of, images that came to mind, etc.
- Process is repeated.
 - can also be done in a large group when teacher is reading aloud and stops for quick oral responses
 - can use the same process when showing a short video clip as a pre-reading activity

To add writing: Ideally done after speaking with others, students write their comments about the text. Sentence prompts can be used to help them write and stay focused. The writing can also be done at home as an extension or processing activity.

Word Sort –*Developing Oracy and Background Knowledge, Pre-Writing and Post-Writing*

Purpose:

- To focus on higher level thinking by finding connections among words or classifying words into categories that are either closed (What I know, I think I know, I do not know) or open.
- As a pre-reading activity, the word sort provides the teacher with the opportunity to assess students’ understanding of the key academic vocabulary, while at the same time providing a low-stress environment for teaching that key vocabulary.

Description

- Pairs of students are asked to categorize words (or pictures, or realia) either into predetermined categories or into categories of their own choosing.
- Predetermined categories are known as closed word sorts, while the latter is an open word sort. In pairs, students are asked to categorize a set of words.
- Because it is a pre-reading activity, there is no expectation on the part of the teacher that the students will categorize the words “correctly” or in a way that reflects the content to be taught. If the students are involved in an open word sort, they can categorize the words in any way they would like, as long as they can explain their categorizations.

- If it is a closed word sort, the categories the teacher provides to the students must be comprehensible to the students.
- Sentence prompts can be used to structure oral language and to help students focus on the words.
- Make a list of 8-10 words from the unit/lesson. The words should be key concepts, main ideas, topics that you want to be sure that the students understand.
- Add any other difficult words that your students will encounter in the reading passages of the text.
- Look at the list of your words. Figure out what categories you might use if you were going to put these words in some sort of order.
- Add a few more words that will help connect the list of words and/or help fit the words in categories. These words may be “easy” or common sense words that will simply offer clues to the students.
- For primary grades keep list to 8-10 words.
- For older students 15-20 words work well in a word sort.

Sample Sentence Prompts for a Closed Word Sort
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|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Yo se que esta palabra se refiere a...</i> • <i>Creo que esta palabra se refiere a...</i> • <i>No sé que quiere decir esta palabra. ¿Tú?</i> • <i>Estoy de acuerdo.</i> • <i>No estoy de acuerdo porque...</i> |
|---|

Sample Sentence Prompts for a Closed Word Sort
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- | |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I know that this word refers to... • I think this word refers to... • I don't know the meaning of this word. Do you? • I agree. • I disagree because... |
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