

Strategies that Support Reading Comprehension for Multilingual Learners



Darien-Delavan, WI

August 21, 2025

Melody Wharton, M.Ed.

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The Center for Teaching for Biliteracy



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Agenda:

- Welcome & Introductions
- What is Reading Comprehension?
- Effective Strategies for Developing Oral Language and Language Comprehension
- Sample Instruction
- Debrief of Strategies & Supports
- Next Steps and Session Closure

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Materials for today's session



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Strategies that Support Reading Comprehension for Multilingual Learners

Delavan-Darien, WI

Presenter	Contact Information
Melody Wharton	teachingforbiliteracyMW@gmail.com

Session Outcomes:

- Identify the key components of reading comprehension
- Describe strategies that develop oral language and language comprehension to support reading comprehension.

Session Evaluation Form



<https://bit.ly/DDAug212025>

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- Hello! My name is...
- I work at ____ and I ____ (role).
- In reading the outcomes, I notice that...
- I am interested in...
- What about you?

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Norms

- Participate actively and interactively
- Use a growth mindset and make sure everyone has a voice
- Please keep sidebar conversations to a minimum.
- Please silence your phones.
- Use technology strategically.
- Please no videorecording.

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Agenda:



Welcome & Introductions

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- Sample Instruction
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What is reading comprehension?

SIMPLE VIEW OF READING

The Simple View of Reading has been empirically validated by research that reading is the product of word recognition and language comprehension. If word recognition is weak, reading comprehension is diminished. No amount of skill in one component can compensate for a lack of skill in the other. While it is a simple view, it is not a simplistic view. It is a view that is supported by a wealth of research. It is a view that is supported by a wealth of research. It is a view that is supported by a wealth of research.

This equation holds true for ANY language.

$$\text{WR} \times \text{LC} = \text{RC}$$

Gough, P. B., & Tunmer, W. E. (1986). Decoding, reading, and reading disability. *Remedial and Special Education*, 7, 6-10.



Figure 1: From "The Science of Reading: Defining Guide." Distributed by The Reading League.

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What is reading comprehension?

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SIMPLE

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This equation reflects the simple view of reading in one language only (monolingual instruction).

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Figure 1: From "The Science of Reading: Defining Guide." Distributed by The Reading League.

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Page 2

Word Recognition

Constrained

In English ~ 3 years
In Spanish ~ 1 year
(K-2)

- Phonological Awareness
- Decoding (and Spelling)
- Sight Recognition



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Language Comprehension

Unconstrained

Develops over your entire life

- Background Knowledge
- Vocabulary Knowledge
- Language Structures (syntax)
- Verbal Reasoning
- Literacy knowledge



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What is reading comprehension?

Page 2

SIMPLE VIEW OF READING

The Simple View of Reading has been empirically validated by over 150 scientific studies. It shows us that reading comprehension is not the sum, but the product of two components - word recognition and language comprehension - such that if either one is weak, reading comprehension is diminished. No amount of skill in one component can compensate

for a lack of skill in the other. While it is a simple view of a developmental process, skilled reading development is NOT simplistic. For a more in-depth understanding of the subcomponents within word recognition (WR) and language comprehension (LC), we turn next to Scarborough's Reading Rope.



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What is reading comprehension?

Page 2

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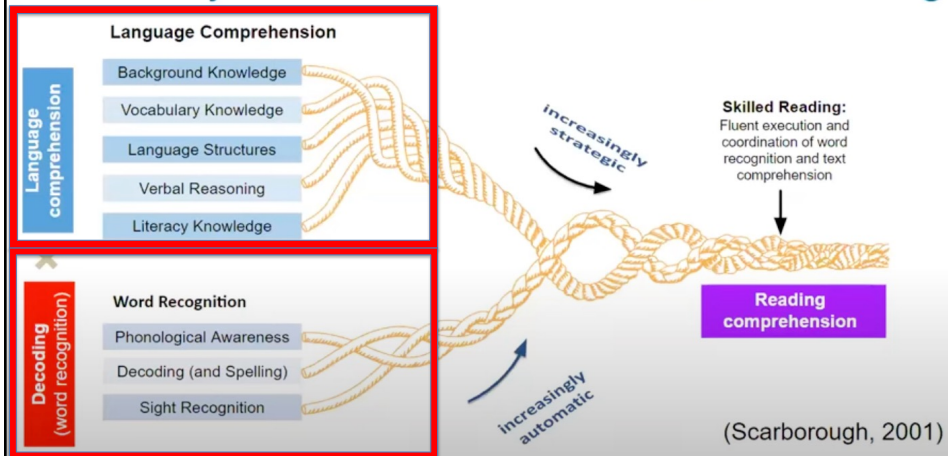
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Scarborough's Reading Rope

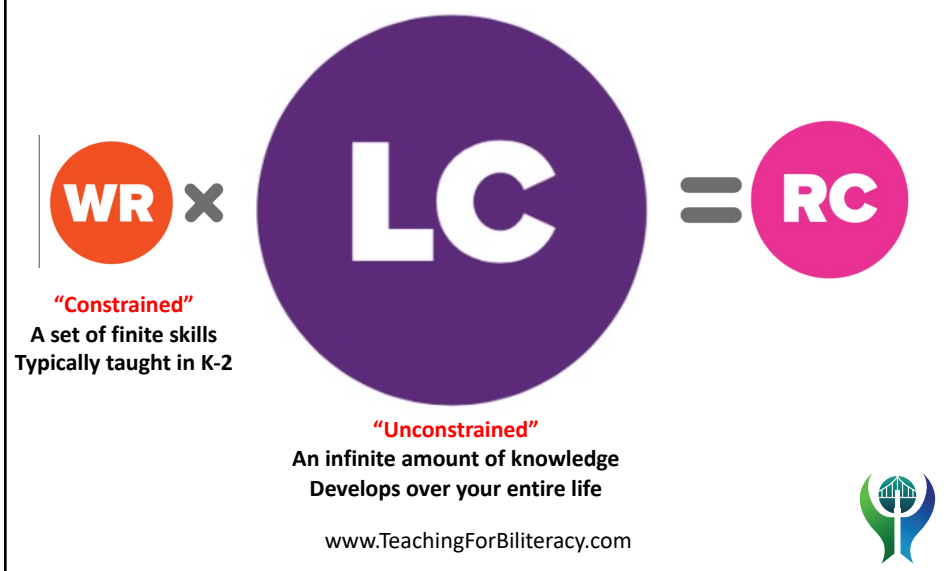
The Many Strands Woven Into Skilled Reading



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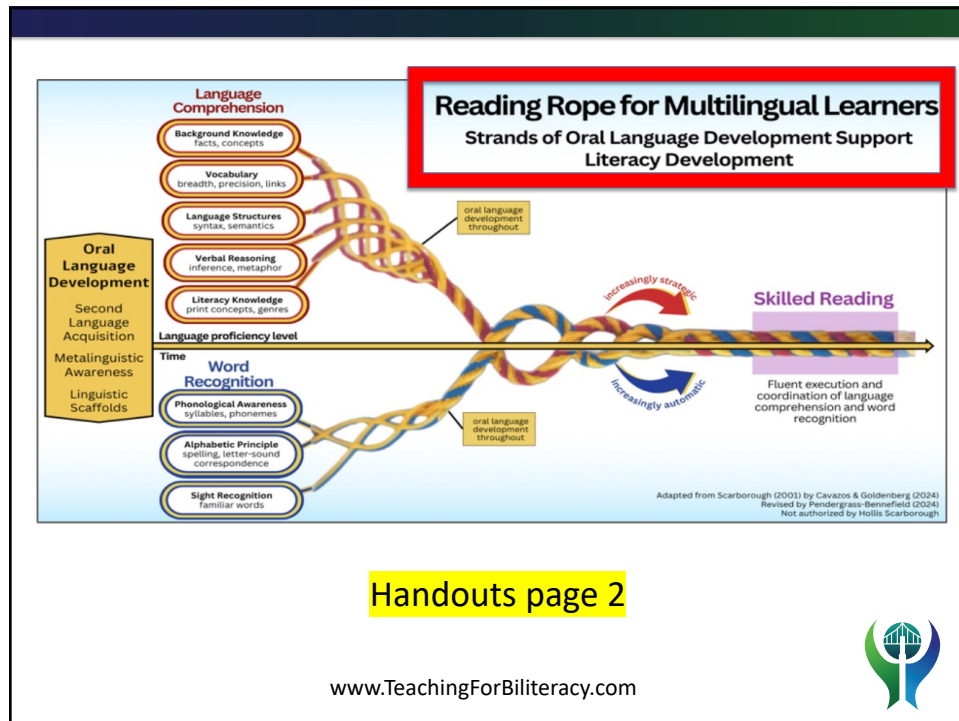
Simple View of Reading



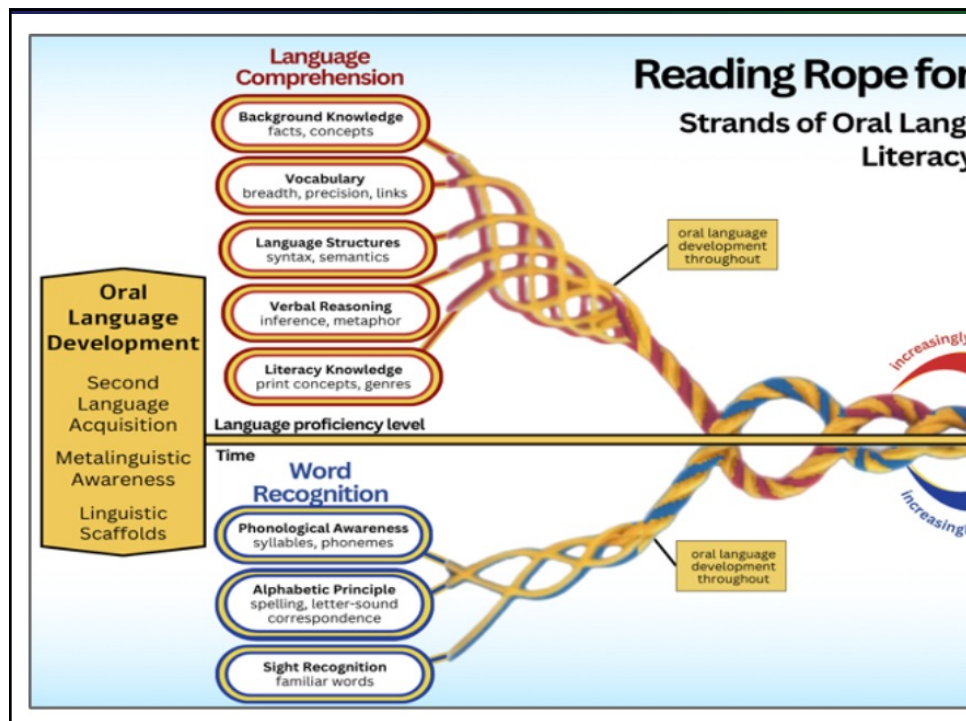
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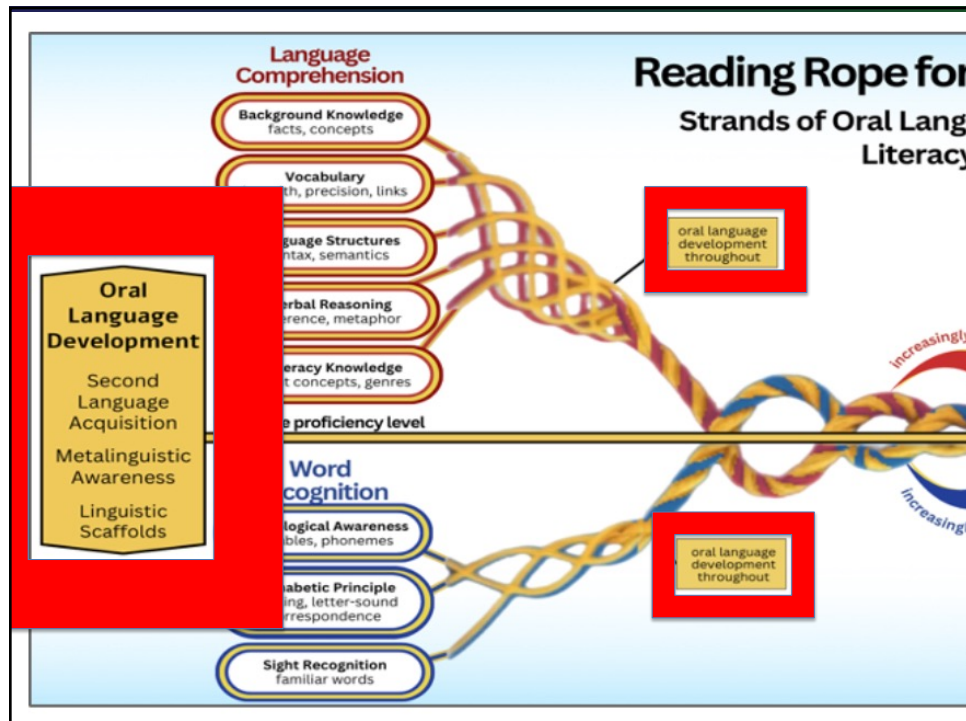
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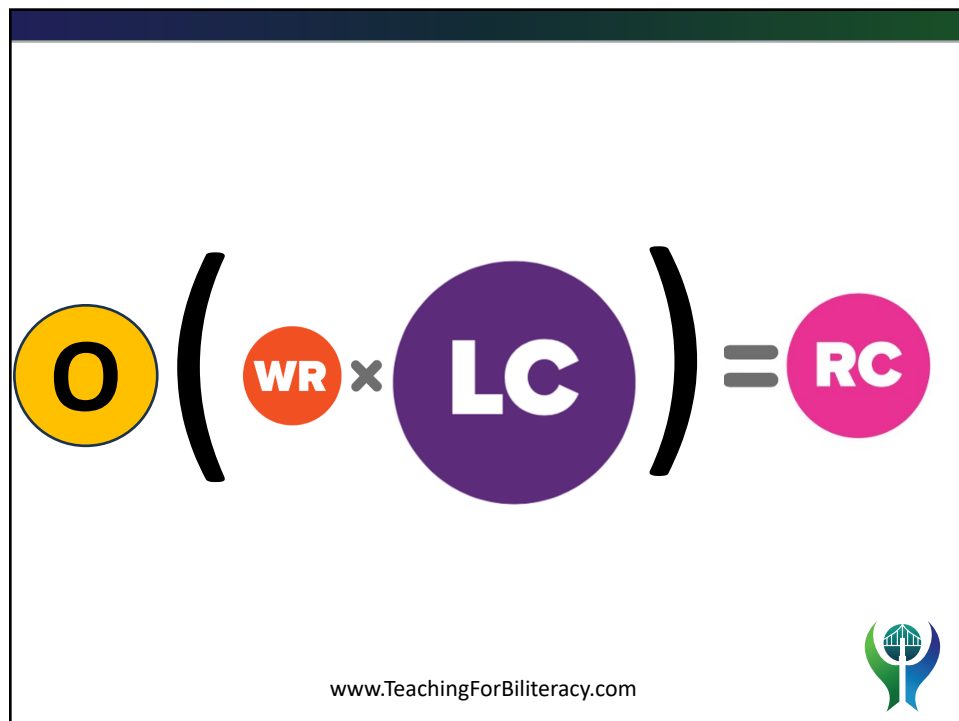
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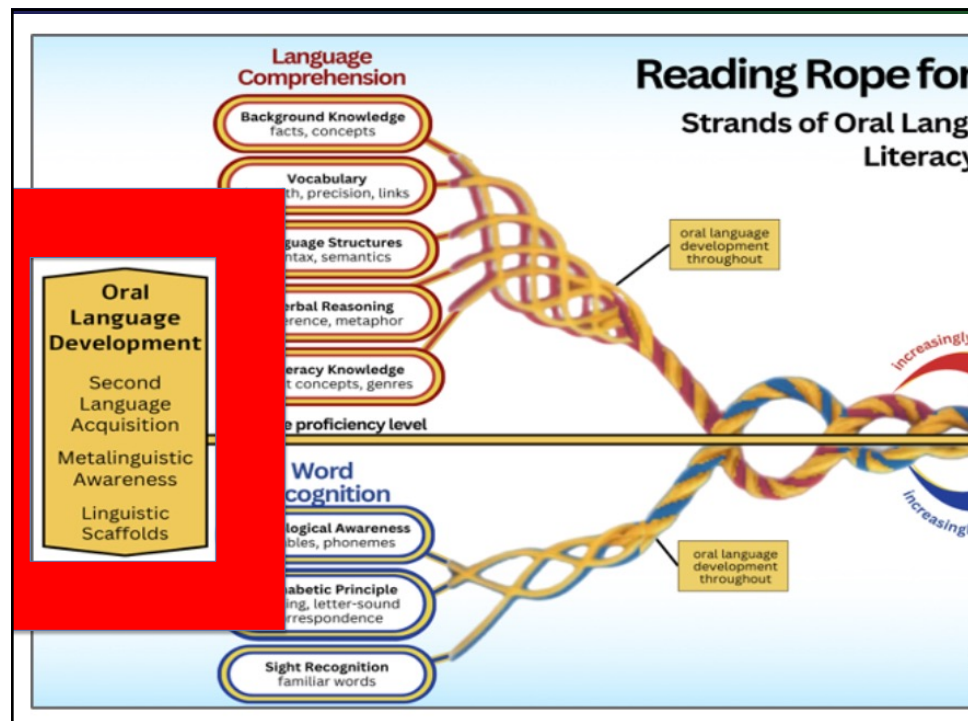


In other words, the way the simple view of reading applies to multilingual learners is that...

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- ✓ Welcome & Introductions
- ✓ What is Reading Comprehension?
- **Effective Strategies for Developing Oral Language and Language Comprehension**
 - Sample Instruction
 - Debrief of Strategies & Supports
 - Next Steps and Session Closure

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K	W	L

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Materials for today's session

Part 1: Strategy Name and Description	Notes
Adapted Reader's Theater (ART): An adaptation of readers' theater where the teacher summarizes or paraphrases a text while the students, guided by the teacher, act out the text, first silently then joining into the narration using the key academic vocabulary. This previews concepts and vocabulary from the text through narration and movement. While it is similar to TPR, the difference is that there is not as much of an emphasis on associating specific vocabulary with a specific movement. <i>Teaching for Biliteracy Book: page 81</i>	
Part 2: Strategy Name and Description	
Fishbowl: A small group of students is selected to model task in the "fishbowl," with the rest of the students observing their actions and language. The teacher guides the students in the fishbowl through the activity, narrating and providing sentence prompts as needed. After the students observe their peers participating in the fishbowl, they return to their places and begin the same activity. This strategy is effective when the task or activity has many directions or steps. <i>Teaching for Biliteracy Book: page 82 & 136</i>	

Great for developing oracy and language comprehension on abstract concepts.

Handouts pages 3-4

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Stacking Strategies for Developing Oral Language and Language Comprehension

- Part 1: Adapted Reader's Theater
- Part 2: Fishbowl
- Part 3: Sort
- Part 4: Language Experience Approach

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- ✓ Welcome & Introductions
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Partners



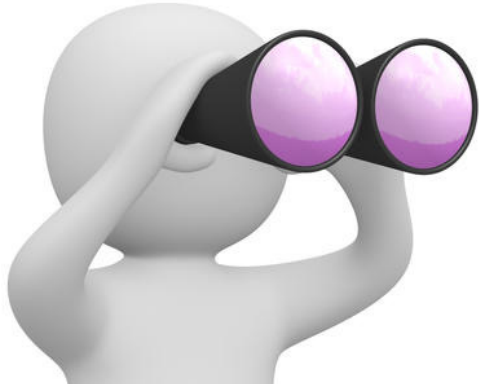
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I observe....

I notice....

I see....

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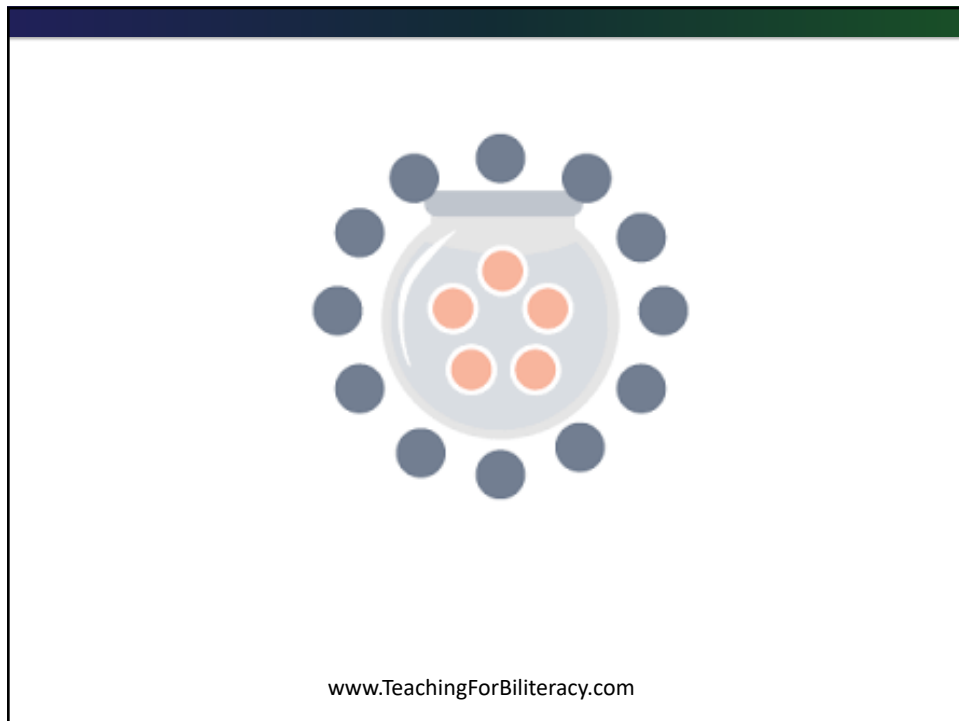
Let's Practice!



1	2
 I observe.... I notice.... I see....	Oh yes, me too!
What about you?	I observe.... I notice.... I see....



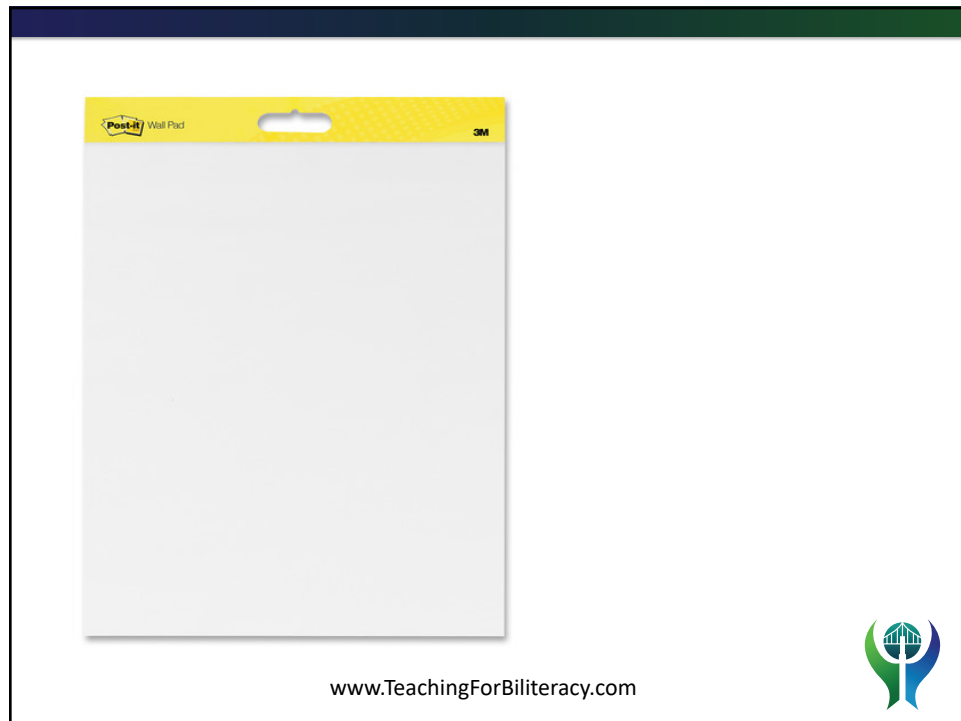

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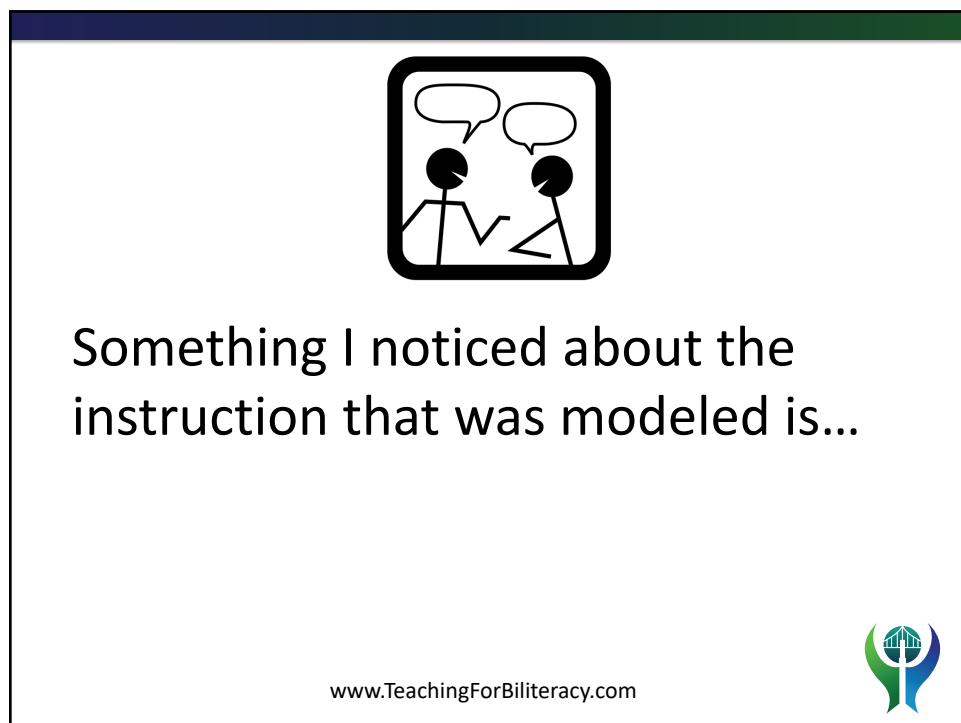
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May I take out the cards from the bag?	Yes, of course!
Thanks! Can you help me place them face up?	Absolutely! Give me some and I'll help you.
Would you like to start?	Sure! This card represents.... The movement we associated with it was...
Great! Now it is my turn.	
This card represents ____ and the corresponding movement is....	I agree because...
I think it goes before/between/after this/these card(s) because....	Hmmm...what do you think about...
What do you think?	Now it is my turn.
Take turns until you have sequenced all the cards.	

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Part 1: Adapted Reader's Theater

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Part 1: Adapted Reader's Theater
 Paired movements with illustrations from the text to develop background knowledge and oracy on important vocabulary and language structures.

"...establish a permanent English settlement."

"She appointed John White."

"...cultural differences caused tension between the two groups..."



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Stacking Strategies for Developing Oral Language and Language Comprehension

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Part 2: Fishbowl

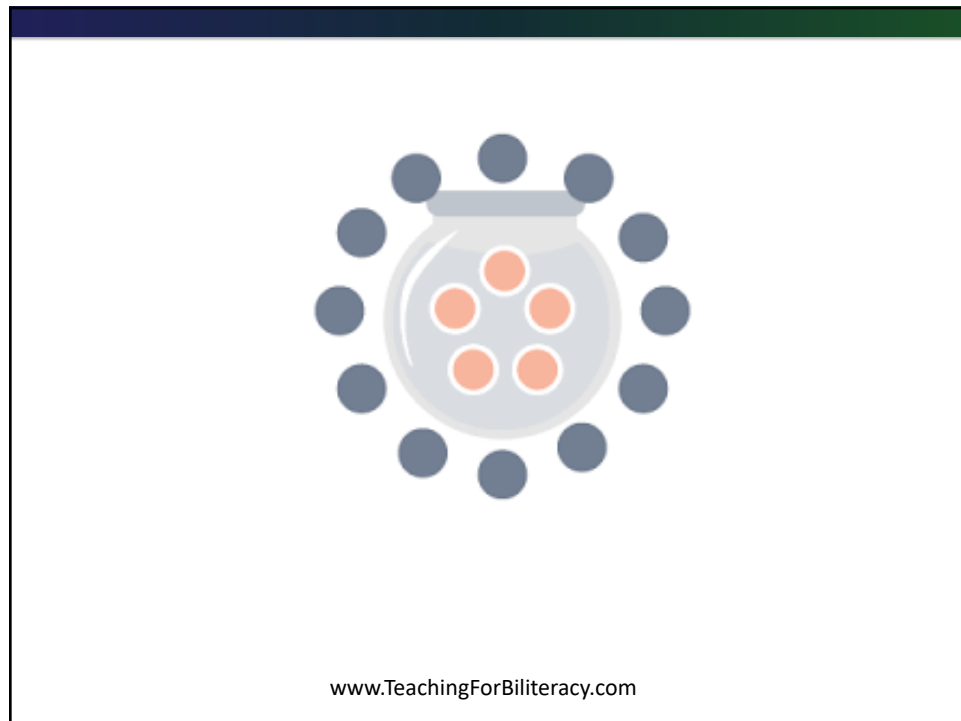
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I think it goes before/between/after this/these card(s) because....	
What do you think?	
Take turns until you have sequenced all the cards.	

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Stacking Strategies for Developing Oral Language and Language Comprehension

Part 3: Strategy Name and Description

Sort: In strategic partnerships, students categorize words, pictures, or realia into groups. This can be done as a **closed sort**, using teacher-provided categories, or as an **open sort**, where students create their own categories.

In an **open sort**, there is no expectation that students will group items according to content standards. They may organize items in any way, as long as they can explain their reasoning.

In a **closed sort**, the teacher provides the categories, which must be clear and understandable to students.

Sentence prompts are used to structure oral language development and help students focus on vocabulary and concepts.

Teaching for Biliteracy Book: page 83

Part 3: Sort

Organized images in a sequence to retell a story.

Language Experience Approach (LEA)

Students experience something meaningful together (go on a field trip, conduct an experiment, read a story). Afterwards, using sentence prompts and strategic partners, the teacher asks students to propose a retelling, one sentence at a time, about the shared experience. Their contributions are transcribed into a written piece. This shared text becomes a meaningful literary resource that may be used as a writing mentor text, reading fluency practice, and/or meaningful application of grade-level language standards and foundational skills.

Teaching for Biliteracy Book: page 94 & 104-105

RI.5.2 - Determine two or more main ideas of a text and explain how they are supported by key details. Summarize the text.

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Stacking Strategies for Developing Oral Language and Language Comprehension

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Teaching for Biliteracy Book: page 83

Part 4: Language Experience Approach

Part 4: Strategy Name and Description

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Teaching for Biliteracy Book: page 94 & 104-105

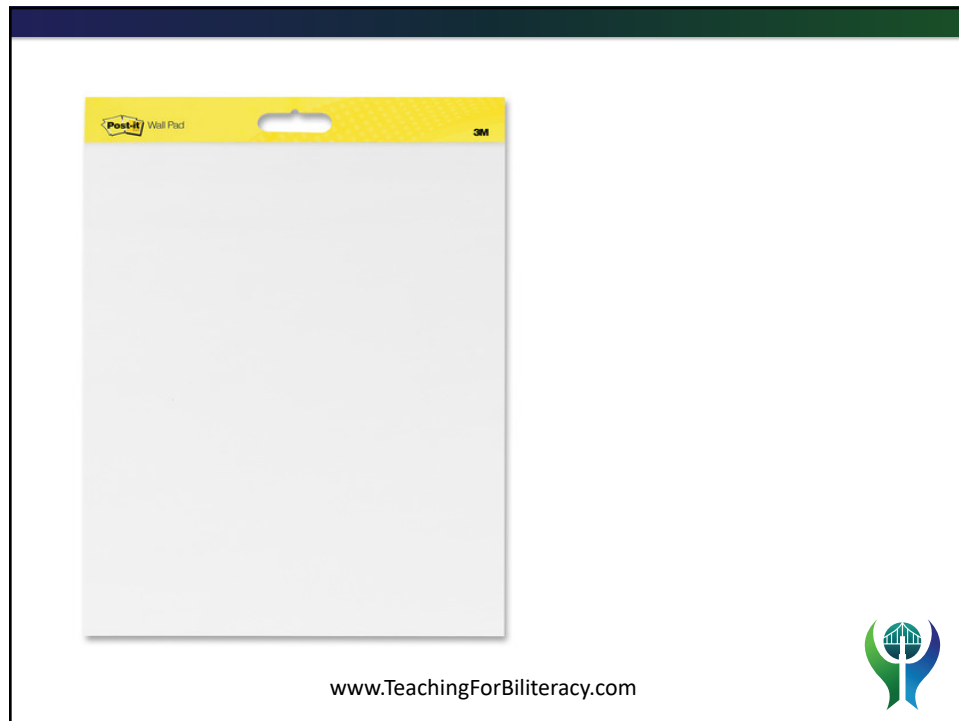
Notes

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Stacking Strategies for Developing Oral Language and Language Comprehension

Part 3: Strategy Name and Description
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Sentence prompts are used to structure oral language development and help students focus on vocabulary and concepts.

Teaching for Biliteracy Book: page 83

Part 4: Language Experience Approach

Used the sequenced images to summarize what happened, including the key details.

Part 4: Strategy Name and Description	Notes
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Another context in which I could use these strategies is...

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Sensory Supports	Graphic Supports	Interactive Supports
- Real-life objects (realia) - Manipulatives - Pictures & photographs - Illustrations, diagrams & drawings - Maps, globes, globes - Physical activities - Videos - Broadcasts - Models & figures	- Charts - Graphic organizers - Tables - Timelines - Number lines	- In pairs or partners - In small groups - In a whole group - Using cooperative group structures - With the Internet (Web sites) or software programs - In the native language (L1) - With mentors

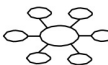
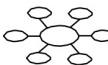
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Examples of Graphic Supports across the ELD Standards					
ELD standard	1- Social and Instructional Language	2- The language of Language Arts	3- The language of Mathematics	4- The language of Science	5- The language of Social Studies
Venn Diagrams - Comparing and Contrasting Two Entities 	- Two friends or family members - Two traditions	- Two characters - Two settings - Two genres	- Two operations - Two geometric figures - Two forms of proportion	- Two body systems or organs - Two animals or plants	- Two conflicts - Two forms of government - Two forms of transportation
T-Charts - Sorting or Categorizing Objects or Concepts 	- Colors - Classroom objects	- Facts/Opinions - Points of view - Pros/Cons	- Area/Perimeter - Fractions/Decimals - Addition/Subtraction	- Forms of matter - Forms of energy - Senses - Vertebrates/Invertebrates	- Types of transportation - Types of habitats
Cycles - Producing a Series of Connected Events or a Process 	- Conflict/Resolution - School or classroom routines	Plot lines	Steps in problem-solving	- Scientific inquiry - Life cycles - Water cycle	- Elections in a democracy - Passage of a law
Cause and Effect - Illustrating a Relationship 	- Classroom or school rules - Health and safety at home or in school	Responses of characters to events	- Variables in algebraic equations - Geometric theorems	- Chemical reactions - Adaptation - Weather events	- Political movements - Economic trends
Semantic Webs - Connecting Categories to Themes or Topics 	- Personal interests - Idiomatic expressions - Multiple meanings of words and phrases	- Root words and affixes - Main idea/Details	- Types and features of polygons - Types and characteristics of angles	- Foods and their nutritional ingredients - Types and characteristics of rocks	- Types of human and civil rights - Impact of economic policies

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The three types of supports are...

The supports help multilingual learners in that...

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