



# Introduction



The toolkit aims to provide practical yet effective strategies for developing academic language skills for all students in physical education. Another literacy challenge for physical educators is helping their English Language Learners (ELLs) to continue their development of English. Therefore, we have included in this toolkit information about the stages of language acquisition and the implications for teaching. In a simple format designed for ease of use, this toolkit shows how to explicitly integrate academic language and language acquisition.

Our approach emphasizes the importance of teachers' awareness of their own cultural background and that of their students. Teachers should strive to create an inclusive, safe, and welcoming learning environment for all students.

Lastly, 10 simple, right to the point strategies that can help you start revamping your teaching repertoire are presented.

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# First Things First



Take time to reflect on your own cultural background. Become aware of any biases or stereotypes that you may hold that may impact your teaching and your students' learning.

Invest time in learning about students' backgrounds, cultural traditions, language, and expectations for behaviors with respect to education and authorities.

Familiarize yourself with the language acquisition stages, and determine the stage for each of your ELLs. Integrate this information with your knowledge of academic language and physical education.

Be sure to create a warm and welcoming environment that is inclusive and respectful, one that embraces differences and appreciates uniqueness

# Understanding Academic Language

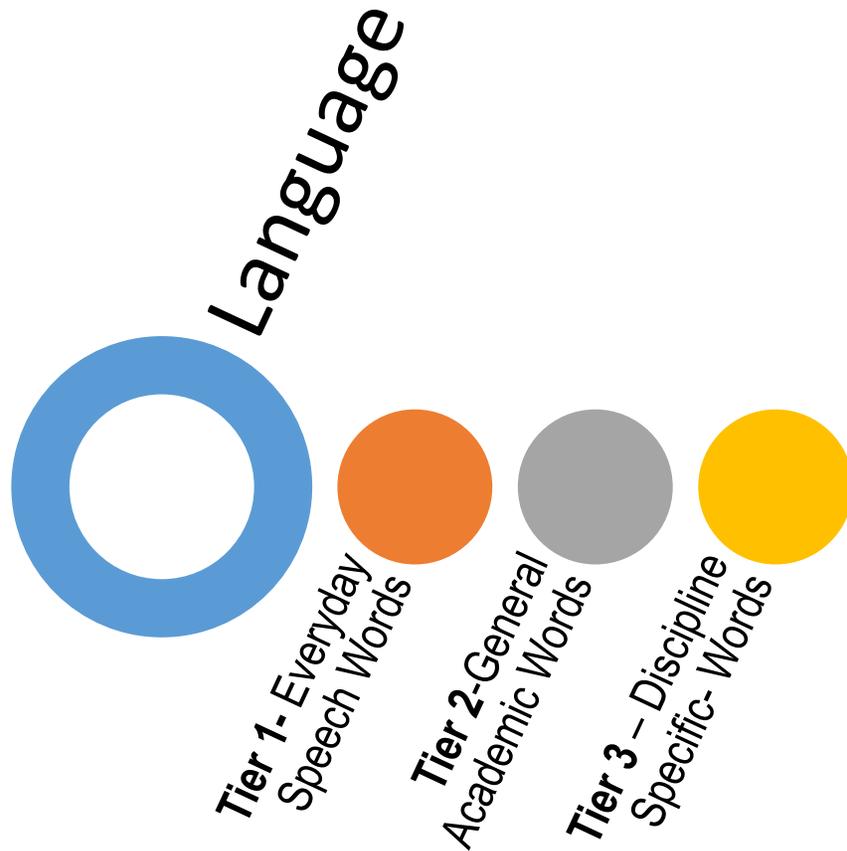


This next section discusses academic language. First, the different tiers of language are presented, with examples. Next, academic language is defined. The discipline-specific academic language of physical education is shown, with examples to highlight the different tiers of language. The various components of academic language- vocabulary, language function, syntax and discourse - are presented. As teachers we can promote the development of academic language by providing opportunities to speak, listen, read, and write (SLRW) in our classes.

Academic language is considered by experts as one of the keys to academic success. By planning for the development of academic language, physical educators help their students acquire one of the critical skills for successful learning in physical education, while satisfying some of the Common Core literacy requirements..



# Language Tiers



Language can be conceptualized as consisting of different tiers. Words are categorized into tiers according to the frequency and applicability of the word.

**Tier 1** consists of words that are commonly used on every day speech.

**Tier 2** consists of words that are used in formal writing and in academic settings. These words have broad applicability and thus can be used in various disciplines.

**Tier 3** words have a narrow applicability and are discipline-specific. Such words lack generalization and are mostly used to define specific vocabulary and concepts of the discipline.

# Defining Academic Language



Academic language is the language students are expected to use in school to acquire a new or deeper understanding of content and to convey that understanding to others. Tier 2 words, that is, general academic vocabulary, are used across many disciplines. Tier 3 words are discipline-specific, and essential to learning within the specific discipline. Both Tier 2 and Tier 3 words comprise academic language, along with language function, syntax and discourse.

# Three-Tier Sample Words

## Tier 1 - Everyday Words

### **Verbs**

- Play
- Eat
- Run
- Sleep

### **Nouns**

- Pizza
- Water
- Chair
- Table

## Tier 2 - General Academic Words

### **Verbs**

- Articulate
- Summarize
- Analyze
- Support

### **Nouns**

- Evidence
- Argument
- Conclusion
- Point of view

## Tier 3 – Discipline-Specific Words

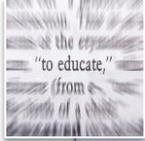
### **Verbs**

- Exercise
- Run
- Skip
- Pass

### **Nouns**

- Muscles
- Triceps
- Endurance
- Movement

# Physical Education~Discipline Specific Academic Language



## Discipline Specific-Vocabulary

- **Soccer**
- Penalty kick
- Free kick
- Corner kick
- Goal Kick
- Throw-in
- Offside
- Hand ball



## Language Function

- Contrast
- Describe
- Evaluate
- Analyze
- Sequence
- Interpret



## Syntax

- Sentence structure – simple, compound, complex, or compound-complex)
- Sentence length
- Transitions
- Verb tenses
- Active voice
- Passive voice



## Discourse

- Speaking
- Reading
- Listening
- Writing

# Discourse & Syntax

We often incorporate language elements of discourse and syntax into our physical education classes, without realizing that we do so.

We need to recognize how we consciously or incidentally develop academic language. Once we do this, we can increase the opportunities we provide.

## *Listening*

*Listen and demonstrate comprehension by following directions*

*Executing skill using critical elements verbally identified by the teacher*

## *Reading*

*Read task card and perform task*

*Complete exit slip or worksheet*

## *Speaking*

*List steps in a skill as peer performs or when asked by a teacher*

*Give feedback to peer*

## *Writing*

*List critical cues on exit slip*

*Analyze why a strategy worked using complete sentences*

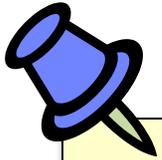
# Meeting Academic Language Demands



“Being a competent user of academic language means knowing what to say, when to say it, and how to say it within the different oral and written disciplinary contexts”.

(Gottlieb & Ernst-Slavit, 2014, p. 5).

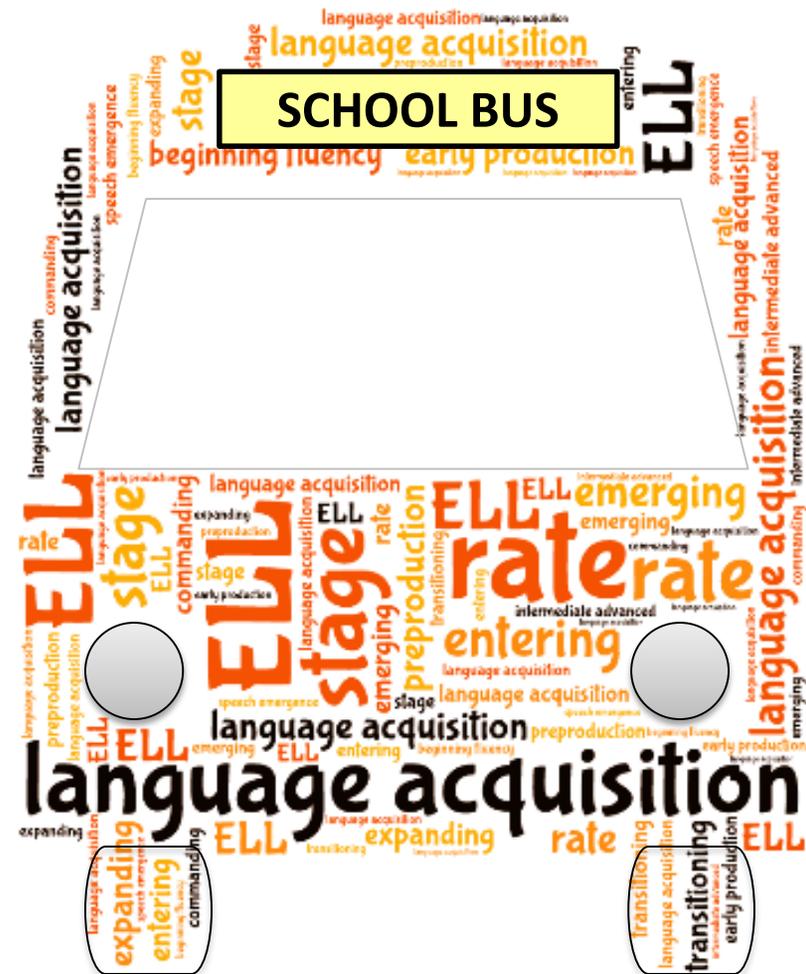
# English Language Learners (ELL)



The acquisition of English language is highlighted in this section. Some general guidelines for physical educators to help ELLs to learn are suggested. The five stages of language acquisition are shown. Students proceed through these stages at different rates, with a multitude of factors influencing their progress.

Next, for each stage, its characteristics are presented in conjunction with stage-appropriate prompts to elicit student use of language. Sample physical education activities that teachers can use to help their students acquire English are provided along with likely student actions. This is followed by the academic language demands that are appropriate for that specific stage.

We hope you will find the sample ideas associated with each stage helpful in working with your ELLs and provide a stepping stone to stimulate your creativity.



# Helpful Ideas to Guide Your Efforts to Support Language Acquisition with ELLs

**Recognize, embrace and build on students' native language, literacy, and background.**

**Understand and utilize language acquisition theory.**

**Use visuals and native tongue words to motivate ELLs to practice academic language skills.**

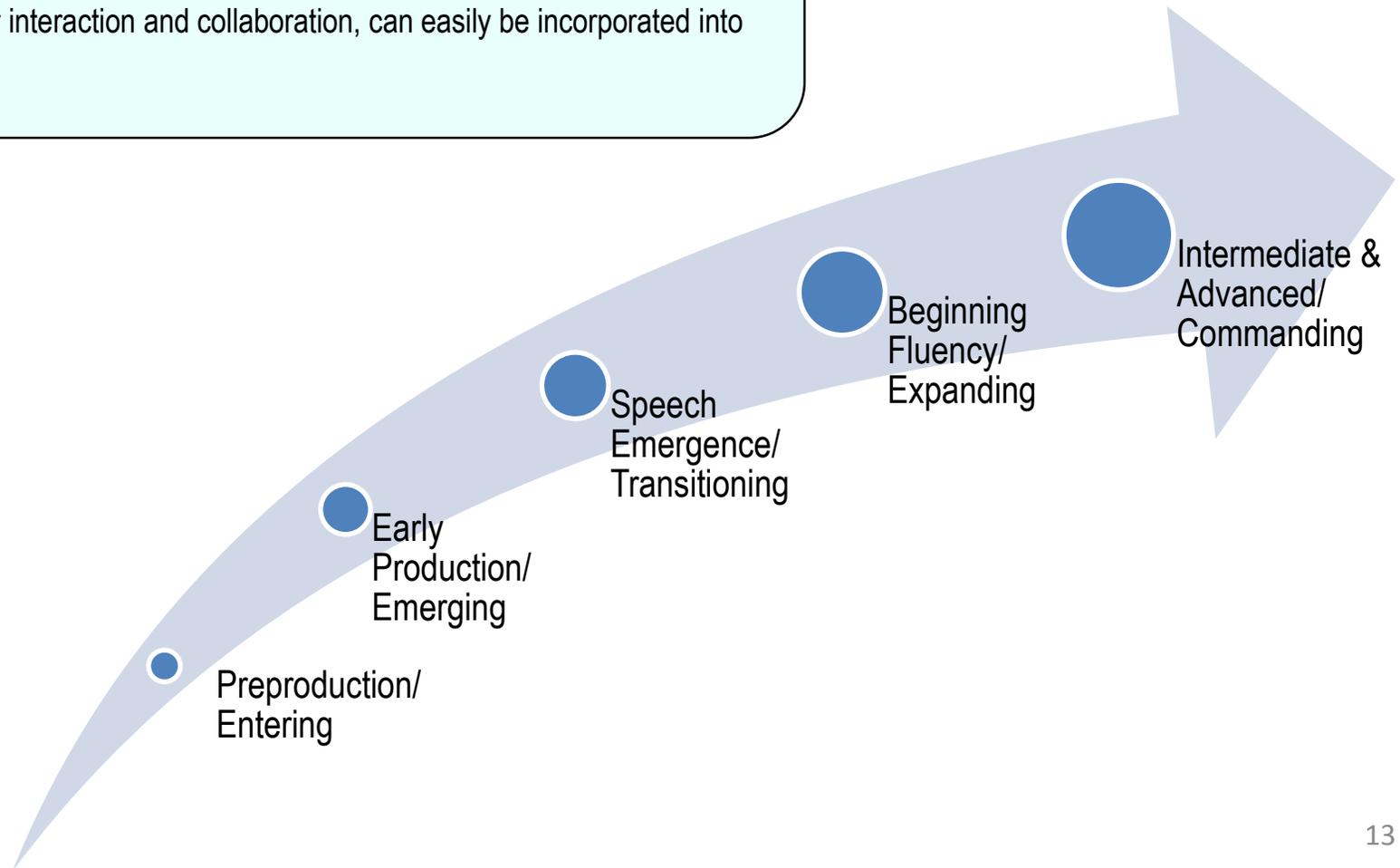
**Create a classroom environment that facilitates all language learning.**

**Recognize language development stages and engage in differentiated instruction and assessment practices.**

# Stages of Language Acquisition

Language acquisition is typically viewed as passing through a series of stages. Each stage has distinct characteristics.

The rate of language acquisition is influenced by a host of factors. Some of the factors, such as opportunities for interaction and collaboration, can easily be incorporated into physical education.



# Selected Factors Influencing the Process of English Language Acquisition



There are a number of factors influencing the rate of progress of ELLs, only a few of which are presented above. These factors interact with a host of other factors that influence student learning, Incorporating some of these factors into your teaching can help ELLs develop their English skills..

# Stage 1 ~ Preproduction or Entering



## Language Characteristics

- Student takes in the new language
- Does not speak it
- Often better responding nonverbally
- Often lasts six weeks or longer
- Appropriate teacher prompts
  - Show me ...
  - Circle the ...
  - Where is ... ?
  - Who has ... ?



## Teacher's Actions

- *Activity Picture Task Cards*:
  - e.g., Picture of child dribbling a soccer ball or throwing
- *Word Cards*:
  - Discipline-specific vocabulary (dribbling, soccer ball, etc.)
  - General academic words (e.g., and, a, the, she, he, Maria, John, etc.)



## Students' Actions

- **Students work in pairs**
- Student A- *Activity Picture Task Card*-performs the task
- Student B- Selects from the correct *Word Cards* (e.g., the words "dribbling", "is", "a" and "soccer ball".



## Academic Language Demands

- **Vocabulary** – discipline specific words (dribbling, throw)
- **Syntax** - Students need to put the word in the correct order (e.g., Nick is dribbling a soccer ball when completing Word Card activity)

# Stage 2 ~ Early Production or Emerging



## Language Characteristics

- Begins to speak using short words and sentences
- Emphasis is still on listening and absorbing the new language
- Many errors
- **Prompts**
  - Yes/no questions
  - Either/or questions
  - Who ... ?
  - What ... ?
  - How many ... ?



## Teacher's Actions

- Activity Picture Task Cards:
  - e.g., picture of child dribbling a soccer ball, or throwing
- Word Cards:
  - Discipline-specific vocabulary (dribbling, soccer ball etc.)
  - General academic words (e.g., and, a, the, she, he, Maria, John etc.)



## Students' Actions

- **Students Work in Pairs**
- Student A- Activity Picture Task Card- performs the task
- Student B- Selects from the correct Word Cards (e.g., the words "dribbling", "is", "a" and "soccer ball").
- Wall Sentence Board: Each student writes a short sentence on the Wall Sentence Board (e.g., Angelos is dribbling a soccer ball or she is dribbling the soccer ball).



## Academic Language Demands

- **Vocabulary:** Dribbling
- **Discourse:** Writing/ copying the words from the *Word Cards*
- **Syntax-** Students need to put the word in the correct order (e.g., Nick is dribbling a soccer ball).

# Stage 3 ~ Speech Emergence/ Transitioning



## Language Characteristics

- Speech is more frequent
- Words and sentences are longer
- Still relies heavily on context clues and familiar topics
- Vocabulary continues to increase
- Errors decrease in common interactions
- **Prompts**
  - Why ... ?
  - How ... ?
  - Explain ...



## Teacher's Actions

- **Activity Task Card:** With a diagram e.g., In a group of three, pass the soccer ball to teammates and attempt to shoot at the goal. Take turns in all three positions (starter, middle passer and shooter)



## Students' Actions

- **In groups of three: Take turns**
- Take an *Activity Task Card* read it or look at diagram again if needed.
- **Discuss:** Who would be the starter, the middle passer and shooter for each trial
- Perform the task.
- **Wall Sentences Board:** A student with the help of peers writes a sentence or two with at least one transition word (e.g., Angelos dribbled the soccer ball to point A and passed the ball to Mary.)



## Academic Language Demands

- **Vocabulary:** Pass, Shoot
- **Discourse:** Reading the *Activity Task Card*, discussing (oral) the order of passing the ball to each other. Writing the sentences on the *Wall Sentence Board*
- **Language function:** Sequencing their passes.
- **Syntax-** Writing complete sentence with at least one transition word (e.g., Angelos dribbled the soccer ball to point A and passed the ball to Mary.)

# Stage 4 ~ Beginning Fluency/ Expanding



## Language Characteristics

- Speech is fairly fluent in social situations
- Minimal errors.
- New contexts and academic language still a challenge
- Still gaps in vocabulary and appropriate
- **Prompts**
- Decide if ...
- Retell ...



## Teacher's Actions

- **Reads:** *Activity Task Cards*:
- Using the equipment provided create a game that you can play with your group.
- Rules:
  - All teammates must be included
  - Game must be safe and fair -teacher explains the meaning of safe and fair



## Students' Actions

- **Group of 4** (A, B, C, D designated students) - Each student in the group must have a specific role. For example:
- Student A- selects the equipment
- Student B- selects the name of the game
- Student C- decides if the game is safe
- Student D- decides if the game is fair
- **Discuss:** Safety and fairness



## Academic Language Demands

- **Vocabulary:** Safety & Fairness
- **Discourse:** Listening to the teacher instructions, reading the *Activity Task Card*, discussing (oral) safety, fairness, and game development
- **Language function:** Describing (how to play the game), analyzing (if is safe and fair).
- **Syntax-** Aiming to speak in complete sentences

# Stage 5 ~ Intermediate & Advanced/ Commanding



## Language Characteristics

- Communication becoming fluent, especially in social language situations.
- Almost fluently in new situations or in academic areas
- Still some gaps in vocabulary unknown expressions.
- Few errors.
- Higher order thinking skills possible
- Offering an opinion or analyzing a problem
- **Prompts**
  - Compare and contrast...
  - Describe ....
  - What are the advantages of...



## Teacher's Actions

- Pairs-up groups
- Distributes equipment needed for students to play their created games
- **Reads:** *Activity Task Cards*:
- After pairing-up with the other group take turns explaining your game and play it. Each student in the group must contribute to the explanation (roles assigned to students in previous lessons can be assigned here as well)



## Students' Actions

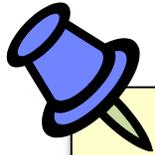
- After creating their game, pair-up with another group.
- Each group teaches their game to the other group, and all play the game.
- Each group offers suggestions to each other on how to improve /modifying the game for the better.



## Academic Language Demands

- **Vocabulary:** Safety & fairness
- **Discourse:** Listening to the teacher instructions, reading the *Activity Task Card*, discussing (oral) how the game is played, including the rules, scoring etc.
- **Language function:** Describing (how to play the game), sequencing (the game) analyzing (if is safe and fair).
- **Syntax-** Aiming to speaking in complete sentences

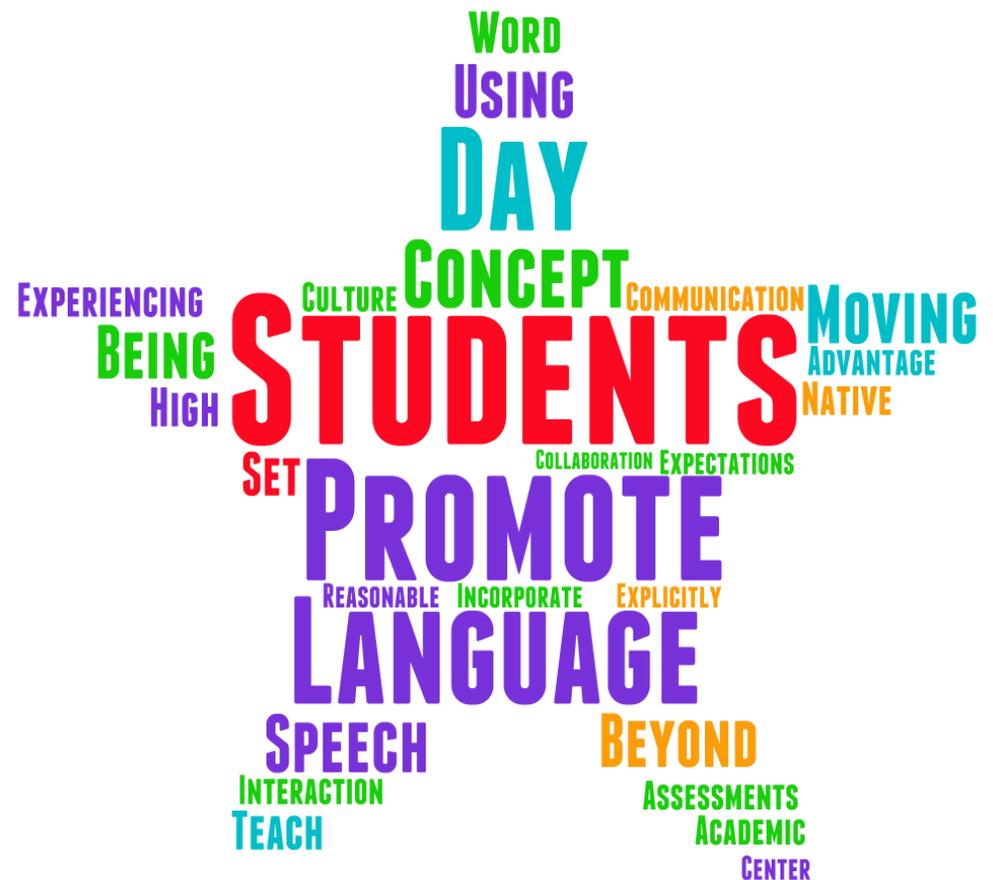
# 10 Strategies to Promote English Language Learning & Academic Language



Carefully selected strategies, creative teaching, and paying attention to students' needs promote both the acquisition of English by ELLs and the development of academic language by all students.

Ten strategies for the development of language are presented in this section. It is suggested that having a Communication Center is a strategy that would be useful for all students throughout the year. You may find some of the other strategies a better fit for one unit, one lesson, or perhaps for a particular group of students.

Our best advice is to try one or two strategies at a time, rather than overwhelm yourself trying to do it all. Try a strategy in one class, refine it and make it your own, and then, when feeling comfortable, use it in other classes.





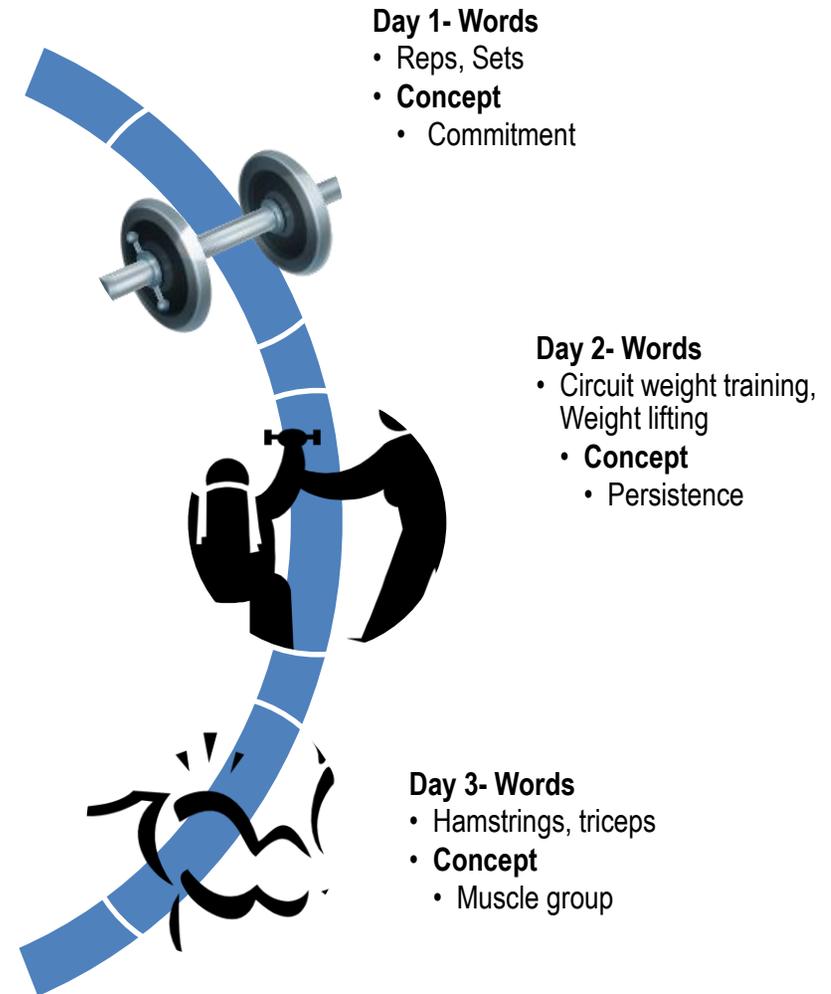
# Strategy 2 ~ Word/Concept of the Day

Identify the word(s) and concept of the day and use the listening, reading, speaking and writing method to stimulate learning.

Verbally instruct or /read directions of what needs to be accomplished for the day. Have students read the task cards, station instructions, or test instructions so that they practice listening and reading.

Have students discuss with their peers the concept of the day and use graphic organizers, journals, short answer questions for a written test or verbal discussion to encourage speaking and writing.

## Fitness Unit

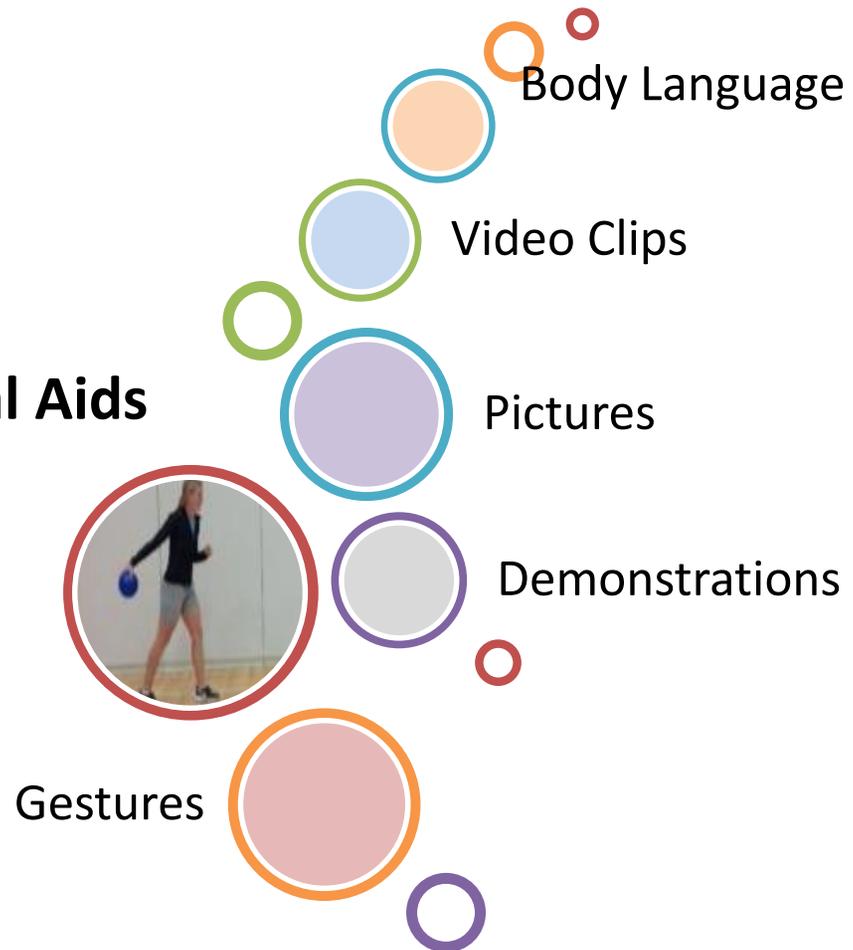


# Strategy 3 ~ Moving Beyond Speech

Visual aids help ELLs contextualize discipline-specific vocabulary as well as general vocabulary.

A variety of non-verbal communication strategies can be used to help students understand the task, modify their performance, and/or complete an assessment.

## Visual Aids



# Strategy 4 ~ Experiencing Being the “Other”



Video instructions in an unfamiliar language for all students.

Let them figure out what is being said and/or what to do with a peer.



Video instructions in the language of the ELLs.

Let the ELLs be the source of understanding .



Include games and activities from other cultures.

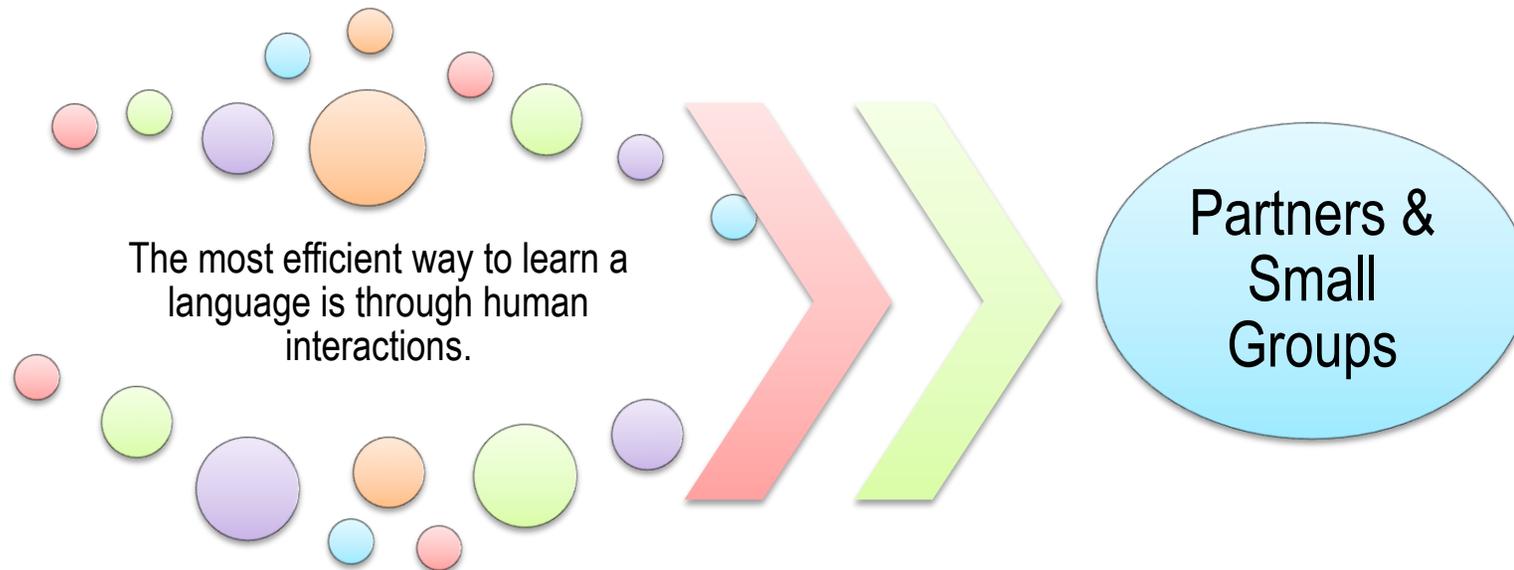
Students may benefit from being put in the “shoes” of their ELLs peers. These kind of experiences allow students to feel how it is to be in a setting where you don’t quite understand what is said or are unsure about what you are expected to do.

The experiences of being the “other” have been shown to be beneficial in developing empathy in others.

*“Tell me, I’ll forget. Show me, I may remember. But involve me, and I’ll understand. “*

-Chinese Proverb

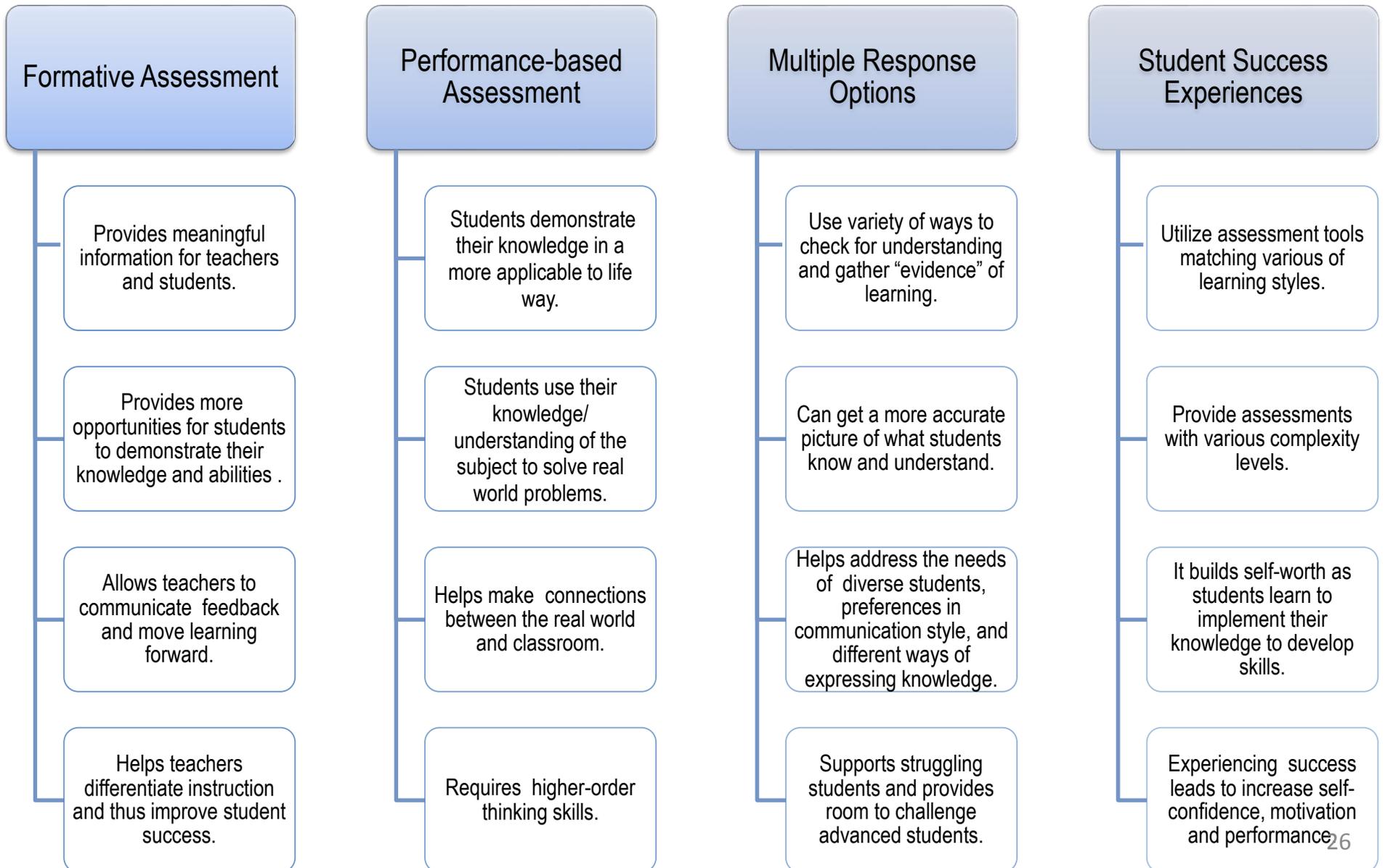
# Strategy 5 ~ Promote Interaction



Promote interactions by providing opportunities for students to work with partners and in small groups. These opportunities encourage ELLs to interact while removing some of the pressures they feel when having to talk in front of a larger group or the entire class.

Opportunities to experience success boosts ELL's self-confidence, which is crucial for acquiring a new language. Partners and peers can help each other with appropriate vocabulary, spelling, reading, and pronunciation.

# Strategy 6 ~ Use Assessments to Students' Advantage



# Strategy 7 ~ Teach Academic Language Explicitly

## Academic Language Demands

Provide verbal frames for discussions (e.g. Our defensive strategy is..... First ..... Then.....)

Provide summary frames for written work ( e.g., In this ..... the player ... .At first..... Then..... Finally...).

Have students read about a sport (e.g., newspaper, book, magazine, blog) and summarize it . (e.g., . I found the reading..... )

Have specific daily objectives for academic language.

Post transition words in the gymnasium

Use academic language when instructing yourself.

Hold students accountable to use complete sentences and correct grammar.

# Strategy 8 ~ Promote Collaboration

## Collaborative Learning Ensures Talking and Discussing Among Students

Listening skills are developed

Talking out loud develops oral language skills

Builds respect and trust

Different views are questioned & validated during discussion

Use problems that offer the opportunity for multiple solutions

Strengthens peer relationships and sensitizes peers to difficulties in learning a new language

Welcomes differences of opinions/views

Peers as role models for ELLs

Develop skills in working together to meet group goals

Stresses personal responsibility to contribute to the group outcomes

Offers more opportunities for ELL to develop language

More opportunities to use language skills within the group as each group member's contribution is expected.

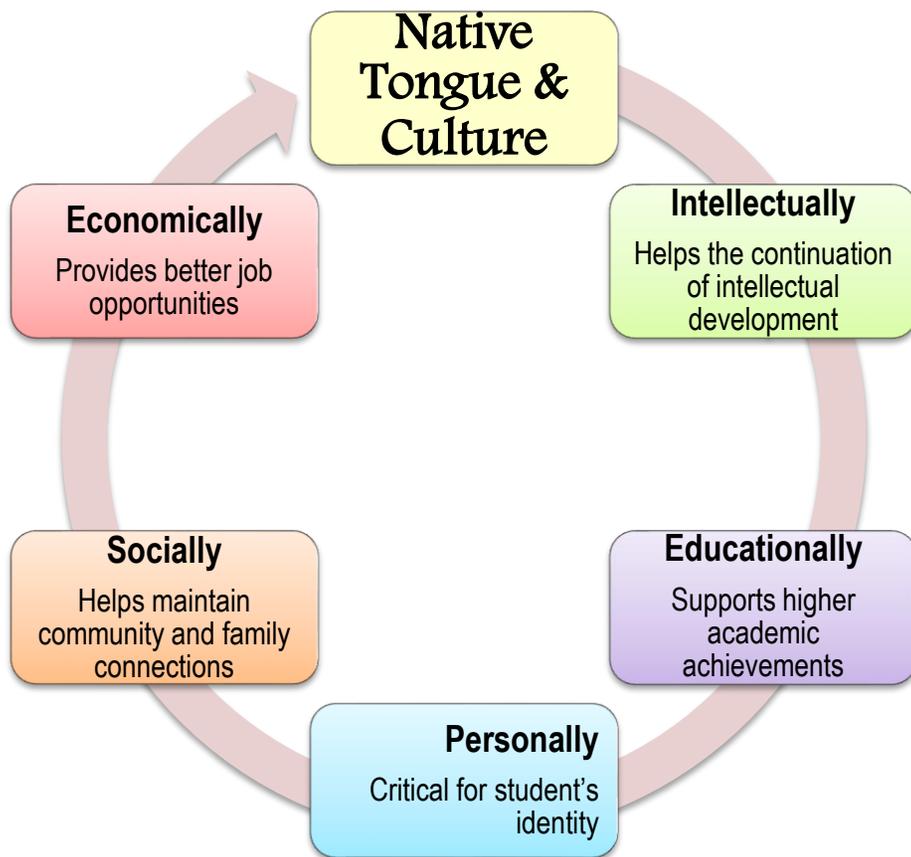
Offers a safer environment in which to use new language as there is less pressure compared to the whole class

Collaborative learning is very much influenced by the amount and quality of interaction.

It is critical that as teachers we establish group roles yet, flexible group norms to allow for differences in responses and contributions.

Working in small groups allows ELLs more opportunities to practice their language skills in a safe environment.

# Strategy 9 ~ Incorporate the Student's Native Tongue and Culture

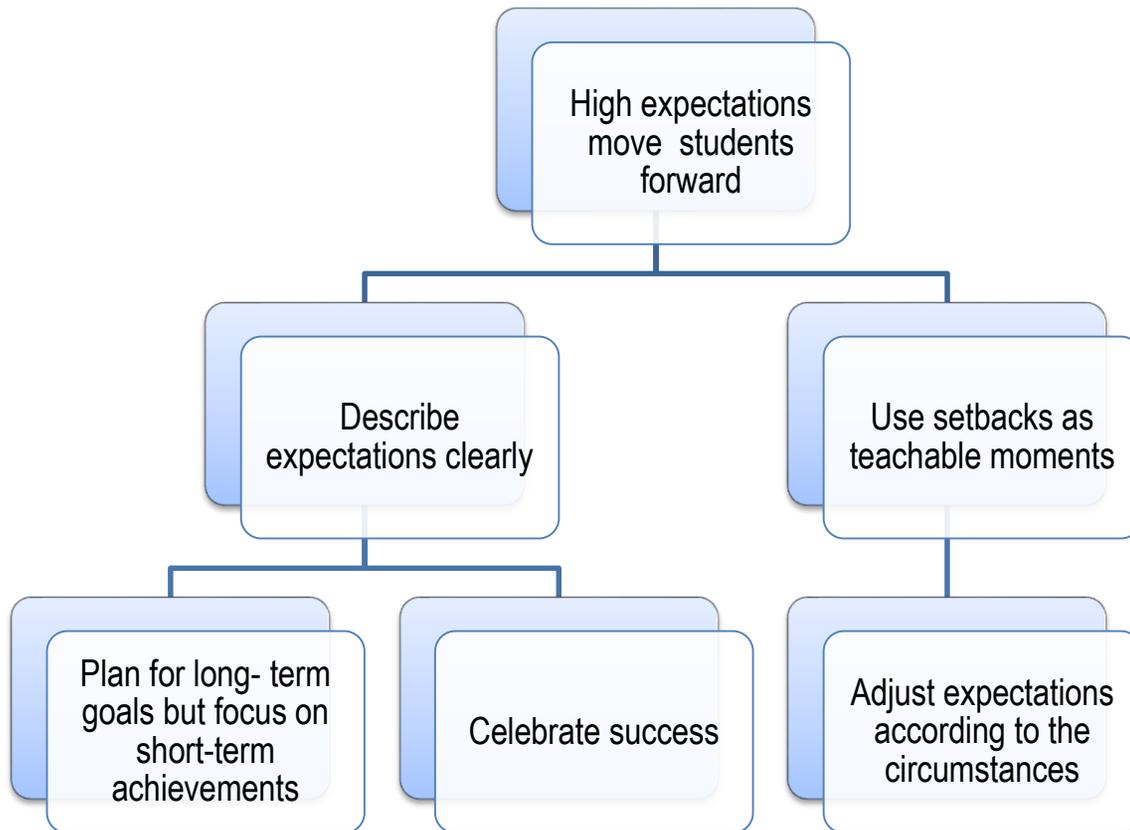


When needed, allow ELLs to use the Communication Center to translate key English words to their native tongue so that they may understand the task and/or concepts. This facilitates their learning, boosts their self-confidence and eases their feeling of being "lost". Letting students use their native language allows them to grow intellectually rather than have their progress be limited by the language barriers.

Additionally, maintaining fluency in the native language helps ELL's sense of identity and assists them in maintaining connections with their community and family. Fluency in their native tongue may be beneficial for ELLs in terms of employment in our increasingly diverse world and global society.

Meaningfully incorporating activities from ELL's native culture on a consistent basis helps them be proud of their roots. Including activities from their culture communicates that this culture is valued. These experiences also broaden other students' cultural horizons and provides a platform for promoting acceptance of differences.

# Strategy 10 ~ Set High, But Reasonable Expectations

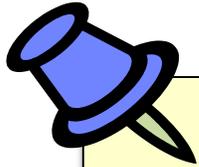


High expectations are important for all students but for ELLs this is critical. Many times, lower expectations are held for ELLs, indirectly limiting their achievement. Similarly, unreachable expectations could have a backlash effect, discouraging ELLs and affecting their motivation and their self-confidence.

Thus, it is important for teachers to be flexible and to adjust expectations according to the particular circumstances. Knowing students' capabilities helps teachers provide meaningful yet challenging opportunities for their growth and success.

Use setbacks, in both physical education content and language skills, as teachable moments to help students move forward toward attaining their goals. Using both long- and short-term goals provides opportunities for frequent successes and reassures ELLs that they can learn.

# Fitting the Pieces Together

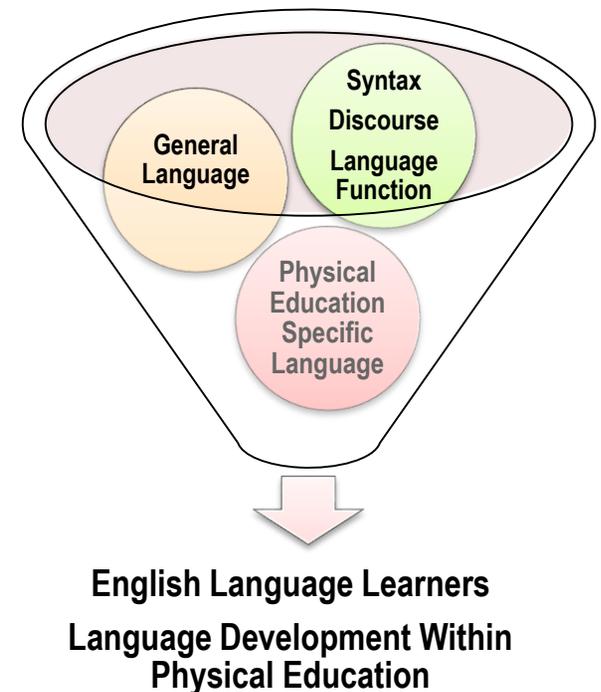


Promoting language development within physical education might seem a bit challenging especially since this is not a traditional expectation of the field. Moreover, add the task of addressing ELLs language needs and it further increases the teaching responsibility. Approaching this task with a positive mind set, however, can make a big difference. A number of popular strategies and approaches that promote language development lend themselves to physical education. Peer interactions and collaboration are commonly use in physical education and both enhance language development. Holding high expectations for all students or using a variety of ways to deliver instruction and assess learning are also common practices among physical education teachers.

Some ideas are the use of a Communication Center in conjunction with strategies such as the “Word of the Day” and focusing on teaching academic language explicitly. Going a bit further, to create a supportive environment for ELLs, you may find it beneficial to occasionally have your class experience what it is like to be the “Other”. This usually helps non-ELLs become more empathetic to the challenges associated with learning a new language and adapting to a new culture. Be aware of the stage of language acquisition ELLs are at and support them by allowing them to use their native tongue and other methods to enhance their understanding and knowledge.

As a teacher, you may find that helping ELLs acquire English and the promotion of academic language are not mutually exclusive. Thoughtful planning, creative teaching, and an appreciation for diversity will help you embrace this challenge and make it a rewarding experience for both you and the students.

## Physical Education



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