

Augustana College

Grades K-6 (0522); Grades 5-9 (0523); Grades 7-12 (0524)

Concepts addressed:

Approaches for Accommodating Various Learning Styles, Intelligences, or Exceptionalities. Process of second-language acquisition and strategies to support the learning of students for whom English is not a first language.

ELL (English Language Learners) or LEP (Limited English Proficient) are the two main acronyms describing students who do not have English as their first language. It takes three to seven years for students to become proficient in English orally; however, academic English takes four to eight years.

Strategies to help ELL students gain proficiency are best practices in learning. Start with background knowledge. What is the student able to connect with to gain meaning of words and phrases? Use manipulatives, illustrations, gestures, and kinesthetic learning opportunities. Other strategies include encouraging students to ask questions. A student's question can give the teacher insight into his/her thought process. Picture books help in presenting big concepts in a concise manner. Pictures help to support the text and give ELL students added meaning to the language.

As the ELL student progresses to content area classes the achievement gap widens. The instructional congruence model (Lee & Fradd, 2001) has been used with success. This model involves teachers instructing in both content and literacy. Key strategies involve observing all students for individual cultures and languages and making the instruction more relevant for all students. Also equal emphasis must be giving to the academic content and the acquisition of literacy.

Problems arise for both teachers and students when communication styles conflict from one culture to another. Subtle miscommunication can lead to bigger problems. Students who experience communication conflicts may withdraw from the school's society and suffer academic failure. Establishing trust and a strong learning community in one's classroom keep channels open for questions and clarification of such miscommunications.

Lee, O., & Fradd, S. H. (2001) Instructional Congruence to Promote Science Learning and Literacy Development for Linguistically Diverse Students. In D. R. Lavoie & W.M. Roth (Eds.), *Models of science teacher preparation* (pp. 109-126). AA Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.