

Engaging English Language Learners in Classroom Instruction: Grades 1 and 2 **2006**



DVD Viewing Guide

Montgomery County Public Schools
Rockville, Maryland

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Introduction

English language learners (ELLs) comprise more than 20 percent of the total population of the Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). Most classrooms are impacted by the presence of students who are currently enrolled in the English for Speakers for Other Languages (ESOL) program, have recently exited the program, or come from homes where English is not the primary language.

Relatively few classroom teachers have had the training in second-language acquisition necessary to feel confident about promoting the academic success of their English language-learning students. Nevertheless, the accountability demands of education today oblige them to find ways to close the achievement gap that often exists between these students and their native English-speaking peers.

This DVD set and viewing guide provide a dynamic resource for supporting the academic achievement of students learning English as a new language in the regular classroom setting. The set consists of four complete lessons taught by MCPS teachers using the appropriate grade-level MCPS curriculum in reading/ language arts or mathematics.

The classrooms depicted in these DVDs represent a range of instructional settings in which ELLs are found. Two of the classrooms include a considerable representation of ELLs; one classroom has only a few ELLs, and one classroom shows a self-contained ESOL class where the reading/language arts curriculum is taught.

Each lesson includes captions that identify the best practices the teacher is using to support English language learners during instruction.

In addition, this set includes one DVD that collects the strategies demonstrated in the classroom videos into one resource. These strategies are organized into a schema for lesson planning referred to as the “Three Principles for Engaging English Language Learners in Classroom Instruction.” These principles have been adapted from the publication *Enhancing English Language Learning in Elementary Classrooms*, published by the Center for Applied Linguistics.

These Three Principles provide a blueprint for supporting the academic success of ELLs in the regular classroom. Dr. Karen Woodson, director of the MCPS Division of ESOL and Bilingual Programs, provides an explanation of the Three Principles at the beginning of each DVD. This viewing guide also includes a brief overview of second-language learning research in the section titled Research-based Approaches to Engaging English Language Learners (ELLs) in Classroom Instruction: What the Research Says.

A later section of this viewing guide, Using *Engaging English Language Learners in Classroom Instruction* for Professional Development, offers educators suggestions for using the videos to facilitate their own learning about working with ELLs in their own classrooms.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge the shared effort that went into the production of this resource. *Engaging English Language Learners in Classroom Instruction: Grades 1 and 2* was made possible through the collaboration of the MCPS Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs, Office of Organizational Development, and Office of Information and Organizational Systems.

This collaboration includes critical contributions by specialists in ESOL instruction, reading/language arts instruction, mathematics instruction, professional development, and instructional television and production. The result is a professional development resource that is not only grounded in research-based practices, but also faithful to the content and application of the MCPS curriculum.

Research-based Approaches to Engaging English Language Learners (ELLs) in Classroom Instruction: What the Research Says

During the past 20 years, linguists and educators working together have discovered effective ways to support students in both acquiring new language and meeting the demanding standards of academic content. Probably the most relevant contribution for those who teach ELLs in the classroom is the distinction proposed by linguist Jim Cummins between basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) (Cummins, 1981).

Students may seem fluent in English when they are using the language they need for BICS, or social communication—for example, playing at recess or talking about their family and friends. However, this is not the same thing as having the level of language proficiency (CALP)—grade-level academic vocabulary, complex linguistic ability, and critical thinking—to fully benefit from academic content instruction.

BICS and CALP are often represented by the language-learning “iceberg,” since social language is only the more visible “tip of the iceberg” of the language that students need to do well in school. And like the Titanic, they are liable to sink academically when they run into the hidden linguistic demands of academic content. Basic interpersonal competence may take from only a few months to a few years for second-language students. Achieving cognitive academic linguistic proficiency may take up to 10 years, especially in students with limited prior formal education (Cummins, 1981).

Cummins also explains that the addition of context—concrete representations and visual and kinesthetic cues—supports students’ understanding of curriculum content at the same time that it builds their academic language proficiency. Scaffolding instruction with graphic organizers, for example, gives ELLs “hooks” to hang on to content knowledge and higher-order thinking while they are sorting out the vocabulary and language of the material.

However, providing comprehensibility of language and content is not enough. Language-learning theory demonstrates that students need many opportunities for language interaction such as think-pair-share and cooperative learning activities. This helps students reinforce their learning and practice new language in a safe environment.

In *Enhancing English Language Learning in Elementary Classrooms: A Professional Development Program*, the Center for Applied Linguistics summarizes the research on language acquisition and content learning into Three Principles for engaging English language learners in classroom instruction:

1. Increase opportunities for comprehensible learning
2. Increase opportunities for interaction
3. Increase opportunities for critical thinking and questioning

Differentiation that addresses the first two principles is usually a prerequisite to giving English language learners the academic scaffolding they need to take advantage of the third—engaging in critical thinking and questioning. Classroom teachers can maximize their instruction for ELLs by providing instructional activities that meet these three criteria:

1. Did I make the instruction easy to understand for my ELLs by providing clear, meaningful context and reinforcement? Examples: visual aids, labels, classroom routines, *realia* (real objects), chants, songs, graphic organizers, previewing content, activating prior knowledge, role-plays, and theme-based instruction.
2. Did I give students multiple opportunities to practice content, build understanding, and improve their command of the language through peer interaction? Examples: pair work, think-pair-share, cooperative learning, peer editing, shared writing, shared reading, writers workshop, dialogue journals, choral responses, and center work.
3. Did I provide ELLs with the same exposure to and practice with critical thinking and learning strategies as provided for their peers? Examples: think alouds, graphic organizers that support summarizing, inferring, analyzing, evaluating, comparing and contrasting, and responding to why and how questions.

Best practices for ELLs are those same best practices that teachers use with all students.

However, best practices for ELLs should not be considered as merely an option. They **must** be integrated into every moment of every lesson. The Three Principles provide an easy-to-remember schema for ensuring that instruction exemplifies the best research on learning both language and content.

How to Navigate the DVDs

Insert a reading/language arts or mathematics DVD into the player. The first screen to appear is the title page, which indicates the content of the DVD (mathematics or reading/language arts) and the classroom lesson, part 1 or part 2 (see Figure 1).

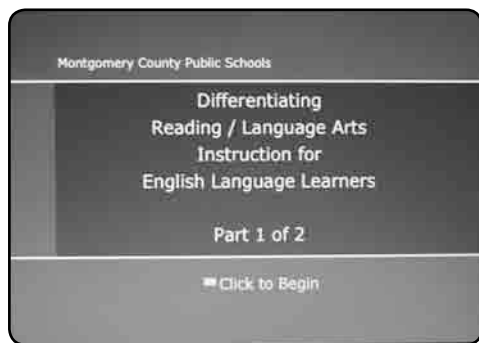


Figure 1

Access the second screen by using the mouse to click on the yellow button to the left of the text, **Click to Begin**.

The second screen of each DVD contains an informational welcome by Dr. Woodson. This introduction provides information about the nature of second-language acquisition, BICS and CALP, and the Three Principles of engaging English language learners in classroom instruction. The same introduction appears on each DVD (see Figure 2).

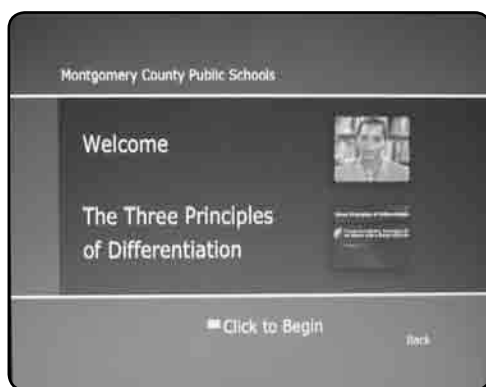


Figure 2

Another link, The Three Principles of Differentiation, will appear under the Welcome link. This link provides a guide to the icons which identify the use of strategies supporting the Three Principles as they appear in the video.

Use your mouse to highlight a hidden yellow button to the left of each link in order to view the video. Click twice to see the video. The DVD will automatically return to the previous screen when the video segment has finished.

After viewing the links on the second screen, click on the yellow button to the left of the text, **Click to Begin**. Click twice on the button. This will take you to the screen with links to the videos of classroom instruction. To return to the title page, click on the yellow button to the left of the **Back** link.

The third screen contains links to elements of the classroom lesson (see Figure 3).

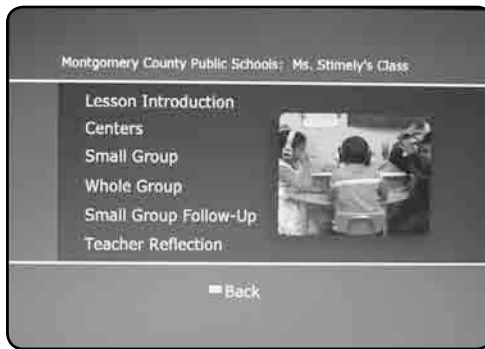


Figure 3

The first link on each screen, **Lesson Introduction**, provides an explanation by Ms. Lois Wions, ESOL program supervisor, about the demographics of the classroom, the type of instruction, and the curriculum content of the lesson that is about to be viewed.

The titles of the links following **Lesson Introduction** may vary according to the content of each lesson. However, the final link is always **Teacher Reflection**. Here, Ms. Wions meets with both classroom and ESOL teachers to discuss the collaborative lesson-planning process that led to the successful lesson.

When each video segment is completed, the DVD automatically returns to the previous screen. When all of the links have been viewed, click on the yellow button to the left of the **Back** link to navigate back through the DVD.

The summaries on the following pages provide a brief overview of the content of each DVD.

Reading/Language Arts Lessons

Classroom instruction in reading/language arts is demonstrated at two schools—East Silver Spring and Beall elementary schools—and appears on two separate DVDs. The Viewing Guide includes a brief summary of the lesson and each of its parts. At the end of each summary, selected focus questions appear that will help the viewer reflect on specific strategies that support English language learners’ access to the grade level content curriculum.

East Silver Spring Elementary School

Ms. Kim Stimely
Grade 1 classroom teacher

Reading/Language Arts Curriculum Guide: Quarter 3, Lesson 8 in Literary Experience

Essential Question: How do pictures and words go together to help us understand the story?

SCREEN 1: Differentiating Reading/Language Arts Instruction for English Language Learners, Part 1 of 2.

SCREEN 2:

- ◆ Introduction by Dr. Karen Woodson, director, MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs. (4:34)
- ◆ The Three Principles of Differentiation. (:30)

SCREEN 3:

 Ms. Stimely’s Class

- ◆ **Lesson Introduction.** Ms. Lois Wions, ESOL program supervisor in the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs, introduces the lesson. (:39)
- ◆ **Centers.** Ms. Stimely uses classroom routines and comprehensible language to send students to reading/language arts centers. (3:36)
- ◆ **Small Group.** Ms. Stimely works with a small group of ESOL students to preview the whole group reading material for the next day: *The Goat in the Chili Patch*. (15:07)
- ◆ **Whole Group.** Ms. Stimely works with the whole class on the Essential Question: How do pictures and words go together to help us understand the story? (7:31)
- ◆ **Small-Group Follow-up.** Ms. Stimely works with the ESOL students to reinforce and follow up on the content of the lesson. (7:16)
- ◆ **Teacher Reflection.** Ms. Stimely and ESOL teacher Ms. Judy Dan reflect with Ms. Wions on the collaborative process they use to plan for reading/language arts instruction. (11:41)

FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. Isaac, the student with the dark curly hair, is an ESOL newcomer who has very limited abilities in English so far. What does Ms. Stimely do to keep Isaac engaged in instruction during the small-group previewing lesson?
2. When you watch the Whole Group lesson, what evidence is there that the small group lesson preview of *The Goat in the Chili Patch* has had a positive effect on his participation?

Beall Elementary School

Ms. Lisa Graff

Ms. Linda Hoffsis

Self-contained Grades 1 and 2 ESOL reading/language arts

First Grade MCPS Reading/Language Arts Instructional Guide, Quarter 3, Writing Understanding Persuasion: Lesson 2: Opinion vs. Fact.

Essential Question: *First Grade MCPS ESOL Curriculum, Grade 1, Quarter 3, Lesson Sequence 5: What do we say to persuade others?*

SCREEN 1: Differentiating Reading/Language Arts Instruction for English Language Learners, Part 1 of 2.

SCREEN 2:

- ◆ Introduction by Dr. Karen Woodson, director, MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs. (4:34)
- ◆ The Three Principles of Differentiation. (:30)

SCREEN 3: Beall ESOL class

- ◆ **Lesson Introduction.** Ms. Lois Wions, ESOL program supervisor in the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs, introduces the lesson. (1:15)
- ◆ **Whole Group.** Ms. Graf and Ms. Hoffsis review the lesson itinerary, discuss the meaning of the concept facts, and activate students' knowledge about spiders. (37:30)
- ◆ **Small-Group Follow-up.** Ms. Graff works with students in a small group with another text to reinforce the whole-group lesson. Ms. Hoffsis meets with a small group to develop language focus objectives that help them access reading/language arts content. (22:17)
- ◆ **Teacher Reflection.** Ms. Wions, Ms. Graff, and Ms. Hoffsis discuss their collaborative approach to planning and implementing the reading/language arts block with ESOL students. (11:01)

FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. How does Ms. Graff use the student's native language to enhance access to the content of the curriculum?
2. How does Ms. Graff use strategies from the principles, "Increase opportunities for comprehensible learning" and "Increase opportunities for interaction" so that students can participate in critical thinking and questioning activities?

Mathematics Lessons

Classroom instruction in mathematics is demonstrated at two schools—East Silver Spring and Matsunaga elementary schools—and appears on two separate DVDs. The viewing guide includes a brief summary of the lesson and each of its parts. At the end of each summary, a few targeted focus questions appear that will help the viewer reflect on specific strategies that support English language learners' access to the grade-level content curriculum.

East Silver Spring Elementary School

Ms. Sara Klinessmith
Grade 2 classroom teacher

Second Grade MCPS Mathematics Curriculum Guide—Unit 5, Part A

Essential Question: What strategies can be used to multiply and divide?

SCREEN 1: Differentiating Mathematics Instruction for English Language Learners, Part 1 of 2.

SCREEN 2:

- ◆ Introduction by Dr. Karen Woodson, director, MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs. (4:34)
- ◆ The Three Principles of Differentiation. (:30)

SCREEN 3: Ms. Klinessmith's Class

- ◆ **Lesson Introduction.** Ms. Lois Wions, ESOL program supervisor in the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs, introduces the lesson. (:42)
- ◆ **Warm Up.** Ms. Klinessmith uses a variety of interactive and comprehensible activities to activate students' prior knowledge about groupings. (5:38)
- ◆ **Focus Lesson.** Ms. Klinessmith uses concrete representations and modeling to make connections to the focus lesson about strategies for multiplication and division. (10:59)
- ◆ **Independent Practice.** Ms. Klinessmith organizes independent practice that provides students with opportunities for interaction and comprehensible learning. (11:13)
- ◆ **Teacher Reflection.** Ms. Klinessmith and ESOL teacher Ms. Ligia Williams discuss their collaborative approach to planning and implementing today's lesson. (12:10)

FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What are the challenges ESOL students may face in answering the lesson's Essential Question: What strategies can be used to multiply and divide?
2. Describe how Ms. Klinessmith helps ESOL students move from concrete to abstract representations of the content throughout the lesson.

Matsunaga Elementary School

Mr. Kevin Burns
Grade 1 classroom teacher

First Grade MCPS Mathematics Instructional Guide—Unit 5

Essential Question: How can $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, and $\frac{1}{4}$ be represented?

SCREEN 1: Differentiating Mathematics Instruction for English Language Learners, Part 1 of 2.

SCREEN 2:

- ◆ Introduction by Dr. Karen Woodson, director, MCPS Division of ESOL/Bilingual Programs. (4:34)
- ◆ The Three Principles of Differentiation. (:30)

SCREEN 3:

 Mr. Burn's Class

- ◆ **Lesson Introduction.** Ms. Lois Wions, ESOL program supervisor in the Office of Curriculum and Instructional Programs, introduces the lesson. (:56)
- ◆ **Warm Up.** Mr. Burns uses visual reinforcement and student-to-student interactions to activate students' background knowledge and build academic language. (5:38)
- ◆ **Focus Lesson.** Mr. Burns incorporates modeling and role-play strategies to engage all students in the focus lesson. (10:59)
- ◆ **Independent Practice.** Mr. Burns reinforces the focus lesson by giving students the opportunity to engage with the content material in interactive and concrete ways. (11:13)
- ◆ **Teacher Reflection.** Mr. Burns and ESOL teacher Ms. Min Kim discuss with Mrs. Wions their collaborative approach to planning and implementing today's lesson. (12:10)

FOCUS QUESTIONS:

1. What technique did Mr. Burns use throughout the entire lesson to keep English language learner Alejandra engaged in the instruction?
2. Early in the warm-up, Natasha, a former ESOL student, demonstrates that academic language is not always complicated or content-specific. What vocabulary word proved to be a challenge for Natasha to define verbally?
3. Mr. Kline has a repertoire of routines for classroom management that enhance his students' ability to participate appropriately in student-to-student interactions. What are they?

Compilation of Strategies DVD

The Compilation of Strategies DVD provides a collection of the examples of best practices depicted in each of the lesson videos. These activities are organized according to the Three Principles:

1. Increase opportunities for comprehensible learning
2. Increase opportunities for interaction
3. Increase opportunities for critical thinking and questioning

Insert the DVD into the appropriate player. The first screen to appear is the title page, which indicates one link to the introduction by Dr. Woodson, and another link to the collection of strategies (see Figure 5).

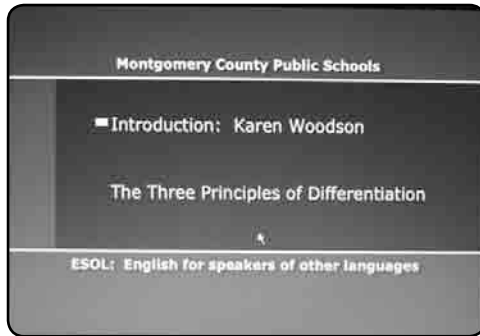


Figure 5

Find the hidden yellow button to the left of **Introduction** to review Dr. Woodson's introduction to second-language acquisition, which appears in all of the DVDs. To move to the collection of strategies, find **The Three Principles of Differentiation** link and click on the yellow button.

The next screen to appear provides links to the strategies that exemplify the Three Principles (see Figure 6). To access each link, click on the hidden yellow button to the left of each link.

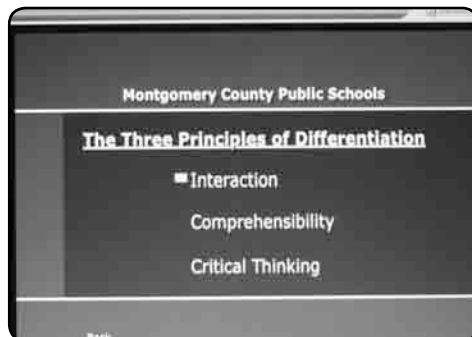


Figure 6

Each link will open to a screen that contains a variety of video examples relevant to the title of the link (see Figure 7).

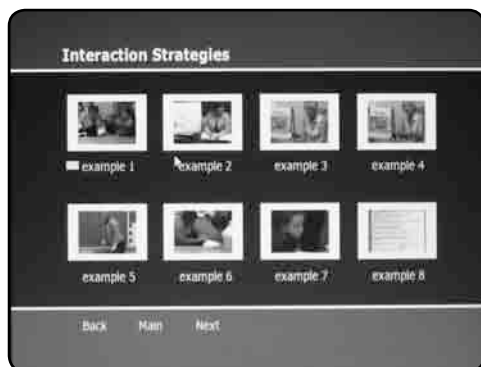


Figure 7

To open a segment, click on the hidden yellow button to the left of the text. Navigate through the remaining screens by using **Back**, **Main**, or **Next** at the bottom of each strategy screen.

The links to the Three Principles provide—

- ◆ 8 examples of strategies that support **Interaction**,
- ◆ 12 examples of strategies that support **Comprehensibility**, and
- ◆ 8 examples of strategies that support **Critical Thinking**.

Using Engaging English Language Learners in Classroom Instruction for Professional Development

Research shows that successful professional development will give teachers the opportunity to use what they learn about ELLs in their classroom. It will provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate via peer coaching; study groups; and other job-embedded, ongoing models. The following professional development activities are suggestions for using these DVDs to support teachers as they learn to engage their English language learners in content instruction.

Small Groups

1. As a grade-level team or other small group, review the section titled *Research-based Approaches to Engaging English Language Learners (ELLs) in Classroom Instruction: What the Research Says* and discuss the implications for your own instruction. What principles or strategies do you already implement? Which ones would you like to know more about?
2. View a relevant video lesson from the DVDs. On a capture sheet, note the strategies that were used and how they enhanced instruction for ELLs.
3. Discuss how the strategies in the lessons were organized to include all the Three Principles for Engaging English Language Learners. Why is it important to include strategies from all Three Principles in each and every lesson?
4. Brainstorm other favorite strategies used by members of the group. Categorize them according to the Three Principles.
5. Review the *Compilation of Strategies DVD* and choose one new strategy for the group to try, or select one of the member's favorites. Implement this strategy in daily instruction. Return after two weeks to discuss what works and what doesn't work when using this strategy. Reflect as a group on the impact the strategy is having on instruction. If the strategy appears to help student learning, ask, "How do you know?"

Teacher Pairs/Peer Coaching

Follow steps 1 through 5 above, plus—

6. Review the *Compilation of Strategies DVD* and choose one new strategy to try, or select another favorite.
7. Agree to implement this new strategy in daily instruction for several weeks. Arrange for peer observations: one member of the pair observes his/her colleague using the new strategy in actual classroom instruction.
8. Meet to share observations. Discuss what works and what doesn't work when using this strategy. If the strategy appears to be helping student learning, ask, "How do you know?"

Individual Study:

1. Begin a journal. For the first entry, make a chart with the name of those ELL students presently in your classroom. Include students presently enrolled in the ESOL program, as well as students who have exited the program in earlier years or who may speak a second language at home. Consult with the school ESOL teacher if necessary. Note their home language and the level of English language ability. In separate columns, make notes about each student's academic and social strengths and weaknesses.
2. Review the section titled Research-based Approaches to Engaging English Language Learners (ELLs) in Classroom Instruction: What the Research Says. In a journal, relate this information to your own experiences in teaching ELLs. What have you found useful in working with ELLs? What would you like to learn more about?
3. View a relevant video lesson from the DVDs. On a capture sheet, note the strategies that were used and how they enhanced instruction for ELLs.
4. In your journal, reflect on how the strategies in the lessons were organized to include all Three Principles for Engaging English Language Learners. Why is it important to include strategies from all Three Principles in each and every lesson?
5. Brainstorm other favorite strategies you use that exemplify the Three Principles and categorize them accordingly.
6. Review the Compilation of Strategies DVD and choose one new strategy to try. Implement this strategy in daily instruction for at least three weeks.
7. Maintain a log of your success in implementing the new strategy. Keep track of the following information: date/time the strategy was used, content area, what worked about using the strategy, what didn't work, and ways to improve implementation. Finally, if the strategy appears to be helping student learning, answer the question, "How do you know?"
8. To complete this activity, write response in your journal to this question: "How is the academic progress of English language learners affected by instruction?"

References

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- Reed, B., and Railsback, J. 2003. *Strategies and resources for mainstream teachers of English language learners*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

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Published by the Department of Communications
for the Office of Information and Organizational Systems