

Bilingual/ESL Certification and Sheltered Instruction Training

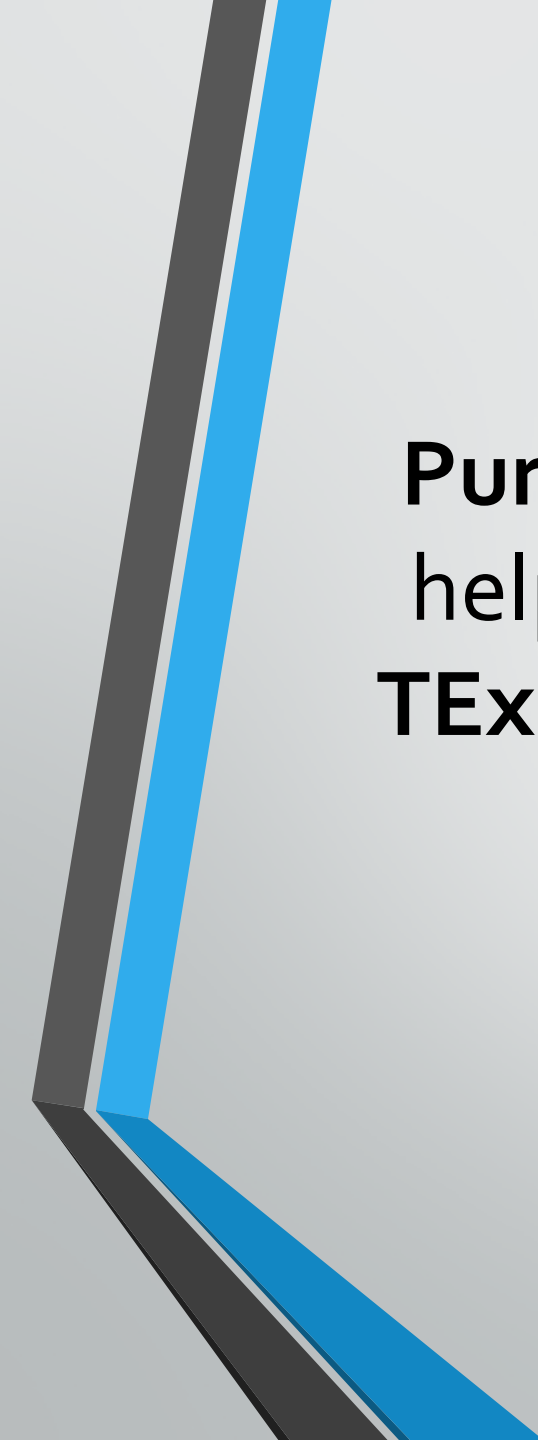
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Professional Learning Essential Agreements/Norms

- Mute microphones throughout the training
- Submit any questions you may have in the chat box
- Follow along using the agenda and/or PowerPoint provided
- Be respectful of others
- Be an active participant (chat box, breakout sessions, etc.)



Purpose: This informative training is designed to help teachers **prepare for the Bilingual and ESL TExES certification exams** plus teach researched based sheltered instruction strategies

Agenda

1. Review of Competency 3: ESL Teaching Methods
2. Continue Domain II - ESL Instruction and Assessment
3. Competency 4: Communicative Language Development
 - Knowing TEKS and ELPS relevant to listening and speaking
 - Recognizing conversational competence as an important part of English proficiency
 - Applying appropriate teaching techniques to promote communicative competence

Agenda (continued)

- Recognizing the interrelatedness of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills
- Understanding how the student's native language competence can support listening and speaking proficiency in English
- Devising instruction that recognizes individual differences
- Offering feedback that promotes EL students' communicative competence
- Self-Check
- Practice Items for Competency 4

Review: Competency 3

Competency 3: ESL Teaching Methods

The ESL teacher understands **ESL teaching methods** and uses **this knowledge to plan and implement effective, developmentally appropriate instruction.**

Review: Competency 3

Which of the following explanations best describes how collaborative activities support EL students' developing English proficiency?

- A.** Simple class activities performed in small group settings allow teachers to assess EL students' language learning in oral language.
- B.** Group activities shift responsibility for L2 learning completely to the EL students through interactive opportunities.
- C.** Using a collaborative approach instead of independent work keeps students from making errors due to limited L2 proficiency because EL students can modulate their participation in group activities.
- D.** Group activities support EL students' social language development by providing opportunities to participate meaningfully with classmates in a variety of learning activities.

Review: Competency 3

In an elementary class that includes beginning-level EL students, which of the following strategies would best promote students' understanding of how the school day is segmented (i.e., reading groups, recess, science time, lunch, etc.)?

- A. The teacher creates a large chart that displays the time each class activity starts and ends.
- B. The teacher creates a poster for each regular class day segment with pictures that clearly illustrate the activity. Each poster is numbered to indicate the place of each activity in the class events sequence.
- C. When it's time for a new activity, the teacher sounds a chime and writes the name and time range of the new activity on the board (for example, 10:00-10:35 – READING).
- D. The teacher shows a video of students in reading circles, science centers, recess, art, and other school activities.

Continue with Domain II: ESL Instruction and Assessment

Domain II focuses on how knowledge and practices in general pedagogy can be adjusted for teaching ESL. Teaching ESL does not require *different* pedagogical practices, but it does require fine tuning and adjusting what we do in the classroom of native speakers in order to meet the needs of students who are both learning English and *in* English.



Competency 4: Communicative Language Development

The ESL teacher knows **how to promote students' communicative language development in English.**

Competency 4: Communicative Language Development

covers the following topics:

- Knowing TEKS and ELPS relevant to listening and speaking
- Recognizing conversational competence as an important part of English proficiency
- Applying appropriate teaching techniques to promote communicative competence
- Recognizing the interrelatedness of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills
- Understanding how the student's native language competence can support listening and speaking proficiency in English
- Devising instruction that recognizes individual differences
- Offering feedback that promotes EL students' communicative competence

Competency 4 Core Content

The table below identifies key terms from Competency 4 that you should be able to define and apply in envisioning ESL teaching scenarios.

Competency 4 Core Content

ELPS for listening	ELPS for speaking	Linguistic environment	Conversational support	Comprehensible language environment
Teaching techniques	Interrelatedness of language domains	Transfer from L1 to L2	Individual differences	Appropriate feedback
Communicative competence	BICS	CALP	Linguistic accommodations	Assessment
Registers	Conversational support	Developmental characteristics and individual needs	Student variation	Classroom management

Listening and Speaking ELPS

Fully understanding the scope of Competency 4 involves close attention to **two relevant areas of ELPS** (TAC, 2007):

- §74.4(c)(2)-(3) describe student expectations in listening and speaking in **cross-curricular** areas.
- §74.4(d)(1)-(2) present descriptors of student performance in listening and speaking in the four **proficiency levels**.

Listening and Speaking ELPS

ELPS describes EL students' observable behavior using specific, distinct terminology.

- Thus, we can hypothesize about teacher behaviors and instructional techniques that enable learners to move to the advance high level.
- For example, how an ESL teacher might support developing communicative proficiency in learners who “struggle to identify and distinguish individual words and phrases during social and instructional interactions that have not been intentionally modified for ELs,” a performance descriptor for beginning ELs' listening proficiency in §74.4(d) (1)(A)(ii), (TAC, 2007).

Listening and Speaking ELPS (continued)

- The very specific ELPS descriptors in listening and speaking student performance point to the teacher's responsibility to apply knowledge from phonology, pragmatics, discourse, registers, and general learning theory.
- The ESL teacher's responsibility is to use knowledge, skills, resources, and classroom activities to move EL students toward the optimal proficiency level in listening and speaking.

Communicative Competence

The focus of communicative language development channels the theory of **communicative competence**, which endorses the development of social skills, authentic communicative opportunities, and confidence shaped by meaningful input and output.

- Unlike with academic or cognitive competencies which researchers believe transfer from L1 to L2, communicative competence is supported through social contexts that allow learner to experiment with language and develop enhanced motivation for communicating in L2.

Communicative Competence (continued)

ESL teachers can support EL students' communicative language development in several broad categories:

- **Sociolinguistics:** Cultural and performative “rules” in L2 that impact communicative effectiveness;
- **Grammar:** Foundational linguistic knowledge in phonology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics (which we covered in Competency 1);
- **Nonverbals:** Effective listening and speaking includes knowing how to interpret and use gestures, body language, spatial boundaries, and embodiments of space as part of communication;
- **Discourse knowledge:** Effective communication requires recognizing linguistic and behavioral expectations that “mark” expectations for groups in which and individual might want to participate.

Communicative Competence (continued)

In the context of overall L2 proficiency, communicated skills are usually addressed as BICS, Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills that are intertwined with the EL student's developing competence in academic areas because increased BICS usually results in increased motivation and positive affect regarding L2 learning.

- Communicative skills include areas such as pronunciation, oral fluency, listening comprehension, meaningful interaction with L2 speakers, and social skills.

Instructional Strategies for Listening and Speaking

To create a learning environment that offers linguistic and conversational support, connects the four language domains, and recognizes learner diversity, ESL teachers can implement targeted approaches, techniques, and strategies in the classroom.

- Whatever strategies are used, teachers should do a “check” on whether the planned strategies offer equitable participation for all levels of learners, meet students’ current ESL development levels, meaningfully promote listening and/or speaking skills, and coherently fit into overall integration of the four language domains.

Instructional Strategies for Listening and Speaking (continued)

Most listening and speaking skills techniques can be categorized in several core areas:

Teacher talk. The teacher orchestrates the discourse of the classroom, to a great extent through **teacher talk**.

- When there are EL learners in a class, teachers need to be especially conscious of how teacher talk is modulated.
- Teachers should always speak loud enough to be heard throughout the room, perhaps even asking the students who are furthest from the teacher whether they can hear.
- Teachers should take care not to ramble or mumble.

Instructional Strategies for Listening and Speaking (continued)

Teacher Talk continued:

- They should use transitional markers like *first, second, most important, last point* to help learners be active listeners.
- Teacher talk should also be punctuated with appropriate facial gestures, body language, and kinesthetic support.
- Teachers should not speak for long periods without giving students time to process information.
- Teachers should be aware of the reality that students' attention drifts easily; thus, teacher talk should be integrated with opportunities for students to process information, ask questions, and apply new knowledge.

Instructional Strategies for Listening and Speaking (continued)

Teacher Talk continued:

- Although most of us use idioms and expressions that seem to reflect collective, linguistic knowledge, teachers need to be conscious that even something as simple as “are we all on track?” might linguistically muddle an EL student.
 - Routines things like getting learners to listen to class procedure instructions (like information about entering or exiting the room, classroom period changes, work station procedures, safety procedures) may be challenging to EL students if the instructions are delivered too quickly or sketchily.
 - To ensure EL students are given an opportunity to derive (gain, obtain) instructional benefits from teacher talk, teachers need to use redundancies such as bulleting items on the white board or summing up high points
- Teacher talk needs to be delivered with the aim of reaching all learners.

Instructional Strategies for Listening and Speaking (continued)

Class discussions. For EL students, whole class discussions can be daunting, especially for students still in the **silent period**.

- Effective class discussions should reflect pre-set “rules” about participation so that learners participate equitably and meaningfully.
- Teachers should consider that whole class discussions can include a lot of phatic communication.
- EL students may not be able to follow along with everything that is happening in a noisy, active discussion that may have begun coherently but then absorbs a lot of input from class members.

Instructional Strategies for Listening and Speaking (continued)

Class Discussion continued:

- Questioning should reflect learner readiness, instructional objectives, and authentic assessment opportunities.
- Wait time should be tailored to learner readiness, diversity, and the cognitive rigor of the questions.
- Calling on students should be done with care, especially if EL students are obviously in the silent period.
- Teachers should work consciously to make whole class discussions an event that everyone can join into, either as participants or engaged, silent observers.

Instructional Strategies for Listening and Speaking (continued)

Meaningful Practice. ESL classrooms should include abundant practice in meaningful, real-world uses of listening and speaking skills.

- Role-playing, scenarios, reader's theater, and simulations (real world and academic) can be used across disciplinary and grade level classrooms.
- In history classrooms, for example, simulations can be used to enact historical events.
- Role-playing can be used to recreate scenes from literary works or to anticipate real-world scenarios relevant to the academic subject or a unit the class is currently engaged in.
- Reader's theatre is traditionally an ELA activity, but teachers in all subject areas can adapt this prolific activity to support learners' listening and speaking skills.
- A common listening and speaking activity, such as asking or giving instructions, can help EL students learn rules of discourse, pragmatics, and non-verbal communication

Instructional Strategies for Listening and Speaking (continued)

Group Activities. Collaborative activities are among the most versatile teaching techniques that teachers can use to support listening and speaking skills.

- A hallmark (characteristic) of well-constructed group activities is the buzz that we hear when students work in groups to tackle learning tasks collaboratively.
- Group activities allow learners to shift their focus from the teacher as authority to class members as learning and teaching peers.
- For EL students who may be uncomfortable participating in whole class discussions, small group activities allow more relaxed, social exchanges that support learning with peers.

Instructional Strategies for Listening and Speaking (continued)

Group Activities continued:

- Group activities can be highly organized with designated tasks for each group member or more relaxed with learners just collaborating on responding to an assigned task.
- Jigsaw activities allow teachers to subdivide a challenging task to enable all learners to contribute to the whole class understanding.
- Adaptations of games, such as round robins, are productive, yet fun.
- Teachers should celebrate the opportunity for social interaction afforded by group work: When students are grouped and given learning tasks, its not long before they are talking freely about things that may be only tangentially related to the task.
- Collaborative activities foster comprehensible input that promotes listening and speaking proficiency for EL students.

Instructional Strategies for Listening and Speaking (continued)

Academic listening and speaking skills. Teachers should strive to integrate speaking activities such as interviews and formal and informal oral presentations as a means of integrating CALP and BICS.

- Teachers should be aware that students need direct instruction in conducting interviews so that appropriate questions are created and appropriate speaking skills are used.
- Mock interviews can be used across most academic areas.
- Oral presentations are among the most anxiety-producing academic ventures in classroom settings.
- Students need to be taught how to do oral presentations, including coaching and instructions in eye contact, movement, gestures, volume, stance, pace of speaking, as well as how to “transform” material into appropriate oral delivery.

Instructional Strategies for Listening and Speaking (continued)

Instructions for major assignments. When instructions for major assignments are delivered orally, teachers should take abundant care to reinforce the presentation with:

- visuals, bullets or key points on the board, plentiful pauses to let learners process the information and possibly construct questions.

Talking and listening occurs in the classroom from the moment learners enter the classroom space until the moment they leave.

- There are continual opportunities for ESL teachers to promote EL students' communicative competence by discovering ways to enhance active listening and meaningful speaking while fully integrating these skills into the spectrum of academic language and general literacy skills.

What listening and Speaking Strategies Look like in Classrooms

Listening and speaking are the media through which a lot of teaching and learning happens in classrooms.

- In ESL teaching, listening and speaking are far more than instruments for classroom transactions; these modes of delivery are also instructional opportunities for teachers to develop EL students' English proficiency.
- ESL teachers also need to be aware of how distinctive communicative interactions support EL students' basic communicative skills (BICS) and how listening and speaking can be integrated to enhance understanding of course content.

What listening and Speaking Strategies Look like in Classrooms (continued)

Lets look at some possibilities for listening and speaking strategies for promoting communicative language development in ESL environments.

Activity	Description	Support for Language Development	BICS/ CALP
Entering the class greeting	Teacher can stand at the door and offer an individual greeting to students by name, offering student-specific comments to encourage responses.	Teacher models common greetings, shows students how to engage personally in a typical greeting, gives students an opportunity to practice speaking skills in responding to the teacher's comments.	BICS
Status-of-the-class	A state of the class session allows learners to quickly "report," in a round robin type of format, how they are progressing on an assignment.	Classroom learning community is bolstered as class members listen to each other's comments on their progress. Student practice speaking in a specific context. In classes where students may be at beginning or intermediate ELPS speaking levels, the teacher may model the responses by writing some response options on the board for the students to complete: My progress is going great/not so good because I got stuck on ____, because I didn't have time to do the assignment ____, because I need help with ____. The teacher records the students responses on a status-of-the-class ledger which can be a reference point later in the class.	CALP

What listening and Speaking Strategies Look like in Classrooms (continued)

Activity	Description	Support for Language Development	BICS/ CALP
Activity instructions	Teacher provides instructions at the beginning of the class on how the lesson will be segmented and what is expected from the class members.	Teacher ensures that instructions are communicated in clear language accessible to all learners. The instructions should be reinforced with bullet items on the whiteboard or document camera. Students should be required to jot down the instructions to integrate listening and writing skills.	CALP
Lesson presentation	Teacher uses lecture, demonstration, examples, mini-lessons to present new information to students primarily through speaking.	Teacher alerts students that active listening will be required, calling their attention to objectives and key vocabulary. During the presentation, the teacher modulates his/her voice to reflect lesson components. Teacher uses appropriate body language and gestures for emphasis. Teacher stops at appropriate junctures to allow students time to process what the teacher is saying.	CALPS and BICS

What listening and Speaking Strategies Look like in Classrooms (continued)

Activity	Description	Support for Language Development	BICS/ CALP
Guided practice	Teacher works in time after major lesson segments for students to practice mastery of new information in short collaborative activities like think-pair-share or kinesthetic activities like recording responses on the whiteboard.	Knowing that there will be a just-in-time practice at the end of lesson segments encourages learners to listen actively. Collaborative application activities allow learners to engage in social interaction prior to addressing the targeted application task.	CALPS and BICS
Class discussion	Teacher asks questions ranging from basic recall to critical thinking about the topic. Discussion can be conducted with the whole class or in groups, depending on student readiness to respond.	Teacher needs to be attuned to the class readiness for whole-class discussion. Often, small group discussions are far more productive because learners feel less put on-the-spot when they are interacting with peers. Teachers should model how students respond orally. For example, the teacher could invite students to use lead ins like "I agree, I think, I'm confused, I wonder, I thought, I think ___ is wrong." Teachers should steer clear of open-ended questions like "Who has a question?" or "What do you think about ___?"	CALPS and BICS

Diversity

Because of the idiosyncratic, learner specific trajectory of L2 acquisition and learning, diversity and heterogeneity are pillars of classroom dynamics in ESL teaching .

- ESL teachers should anticipate having EL students on a wide spectrum of cognitive and communicative proficiencies, which means that instruction needs to be differentiated.
- Teachers need to have a set of guiding principles to ensure that their classrooms celebrate diversity, promote access and equity for all learners, and create an environment where EL students feel affectively supported.

Diversity (continued)

Lets start by examining the realm of diversity among EL students:

- The concept of **interlanguage** poses a challenge for ESL teachers because if the individual learner is reconstructing the interlanguage constantly as his/her trajectory toward L2 proficiency improves, instruction must constantly be changed to keep up with the learner's progress.
 - In a classroom with 20 EL students, a teacher can expect a diversity of performance levels even if all the learners in the class meet performance levels for the same ELPS level.
 - The interlanguage construct hypothesizes constant reconstructions of current L2 competence as the learner approximates structures in the target language.
 - A teacher needs to be attuned to individual differences in competence and ready with differentiated instruction to support EL students' continued growth.

Diversity (continued)

- EL students' socio-economic directly impacts levels of access to materials outside the classroom and degree of parental support for L2 learning.
- Educational history will vary among learners.
 - Recent immigrants, for example, may have strong academic backgrounds due to formal schooling in the country of origin; others may have limited, interrupted, or no formal schooling.
 - Cognitive development will vary substantively among learners for reasons ranging from the degree of formal schooling to negative classroom experiences that result in reduced motivation to learn in school settings.

Diversity (continued)

- The linguistic system of the EL student's L1 may be so different from English that L2 acquisition is more challenging as the learner is faced with acquiring a new alphabet and has limited language transfer possibilities.
- Cultural differences between the native culture and the L2 culture may be extreme and difficult for the learner to negotiate.
- Students' cultural background impacts learning style preferences.
 - Factors such as interpersonal connectivity, reliance on oral communication, independent thinking, visually-based learning, and social norms established by the culture all impact EL students' learning and create the exigency of teacher readiness to meet each learner's needs.

Diversity (continued)

In light of this range of diversity among EL students, the question, then, is how can an ESL teacher create a classroom that celebrates learner diversity, promotes listening and speaking skills, and pulls all learners into the class community?

Here are some suggested instructional strategies that address diversity:

- Teachers should strive to create a community of learners by creating opportunities for learners to learn about each other.
 - Activities that allow class members to share stories about their culture should be started very early in the semester and continued so that the entire class is constantly learning new things about each other.
 - Community activities can be oral, visual, or written.
 - Teachers can contribute to the community by sharing informational items about the cultures represented in the classroom and by reading texts from different cultures.

Diversity (continued)

- Teachers should use a variety of delivery methods in every class session to ensure that all learners – native speakers and EL students – are receiving comprehensible input in a variety of ways, such as traditional lecture, visual materials, kinesthetic activities, and independent activities.
- Group activities should be a mainstay of every ESL teacher's pedagogical repertoire.
 - Group activities can be a just-in-time application through think-pair-share or a formal collaborative project that spans several class periods.
 - Group activities allow EL students to experiment with what works in social interaction and promote understandings about interpersonal dynamics, a vital part of affective learning in L2.

Feedback

Feedback can be defined as a response to student performance designed to identify accomplishment and provide guidance toward improvement.

- Feedback can be formative, which means it is offered in-progress as the learner is working on a learning task.
- Or it can be summative, which means that it provides a culminating assessment when the learner completes a learning task.
- In the context of promoting communicative competence, feedback can be provided immediately and frequently as learners interact in daily classroom routines and activities or it can be provided in more formal assessment settings, such as read alouds or presentations.

Feedback (continued)

There are some target behaviors that teachers should aim for in offering feedback to students, as well as some behaviors to avoid.

- Feedback should be clear and specific and connected to observable learner behavior.
 - The learner should understand exactly what the teacher is commenting on.
 - Comments like *"good job," "great,"* or *"you need to work on that"* do not help the learner.
 - But a comment like *"Michael, I hear your question intonation. That really sounded like a question because your voice went up a little at the end of the sentence"* will help a learner who is having trouble with English pragmatics.

Feedback (continued)

- **Feedback should focus on the behavior or output, not on the learner.**
 - Consider a teacher who is trying to improve EL learner's active listening skills. The teacher has just gone over instructions for an in-class science reading activity and she is walking through the class to see if anyone has questions, she notices that Michael, an EL student, jotted down several instructional notes in his notebook. The teacher can reinforce the behavior by saying, *"Michael, the notes you jotted down show that you were really listening carefully. That will help you do the reading tasks in order when we start our reading project."*
 - An example of a behavior to avoid in a similar situation would be to tell the student who seems not to be listening, *"Michael, would you like to tell the class what you're thinking about?"*

Feedback (continued)

- **Feedback, especially formative feedback, should be aimed at improvement.**
 - Teachers should target what the learner has done and suggest a modification that can be made next time or as the task is being completed.
 - For example, in watching students practice an upcoming oral presentation, a teacher can sit in during their group practice, with a pre-distributed checklist, and say something like, “Michael, I see that you are standing very still while you do your part of the presentation. Next time, walk toward the poster when you mention the chart and look at your audience to see if they are looking at the graph your group is sharing.”

Feedback (continued)

- **Feedback should never be insulting, critical, or punitive.**
 - Feedback impacts learner affect and motivation.
 - Teachers need to remember that feedback is a valuable tool for helping learners feel good about the classroom space and about their involvement in the learning community.
 - Feedback that embarrasses a learner, either deliberately or unintentionally, marginalizes the learner.
 - ESL teachers need to remember that meaning is holistic; thus, even a learning product or utterance that appears to show a lot of errors can convey substantive holistic meaning, and that should be noted in feedback.

Feedback (continued)

- **Feedback should be immediate and frequent.**
 - With listening and speaking skills, ESL teachers can offer on-the-spot feedback, perhaps focused on affirmation of production of a new form.
 - Written work should also be evaluated in quick turnaround to allow learners to connect effort to outcomes and to strive toward improvement.

Feedback (continued)

When ESL teachers work from the mindset of authentic assessment, feedback relevant to listening and speaking skills can be almost on-going throughout the lesson.

- Teachers can recognize the opportunities to praise learners even for apparently small gains, such as when a student who has never offered a comment in class finally volunteers a response during a whole class session, the teacher can praise the student's participation by saying, "*Michael, I am glad you are sharing how the second sentence in the problem is confusing. Your comment will help all of us pay special attention to that sentence when we work on the problem.*"

Feedback (continued)

- During oral reading sessions, feedback can be used to improve pronunciations, intonations, pacing, segmenting, and overall fluency.
- Feedback should be learner-centered, focused on helping the learner take ownership of his/her listening and speaking.
- Correction should be reworked as explanation of how the listening or speaking output can be improved, not on what was done wrong.

Summary, Action Plan, and Competency 4 Wrap-Up

Competency 4 focuses on the ESL teacher's responsibilities in helping EL students achieve higher levels of communicative competencies.

- To demonstrate proficiency in L2, EL students must be provided varied opportunities to receive comprehensible input and produce meaningful output.
- In ESL environments, communicative competence is promoted through social interaction in the classroom which enables learners to interact with each other in a variety of authentic ways.
- In promoting EL learners' listening and speaking proficiency, ESL teachers need to rely on knowledge of phonology, pragmatics, discourse, and subject area content to help students develop BICS as well as CALP.

Self-Check

- Can you identify some terms relevant to listening and speaking skills?
- Can you explain why social interaction is so vital to developing EL students' listening and speaking skills?
- Can you think of specific ways in which ESL teachers can integrate listening and speaking opportunities into lessons?

Practice Items for Competency 4

Use the information below to answer questions 1 and 2.

All the students at an elementary school are going on a field trip to the zoo. To address ELPS expectations for EL students, the content-area teachers plan to integrate communicative language proficiency activities into this science enriched opportunity.

- 1. The Grade 3 teacher, whose class includes 50% beginning EL students, posts pictures of the zoo animals around the classroom. The teacher asks the class to pick their three favorite animals and presents this learning task:**
 - Look carefully at the three animals you picked. Pay close attention to what makes each of your three animals special. For example, if you picked a giraffe, you know that its long neck and big spots make it special.
 - Imagine a new animal made up of the qualities that make your three animals special. Draw a picture of this made up animal.
 - Create a name for your creature and put it on your drawing both in your home language *and* in English.
 - When we all finish our drawings, we are going to show our pictures to the whole class and explain how we invented this new animal.

Practice Items for Competency 4

Question 1 continued:

Which of the following best explains how this instructional activity will promote the student's oral language proficiency?

- A. It shows the teacher using L1 to scaffold L2 learning.
- B. It promotes students' content-vocabulary in science.
- C. It gives students an opportunity to describe and explain in an informal class presentation.
- D. It provides the teacher an opportunity to assess how effectively students can understand instructions.

Practice Items for Competency 4

- 2.** The grade 4 science teacher, who teaches intermediate and advanced EL students, is also creating a field-trip based activity. Which of the following activities would best target development of the students' communicative competence in a science context?
- A.** Students listen to the teacher do book talks on several of Rudyard Kipling's Just So Stories. Students vote on the one they want the teacher to read to them. On the day before the zoo trip, the teacher reads the winning story aloud to the class and then leads the students in an oral discussion of what makes the story engaging.
 - B.** Students pick an animal and create an animal trainer blurb that they would present to zoo visitors who stop at their animal's zoo habitat. The teacher requires at least three sources to show researched-based information on the animals. On the day before the zoo trip, the students take turns presenting their blurbs to the whole class, using tone and gestures they might use if they were really animal trainers.
 - C.** Students watch videos of famous zoos in the U.S. The teacher has students create a semantic map of concepts related to the zoos. Following the video, the teacher has students do a quick write arguing for the zoo that they think best addresses the animals' needs.
 - D.** Students vote on five animals they want to research and do a cooperative mini research paper on the animal each group picks. Each group creates a poster presentation of their research results and posts it on the class display wall before the zoo trip.

This Concludes

- Competency 4: Communicative Language Development: The ESL teacher knows how to promote students' communicative language development in English.

Thank you!

7 Steps to a Language – Rich Interactive Classroom by John Seidlitz and Bill Perryman

- Focuses on **student interaction** with academic literacy
- Teaches students learning strategies that will help them find **success in the real world**
- **Based on four key ideas, or TIPS**, that lay the groundwork for a successful language-rich interactive classroom
 - **Total** Participation
 - **Incorporate** Academic Vocabulary
 - **Promote** Literacy and Language Development
 - **Support** for Struggling Learners

Step 6: Have students participate in structured conversations.

Asking students to talk with each other using specific language about a clearly defined topic is called a structured conversations.

- Structures conversations allow students a chance to share ideas and points-of-view with each other.
- When we are explicit about how students engage in discussion, it reduces a lot of the problems that arise when we ask students to work together in groups.
- During structured conversations, we see less off-task behavior, enhanced understanding of topic, and fewer classroom management problems.

Step 6: Have students participate in structured conversations.

A simple strategy that weaves structured conversation into instruction is **QSSSA** (Question, Signal, Stem, Share, Assess).

- In this strategy, the teacher asks a question and the students give a response signal when they are ready to answer.
- Using a sentence stem, students are asked to share their responses with one or more peers.
- Lastly, the teacher assesses the quality of the discussion by selecting a few students to share their answers with the whole class.
 - Students could also share by writing and then reading their responses.

Step 6: Have students participate in structured conversations.

Structured conversations can become a regular part of classroom instruction.

- Before setting up the structured conversation, it is important to make sure that students have enough background information and an adequate grasp of the content that will be discussed.

Sometimes we avoid using the strategy of structured conversation because we think it will take away valuable instructional time.

- Structured conversations can be short, as little as 35 seconds or as long as five minutes if a topic really engages the students.

Note: Introducing and training your students to use structured conversations such as QSSSA early in the school year will get them accustomed to the process quickly.

Step 6: Have students participate in structured conversations.

QSSSA (Question, Signal, Stem, Share, Assess) Template

Simple Sample:

1. **(Question)** What effect did the exploration of Columbus have on contemporary society in Central America and the Caribbean?
2. **(Signal)** Please stand when you can finish this sentence.
3. **(Stem)** One effect of the explorations of Christopher Columbus on contemporary society in Central American and the Caribbean was ...
4. **(Share)** Beginning with a given sentence stem, students share their responses with a peer.
5. **(Assess)** The teacher randomly assesses students by calling on them individually.

Sample Signals: Stand, Sit Down, Raise Your Right Hand, Raise Your Left Hand, Thinker's Chin

Step 6: Have students participate in structured conversations.

Here are some examples:

QSSSA	Question	Signal	Stem	Share	Assess
Math	What are some important things to remember when factoring equations?	Raise your hand when you can complete this sentence _____	The most important thing to remember when factoring equations is Because	Share in groups of three	Randomly call on students
Social Studies	Do you support Sam Houston's position on secession?	Place your hand on your chin when you can complete this sentence _____	I support/oppose Sam Houston's position because ...	Numbered Heads Together	Randomly select groups to respond
Science	What are some unusual characteristics of annelids?	Stand up when you can complete this sentence _____	The most unusual characteristic of annelids is Because	Share in groups of two	Randomly call on students
Language Arts	Is Stanley a hero?	Put your pen down when you can complete this sentence _____	Evidence that shows Stanley is/is not a hero includes	Share answers with several partners	Have students write their perspectives in journals

Teacher-Student Dialogue

Here is what QSSSA might sound like in an Algebra class:

Teacher: What is the first step you take to factor this equation? Please stand when you can finish this sentence: "The first step I would take to factor this equation is ..." (teacher waits until all students stand before proceeding)

Teacher: Using the sentence stem given, turn to the person standing nearest to you and tell them your answer. If you agree with them, say, "I agree because ..." If you don't agree, say, "I disagree because ..." Ok, ready, go.

Student: The first step I would take in factoring this equation is ... (teacher waits until all students finish sharing before proceeding)

Teacher: Ok, what is the first step you would take to factor this equation? (teacher randomly selects a name from a stack of cards) Michael?

Michael: The first step I would take in factoring this equation would be to put like terms together.

Teacher: Tell me more about that ...

Teacher-Student Dialogue

Here is what QSSSA might sound like in an Chemistry class:

Teacher: What is the smallest element on the periodic table? Please raise your hand when you can finish this sentence, "The smallest element on the periodic table is ..." (students all raise their hands) Turn to the person next to you and say your whole sentence. If you agree with the person say, "I agree because ..." If you disagree say, "I disagree because ..."

Now, turn to each other and begin sharing.

Okay, what is the smallest element on the periodic table? (teacher randomly selects a name from a stack of cards) Michael?

Michael: The smallest element on the periodic table is hydrogen.

Teacher: Thank you, Michael.

What Research Says

Student-to-student interaction focused on lesson concepts has been shown to have a significant effect on student achievement (Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock, 2001).

In several studies, students who participated in discussions with other students about a topic showed a percentile gain on 19 points over students who did not participate in discussions (Guzetti et al., 1993 as cited in Marzano et al., 2001)

The use of sentence stems in structured conversations provides an opportunity to increase the number of exposures to academic vocabulary following direct vocabulary instructing. Jenkins, Stein and Wysocki (1984 found that students need at least six exposures to a word before they can remember its meaning). Structured conversations ensure that students get an exposure to academic vocabulary and a chance to use new terms in an authentic context.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between “structured conversations” and simply calling on students randomly in the classroom , one student at a time?

First structured conversations are more engaging because the process includes 100% student participation.

- In single student questioning, we select one student at a time to respond to a teacher’s question while everyone else in the classroom remains passive.
- With structured conversations, every student must respond by completing the sentence stem given.
- Students demonstrate completion by responding with a signal command. (For example, “Please stand when you can finish this sentence, “One cause of the Spanish American war was ...)
- Once every student has given the signal, students share their complete sentences with a partner or in groups.
- The process provides enough structure to get all students involved both physically and mentally.
- It maximizes engagement time on the classroom and minimizes single-student responses.

Frequently Asked Questions

What happens if students will not participate in the structured conversations?

Initially, there may be reluctance or hesitation by some students.

- Keep in mind that we are nudging our students from a very well-learned pattern of passivity into something that is much more engaging.
- Once students understand and have success with the process, they usually enjoy it and look forward to participating in it.
- For students who need extra encouragement, we simply provide the sentence stem.
- If need be, we give them a phrase or answer to complete the given sentence stem.
- Initially we have to support and push the students as they become accustomed to structured conversations.

With encouragement, support, and repetition, even our most reluctant students will soon feel comfortable and will join the process.

Frequently Asked Questions

I don't understand the "A" of QSSSA?

The "A" of QSSSA stands for *assess*.

- The process is simple, after students have shared their completed sentence stem with a peer, the teacher can assess their responses by randomly calling on individual students.
- Students can share their sentence stems, or they can write about their learning experience during the structured conversation.
- This allows the teacher to assess responses and check student understanding.
- Teachers are not evaluating students; instead, they are using student responses to know whether to re-teach or move forward with the lesson.
- Other assessment methods include: Whole-class written responses, or numbered heads together strategy with teams of students reporting their responses to the rest of the class.

This Concludes

Step 6: Have students participate in structured conversations.

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Thank you