



IU8 ESL Consortium newsletter

Languages Within The Consortium

Appalachia IU8

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Curriculum, Training
& Development

*Providing quality
educational services to
the school districts in
Bedford, Blair,
Cambria, and Somerset
counties.*

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English as a second language (ESL) can be fascinating and interesting! For example, did you know we have had English language learners (ELLs) who spoke the following languages as their first language?

1. Hindi
2. Gujarati
3. Marshallese

Do you know the country of origin for these languages? Not easy, is it?

Hindi is a language of India. It has an exciting and rich history. For more information, visit <http://www.magicsw.com/hruru/>

Gujarati is also a language of India, and is spoken mainly in the state of Gujarat in western India. Gujarati has 53 letters in its alphabet. For more information, visit <http://www.ancientscripts.com/gujarati.html>

Marshallese is spoken in the Marshall Islands, which includes Wake Island of World War II fame. For more information, visit <http://marshall.csu.edu.au>

There are many valuable lessons that can be utilized from exploring the culture of the languages that the limited English proficient (LEP) students in your school district speak. For example:

1. You cannot separate the language from the culture; the LEP student will respond well academically to teachers who have taken a little time to learn about the language and the culture. Many schools have given teachers a short packet of background materials on the LEP student's culture and country. The student, in turn, will lower his/her defenses (affective filter), and learning becomes possible.

2. The background of culture and country serve dual purposes, not only for ESL but for history, geography, literature, etc. For example, the Marshall Islands were an important focus of history in World War II. Also, the Marshallese have a long history of oral storytelling suitable to an English class.

Both at the state and federal level, school districts are expected to demonstrate an ongoing effort to increase cultural awareness and sensitivity in the district.

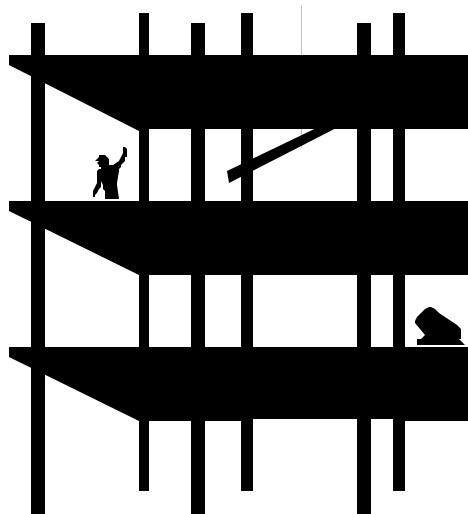


Academic Language Scaffolding

You hear a great deal of discussion in academic circles about “scaffolding” for LEP students. What does this really mean? Are we placing them in a shop area to learn construction? Actually, of course, ESL has borrowed this term. Read on to see what “scaffolding” really means.

Academic language scaffolding supports the successful participation in content area instruction of ELLs by assisting them with the academic language associated with other core subjects, such as mathematics, social studies, or science. In 1986, Jim Cummins, an ESL researcher, identified two types of acquired language. The first, basic interpersonal communications skills, or BICS, is the “social language” and is learned more quickly and easily than academic language. In fact, it generally takes one year or less to learn. This is why so many ELLs sound proficient in English when they are only engaging in conversation.

Cognitive academic language proficiency, or CALP, is the language needed by an LEP student to be successful in content area instruction. There are a number of strategies that a content area teacher may use to assist an ELL. Incidentally, the following strategies address TESOL Goal 2, which is to use English to achieve academically in all content areas.



Suggested steps in an academic language scaffolding lesson:

1. Identify academic vocabulary and language structures. Provide literature that uses the vocabulary.
2. Provide an introductory activity that allows the scaffolding of both the academic vocabulary and language functions in a non-stressful manner.
3. Model the use of the vocabulary or language structure; use the vocabulary in questions, provide a model of note-taking, or post the words in the room on a bulletin board.
4. Guide and monitor the use of the vocabulary by the students. Try an activity that allows students to work in pairs or small groups, interacting verbally.
5. Conclude your lesson with a review of the vocabulary and language structure. Remember, for example, the word “osmosis” in a science lesson may be new not only to an LEP student but to traditional students as well!

An ESL Quiz



Try this short quiz and see if you are up-to-date on these ESL items. Circle true or false.

1. Foreign exchange students do not need to be placed in an ESL program. True False
2. 50% of the world's people are bilingual. True False
3. The Woodcock/Muñoz and the IPT (IDEA Proficiency Test) may be used to determine English language proficiency. True False
4. Spanish is the most commonly spoken first language among Pennsylvania's LEP students. True False
5. In the classroom, all content area teachers must have accommodations for testing ELLs; The teacher must use different assessments for traditional students and ELLs. True False

If you answered true to all five questions, you got them all correct!!

Enrollment of ELL Students



Many school districts across the state are unsure of the exact procedure for enrolling ELL students. According to the Basic Education Circular of July 2001 (Pennsylvania Code) titled, "Educating Students with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and English Language Learners (ELL,)" districts must observe the following: "English language learners must be enrolled upon presentation of a local address and proof of immunization. It is not appropriate to deny students access to school (telling them to stay home) for any period of time while verifying the information they present. Subjecting them to scrutiny that is not part of the normal enrollment

process is discriminatory and may place the school district/charter school at risk of legal action.

Note: Students are not required to provide social security numbers or immigration status information as a condition for enrollment and may not be denied enrollment as a result."