

Classroom Assessment of Language Levels:

A Quick Formative Assessment Tool

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When a newly arrived English learner (EL) enters the classroom, time is not on the teacher's side. It is not uncommon for the EL to arrive far ahead of assessment data, such as a standardized measure of language level. Yet, the teacher is obliged to immediately provide instruction. Time is not on the student's side either. English learners need immediate and appropriate instruction. This calls for a quick, formative assessment tool for identifying language level and appropriate accommodations. The purpose of this article is to present the Classroom Assessment of Language Levels (CALL) a tool for teachers to identify an EL's language level that suggests appropriate differentiated strategies matched to language level (Boyd-Batstone, 2013).

Background

Classroom teachers at all levels, K-12, face the above challenge on a daily basis. Valdez & Callahan (2011) noted that 20% of the U.S. population over five years old was reported as speaking more than one language according to the Federal Interagency Forum (2009). Additionally, a continuing trend between the years 1970 and 2000 showed dramatic growth in the numbers of specific language groups in the U.S., specifically Spanish and Asian languages, such as Vietnamese, Khmer, and Korean. Those numbers are even higher in urban settings. What this means is that all classroom teachers across the country can expect to be responsible to teach students whose first language is other than English.

Another important point in teaching English learners is that multiple factors are involved. Language level, for instance, is not tied to grade level. Although this may sound obvious at first glance, consider the complexities for instruction. Two English learners can arrive at the same time at a fourth grade classroom. One may have had instruction in English and even lived in an English speaking country for a number of years, while the other may be a newly arrived immigrant with limited knowledge of English.

Furthermore, in the current Common Core context, state standards pose the unique challenge of being solely based upon expected results according to grade level. The authors of the Common Core State Standards (2010) developed the standards on a results basis and leave it to classroom teachers to figure out how to differentiate instruction to meet the needs of diverse populations such as ELs, struggling readers, and special needs students. Where to begin instruction and what are the appropriate strategies to apply requires a quick formative assessment.

According to Afflerbach & Clark (2011), the purposes of assessment vary according to the diverse needs of its audiences. Students need to build independence as learners, teachers need to inform their instruction, parents need to understand their child's achievement, administrators need to determine a program's effectiveness, politicians need to determine accountability for funding, and taxpayers need to know that their money is well spent. No single assessment can address all of those needs. The Classroom Assessment of Language Levels (CALL) is designed specifically for the needs of the classroom teacher. It may help inform a child of what they need to do to become a more effective student. It may help a parent understand what language level their child is evidencing. But it is primarily intended to inform instruction.

Summative assessments provide "after-the-fact summaries of learning" (Afflerbach & Clark, 2011, p. 307). They focus on products of learning, achievement of processes, and are typically conducted at the end of a unit of study. They may also involve large populations of students for generalizing results and establishing trends. In contrast, formative assessment, according to Sadler (1989), provides teachers with information about individual students, not large populations. The information provided is about the progress as a learner. In other words, teachers use formative assessment to know how to accommodate learning, revise instruction, and to shape instruction to specific needs of the learner.

The purpose of the CALL is to give classroom teachers an easy to use, formative assessment tool to quickly identify a student's language level. It also provides differentiated questioning techniques and strategies at a glance to match instruction to the student's level. The emphasis is on quick assessment for selecting appropriate instructional accommodations. (*Disclaimer: the CALL is not designed to supplant any current state, district level, or commercial assessment of English learners.*)

Design of the CALL

The CALL is a table of information on a single page that is essential for determining language level based upon language usage or student behaviors using language. It is flexible because it can be used across grade levels, K-12. It can be used in a one-to-one interview or for small group observation. It is quick because in a matter of moments a classroom teacher can observe specific language behaviors that are unique to a given level and thus make an assessment. It also provides differentiated strategies at a glance that are aligned with language level.

I organized the information into a seven-column table that included the following headings: Level, Stages, Duration, Questions for Direct Interview, Interactive Techniques for Small Group Observations, Student Behaviors, and Differentiated Strategies. The heading terminology is defined as follows:

Level. The levels are numbered 1 to 5 with five being the highest or nearest to fully fluent level.

Stages. The five corresponding stages named in the California ELD Content Standards are (1) Beginning, (2) Early Intermediate, (3) Intermediate, (4) Early Advanced, and (5) Advanced. I understand that lock-step stages are an abstraction of the reality of language development. Language is developed more in phases that overlap and even reoccur in new situations. I chose to retain the term Stages to be in alignment with the ELD Content Standards.

Duration. Using the work of Collier & Thomas (1987), I aligned the levels and stages with the duration, in months to years, one could reasonably expect a student to remain given that there were no other factors impeding language development.

Questions for Direct Interview. I created a column for interview questions because the types of questions an EL can respond to correspond to their language level. Questions are the invitation for interaction; however, the questions need to be tailored to the student's stage of language development. Specifically, students at the earliest stages of language development can only respond with a limited set of gestures and words. Asking a student at that stage to describe their thoughts at length would most likely result in a blank stare from the student. Using differentiated questions during the assessment facilitates the process giving the student a way to respond according to a particular stage of language development.

Interactive Techniques for Small Group Observations. Sometimes teachers do not have the time to sit down one-to-one with a student for an interview. I think particularly of secondary level teachers who may teach as many as 200 students a day. Although they may not be able to interview a student, they can set up small group instructional situations and observe key language usage behaviors that indicate language level. For example, a beginning EL might be able to sequence pictures that tell a story, but would not be able to retell the story events orally. This would be an indication that the EL was at level 1 instead of level 2.

Questions and interactive techniques also work hand in glove with instructional strategies. For example, if a teacher displays realia (real objects) to teach new vocabulary, the types of questions used in the instruction may change according to the level of student. A level 1 student at the beginning stage of development will not be able to answer a question about the realia unless it is framed as Yes/No, "Is this a banana?" or Either/Or, "Is this a banana or an apple?" Asking a student at that level to respond to an open-ended question, such as "What do you know about bananas?" would be a waste of time given the ability of the student to respond.

Student behaviors. This is really the heart of the assessment. Given the challenge of consolidating language descriptors into a single page, I included only essential, key descriptors of a student's language usage at a given stage of development were informed by several sources including TESOL English language proficiency standards (2007), WIDA Standards (2007), and CELDT (2009). The individual descriptors of student behaviors have a two-fold benefit. They not only help identify a student's language level and stage of development, but they equip the teacher with necessary words to readily report and justify to colleagues what level of language and why use specific accommodations for a given student.

Differentiated Strategies. The strategies were drawn from a variety of sources with differentiating instruction for English learners (Xu, 2010; Boyd-Batstone, 2006 & 2009; Cummins, 2000 & 2001; Fitzgerald & Noblit, 2000; and Krashen & Terrell, 1984). The intention is to provide teachers with instructional strategies appropriate to each level. Notice that the initial strategies are not relegated to the beginning and early intermediate stages. They continue to be useful at all levels, but may be used with more complex vocabulary development, reading texts, and projects involving writing.

Classroom Assessment of Language Levels (CALL)

Level	Stages	Duration	Questions for Direct Interview	Interactive Techniques for Small Group Observations	Student Behaviors	Differentiated Strategies
1	Beginning	6 mos	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Yes/No questions: "Is this an apple?" •Fill in the blank (cloze) "This fruit is an ____." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Listing items •Categorizing & sequencing pictures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Can be silent •Yes/No responses •Can name objects •1-2 word responses •Shows comprehension by following directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Simple speech, caretaker speech •Use realia, visuals, meaningful gestures (TPR) •Do not force speech •Read to student
2	Early Intermediate	3 mos-1 yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Who, when, what, where questions: "Who is that?" "When did this happen?" •Open ended questions: "What were you thinking?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Name attributes and essential features. •Retell events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Speaks simple sentences •Retell story events •Reads basic vocabulary, simple sentences •Frequent grammatical errors in speech 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use all of the above •Use predictable books •Use books with vivid illustrations •Develop storyboard frames •Interactive journals •Chart stories •Direct instruction of vocabulary
3	Intermediate	2-3 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Descriptive details •How, why questions: "How did she do that?" "Why did she do that?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Encourage inquiry •Explanations in writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Retells using expanded vocabulary •Explains main ideas/details •Can summarize •Discovers new vocabulary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All of the above •Tap experiences •Teach study skills •Use cognates •Explore word origins •Writing for a purpose •Use/create media
4	Early Advanced	3-4 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Analysis & synthesis questions: "What is the difference...?" "How are they the same...?" "What is the central theme here?" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Problem solving approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Appears to be orally fluent •Emergent academic vocabulary and language usage •Needs to attain grade level reading/writing in academic areas •Analyzes/Compares/Contrasts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Shift focus from oral to written language development •Expand study/learning skills •Formal grammar instruction •SDAIE strategies
5	Advanced	>3 yrs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Pose all questions •Encourage student to pose questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Take leadership in collaborative groups •Synthesize what others are saying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Comprehends content material •Generates discussions •Socially comfortable •Reads/Writes at grade level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Expand academic vocabulary •Refine writing skills •Refine research/ study skills •Complex projects

Boyd-Batstone (2013) *Helping English language learners meet the common core*. Eye on Education. www.eyoneducation.com

How to use the CALL

There are basically three ways to use the CALL, direct interaction, and indirect observation of interactions with others, and collecting and analyzing writing samples.

Direct interaction

Direct interaction means simply sitting down one-to-one with the student and initiating a conversation using a visual to provide context.

Required materials: Along with the CALL, paper and pencil to note your observations, I recommend using a picture book with younger students at the elementary level. With secondary level students, use a photograph or picture of painting. The actual content of the conversation is not a primary concern with this assessment. What is necessary is something visual to provide a context for conversation.

1. If you suspect that the student is at the beginning stages of language development, show a picture and ask Yes/No and Either/Or questions about the picture. For example, ask the following questions of picture of an outdoor scene: “Is this a tree?” “Is this a mountain?” “Is this a rock or a lake?” If they don’t respond with yes/no or a single word answer, ask them to point to something in the picture, “Point to the tree.” If the responses are no more than yes/no or there is no understanding demonstrated, the assessment is done. The student is at level 1 the beginning stage.
2. If you think the student will say more responses, move to open-ended questions if the student can respond using full sentences. For example, “What do you see?” “What can you name in the picture?” “What is happening?” Simple phrases with many grammatical errors indicate the student is at level 2 early intermediate stages.
3. Ask for more details, “Can you describe the tree?” The more complex the questions being asked the higher the corresponding language level of the student. If the student can describe the object in detail with complete sentences, continue with early advance level questioning.
4. Stop if the student cannot answer or does not understand the question.
5. If you suspect that the student is at early advanced or advanced levels ask for both oral and written responses. Include questions such as, “What kind of tree is that?” “How do you know?” (See directions for collecting and analyzing writing samples below.)
6. Note the language level and stage of language development. Write down appropriate descriptors of the student’s language behaviors to justify your assessment.

7. If you are not sure if the student is at, for example, the early intermediate or intermediate stage, it is better for the student to be assessed at the earlier stage. The reason for this is that the assessment would only identify the student for more help or specific accommodations. As a formative assessment, this is only to inform instruction, not to grade performance.

Indirect observation of interactions with others

Indirect observation would take place in a small group interaction. Simply observe and note the focus student employing various language behaviors. One benefit of indirect observation is that the teacher can interact with multiple students at one sitting and note the language level of each one. The key is for the teacher to actively participate by asking questions. Passive observation may lead to some students remaining silent and not exhibiting any of the described language behaviors. Follow the same steps above for the direct interaction, but allow students to talk among them selves.

Another benefit of indirect observations of interactions with others would be if you suspect that the students are more advanced. A level 3, intermediate stage, student would tell a narrative with simple sentences and grammatical errors. A level 4, early advanced student, would convey narratives with few errors, but ask for the occasional key word to complete a sentence. For example, early advanced students commonly ask, "How do you say.....?" as they speak fluently about a subject. Conversely a level 5, advanced student may exhibit behaviors such as laughing at jokes and telling narratives with complex sentences. Therefore, you would assessment them as very comfortable in social settings, and therefore level 5, advanced.

An identifying point between early advanced and advanced language development is the use of humor. Consider the times that you have been in an unfamiliar social setting and someone tells a joke that every laughed at except you. It takes a complex knowledge set to understand a joke. They can be embedded in layers of popular culture, politics, history or current events.

Collecting and analyzing writing samples.

Writing samples may be collected from higher-level students and used for assessment purposes. Collecting a brief writing sample can save the teacher a tremendous amount of time because it can be administered to the entire class all at once. What's important here is that the writing sample is only one piece of evidence. A single sample of a student's writing can only support a more comprehensive assessment.

1. Begin by asking the students to write about themselves. You may suggest topics to include such as favorite past times, hobbies, games, books, people, places and so forth.
2. Make the writing brief. Set a timer for 3-5 minutes. All the teacher would need would be a few sentences from each student.
3. If the student is unable to write anything in English or only writes random letters, the assessment would be level 1, beginning stage.

4. If the student writes a single word or two or incomplete sentences with multiple spelling and grammatical errors, the assessment would be level 2 early intermediate. Often times, level 2 students will over-use high frequency words to make multiple sentences. For example, “I like games. I like food. I like bikes. I like... I like...” The words may be spelled correctly, but it is essentially a list inserted into a pattern of high frequency words.
5. If the writing uses multiple, complete sentences with spelling and grammatical errors, the assessment would be level 3, early intermediate. Some students are fluent writers with no concern for punctuation and spelling at this stage. Others, attend more to spelling and punctuation, but write very little. The first group is more concerned with getting the message out; the second cares more about the presentation and accuracy.
6. If the writing sample is a complete paragraph with few errors it could be assessed as either level 4 early advanced or level 5 advanced. When in doubt, I recommend that the assessor go with the lower level because it simply identifies the student for more accommodations.
7. The telling difference between a level 4 and level 5 is the use of language. Are there complex sentences and interesting word usages? Does the writer use transitional phrases? Advanced stage students can easily make spelling and grammatical errors with a raw writing sample. What is often surprising for new teachers is that higher-level English learners’ spelling and grammar usage tends to be highly conventional because they had to really attend to it. Conversely, native English speakers speak and write using constructions that feel right and consequently may make more errors.

Differentiating Strategies for Instruction

The fundamental purpose of formative assessment is to inform instruction. The practice of accommodating instruction to student needs gives purpose to the assessment. Stated in negative terms, there is no need to bother with any assessment if the way we teach remains unchanged. Too often, classroom teachers conduct assessments solely to report data for administrative compliance. There may be little impact on instruction if assessment begins and ends with filling out a report. Conversely, when improving instruction is the impetus, assessment can be a useful tool to inform the selection of differentiated strategies to meet students’ needs. This following section will discuss the differentiated strategies included in the CALL.

Level 1, Beginning Stage

Imagine stepping off an airplane in a foreign country where you do not speak the language. In order to communicate, you respond to directions accompanied by meaningful signs and gestures. An attendant points the direction you are to walk to get your baggage and you see a picture of luggage with an arrow pointing in the same direction. You nod “yes” with your head to indicate you understand. If you don’t

understand, you wag your head “no” to ask for help, at which point, the attendant may take out a map of the concourse to show you what you need to do.

A level 1 student, at the beginning stages of language development, exhibits the same kinds of linguistic behaviors as we would in a foreign environment. The following strategies are highly appropriate for students at this level:

1. Simple speech, caretaker speech: Speak slowly in simple sentences. Avoid rapid and lengthy monologues that will tend to lose the attention of the student.
2. Use realia, visuals: As much as possible, bring in realia (real objects) to make a point. Real objects tap into all the senses, increase comprehension, and foster retention. Realia combined with pictures and signs makes for very meaningful interactions. Given the unlimited internet access to images makes this strategy much easier than ever before.
3. Meaningful gestures: James Asher, et al (1974) developed Total Physical Response (TPR), a combination of actions and commands, to address patients of brain trauma who had lost the function of connecting names and labels for actions and things. He then expanded the concept to language development in general with videos of an instructor holding hands with his students and leaping together as they learned the word *kobe* (in Japanese which is JUMP in English).
4. Do not force speech: Students at this stage are actively listening and trying to learn the language. Consider that the beginner can only say a couple of words or phrases. It is not out of stubbornness that the student remains silent. Nevertheless, uninformed educators will demand that students, “Speak English!” even when it is not possible. This only instills fear and confusion on the part of the student. In addition, I have observed teachers mindlessly raise their voices to English learners think that they would be understood by simply cranking up the volume. Needless to say, this has the effect of terrifying students who uncomprehendingly think they are being yelled at for an unknown reason.
5. Read to the student: Use plenty of picture books with vivid illustrations. Take time to read to and with students. Use the accompanying questioning strategies to encourage interaction. Ask students to sequence pictures from a story. List the characters, set objects, and descriptive words used in a story. Group like characters in categories developed by the students. Invite parents to read with students and discuss their books. If the parent is not literate, teach them to listen and ask questions like, “What does this word mean?” “Who is that character?” “What is your favorite part?”

Level 2, Early Intermediate Stage

The application of appropriate instructional strategies is a more efficient way to teach. This is particularly evident as students move from the beginning stage to the early

intermediate stage. As a classroom teacher, I always knew the moment that the students would cross over into early intermediate stages. It was when they began to be tattle tales. Rather than a clipped collection of disjointed words, they would begin to tell the story of how they were wronged on the playground. This retelling of narrative indicated that they were ready to add some new strategies. But, all of the previous strategies would still remain in the instruction.

In terms of questioning, there is a big leap here. The student can now respond to open-ended questions with narrative response. Much of the following strategies are formed around the acquisition of this ability to tell a narrative in English.

1. Use all previous strategies: Continue to use the above strategies. Student will still need simple speech, realia, visuals, meaningful gestures, TPR, being read to.
2. Use predictable books: Pattern books with predictable narratives are very helpful in developing both oral language and initial reading skills. The repetition fosters fluency providing useful phrases to incorporate in every day speech. This is also an indirect way to introduce specific grammatical structures of the language.
3. Use books with vivid illustrations: The more visually engaging the book, at this level, the more meaningful the reading experience for the student.
4. Develop storyboard frames: A storyboard frame is a simple picture grid of the narrative of a story. Sometimes it may include a sentence in each box describing the action in the picture. Additionally, some characters may reflect dialog with a cartoon bubble to show speech. This is extremely helpful for a student to visualize the path of the story. Students can make their own storyboards as a group project. They can also cut them into individual pictures and practice sequencing the story. Consider also rearranging the storyboard pictures to create alternative endings.
5. Interactive journals: Interactive journals have multiple benefits for English learners. They function as a non-threatening way to develop print literacy because their primary focus is communication in a written dialog. Conventions of spelling, grammar and punctuation are important, but of secondary consideration with interactive journals. Essentially, students are prompted to write and draw in their journals about topics of their choice or selected topics related to a unit of instruction. Adults and/or peers respond in writing to the journal entries. Students are asked to spell the best they can and to circle words they are unsure of in order to flag words for instruction. The respondent is encouraged to write about the topic initiated in the journal and to use many of the same words in a conventional form to demonstrate how to correctly spell and use the circled words. There are many formats for journals such as double entry that facilitate note taking and response to literature or other subject areas. What helps journal writing be an effective tool is the

interaction between the journal writer and other respondents on a regular basis.

6. Chart stories: For students at early stages of language development it may be very difficult to compose a complete story in writing. A small group of students can collaborate with the help of a teacher or more experienced peer to write a story together. The teacher acts as the scribe for the group in order to model conventions of spelling, grammar and punctuation. The teacher can also use the opportunity to expand students' vocabulary by introducing other ways to say common words. For example, if students are trying to describe a story character's feelings and all they come up with "happy", the teacher can take a moment to introduce other synonyms, "delighted", "glad", "joyful", "content".
7. Direct instruction of vocabulary: It might seem obvious that vocabulary would need to be instructed directly at this level of language development. I included direct instruction of vocabulary to emphasize the point that lesson plans should include specific key vocabulary that should be taught before getting into the body of the instruction. Realia, visuals, and meaningful gestures cannot be over used when it comes to vocabulary development prior to instruction.

Level 3, Intermediate Stage

English learners tend to linger longer at the intermediate stages of language development. For this reason, it was divided into early intermediate and intermediate. The essential difference is the use of expanded vocabulary and increased fluency with print literacy.

1. All of the above: Once again all of the previous strategies are appropriate and applicable at this level. These additional strategies are targeted toward expanding vocabulary and teaching skills to develop language for one's self.
2. Tap prior experiences: Because students at this level can fluently retell narratives about their lives, it is highly appropriate to invite students to share their own experiences and perceptions. Aesthetic questions (Cox & Many, 1992) can probe for details about events in their lives and how they relate to stories they are reading. Consider using the following questions when discussing literature: "What were you thinking?", "What did you picture in your mind as you were reading?", "Does this remind you of an experience in your life? Tell us about it."
3. Teach study skills: Students at this level are increasingly becoming independent learners; therefore, they need to learn efficient ways to organize their learning and to study on their own. This involves showing how to use a double-entry journal to take notes, citing important sections on one side of the page and reflecting on its meaning on the opposite side of page. Additionally, students need to learn how to find the meaning of new words they encounter

on their own. Fortunately, there is a wealth of media sources to help with this (see below).

4. **Use cognates:** Words that share the same linguistic derivation, such as those with Latin, Greek, or Indo-European roots, are cognates. They are more prevalent in the content areas of instruction such as Math, Science, or the Arts. Strategically, populating instruction with cognates form a linguistic bridge between first and second languages. They build on what students already know from their first language to expand their use of the second language. Frequent use of cognates also has the indirect benefit of increasing comprehension of content instruction.
5. **Explore word origins:** Word study of origins, or etymologies, is highly appropriate at this level. Exploring the origins of words fosters an understanding of the language and helps students recognize word meanings in other words.
6. **Writing for a purpose:** Yancy (2009) argued that with the multiple venues for written expression provided by internet-based networks, students should be encouraged to write for a wide range of purposes including self-expression, articulating one's perspective, analyzing, critical thinking, reporting information about actual events, and so forth.
7. **Use and create media:** Students should be encouraged to not simply be passive users of media and networks, but to create their own. As a teacher, I like to use a free site called WikiSpaces.com. The benefit is that it is a closed website only open to those invited by the designated wiki-manager (the teacher). Students can upload their writing, digital photographs, even video. This requires a full range of literacy skills from print literacy to information technology.

Level 4, Early Advanced Stage

Students at this level can trick a teacher into thinking they are fully proficient in the language. They appear to be quite fluent when they speak. This is often true when the student is using oral language exclusively or is addressing a familiar topic. Two telltale signs of an early advanced student are the following: Their writing may not apply structures that are unique to English such as when to use double consonants or a floating -s; another sign is evident the moment they move to an unfamiliar topic, they begin to ask, "How do you say...?" These signs indicate that the early advance student needs to concentrate on writing conventionally and to expand their vocabulary knowledge to new subject areas. Here are some strategies to address the needs of early advanced student.

1. **Shift the focus from oral to written language development:** Early advanced students already know how to pronounce words. Where they need help is in producing conventional forms of writing. They would greatly benefit from instruction in organizing and editing their own writing.

2. Expand study/learning skills: At this point, the student will greatly benefit from learning how to learn. For example, a teacher cannot directly teach the thousands of words a literate adult needs to know to function at a high level in our complex society. The student needs to learn how to use reference tools, online resources, and organizational skills to become an independent learner.
3. Formal grammar instruction: It is much appropriated to teach how the English language is structured at this point. Direct instruction of rules for grammar can make sense to a student at this level. Knowing formal grammar structures and rules will help the student at early advanced stages to generalize specific examples to others to become a more independent learner of the language.
4. SDAIE strategies: Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE) is a collection of strategies developed to teach content area subjects such as History, Math, Science, the Arts, and so forth. SDAIE strategies emphasize direct instruction of key vocabulary, socially interactive instruction, writing and paraphrasing ideas, use of graphic organizers, primary language support as needed, and instruction organized around overarching themes.

Level 5, Advanced Stage

A student at this stage needs to continue to expand horizons with use of the language as a combination of academic vocabulary instruction with specific skills development in the areas of writing, research, and study. Students at this stage will benefit from being group leaders in complex projects such as editor of a classroom newsletter, director of video production, or a leader of a discussion group. Teaching a student discourse styles for academic writing, narrative style, poetry forms will be appropriate.

1. Expand academic vocabulary: Encourage students to expand their own vocabulary with internet-based games such as Games with a Purpose (gwp.com) an interactive site that challenges its users to expand vocabulary in a competitive setting. Continue to include specific direct instruction of academic vocabulary with each content area lesson.
2. Refine writing skills: The challenge for the teacher at this level is to continue to push the students to not only write conventionally, but to write with a voice that considers an audience and that uses a wider range of vocabulary.
3. Refine research/ study skills: Building on the previous strategies at other levels, the operative word here is “refine”. Demonstrate and require citation protocols for research projects.
4. Complex projects: Having a school newspaper, as a collaborative project, requires a range of literacy skills to be employed by an advanced student. Consider the various genres of writing, design skills, organizational skills that are required. There are other types of projects too such as organizing a science symposium around a specific topic, producing a video festival of

reproductions of literary works, or organizing an internet blog about current events as they relate to history. The part of this strategy that is unique to English learning is that the teacher, for example, what is a “layout” for a newspaper, explicitly teaches the language skills needed. That term is unique to the project.

Conclusion

The CALL was developed for the classroom teacher as a ready-to-use formative assessment tool of English learner’s language development. The focus is on what to teach a student at a given level. As Afflerbach & Clark (2011) stated so aptly, “Formative assessment, in the hands of talented teachers, provides information that can help shape diverse students’ learning and achievement” (p. 307). This tool is not simply a way to identify language level; it is designed to accommodate learning and achievement for English learners. For an in depth explanation of the CALL and how the differentiated strategies apply to specific Common Core Standards, please see Boyd-Batstone (2013), *Helping English Language Learners meet the Common Core*.

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