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**Differentiating Instruction and Assessments for EL Students**

As mandated by the Office of Civil Rights and ISBE, English Language Learners are entitled to instructional and assessment accommodations.  The following EL descriptors and inclusion strategies can be implemented to allow students to demonstrate their understanding of content while developing their English language proficiency.

**Instructional Accommodations for ALL Levels and Content Areas:**

* Allow longer wait time for EL students to respond.
* State and write content and language objectives.
* Show a model of a completed assignment.
* Use graphic organizers
* If available, allow EL students to use word - to -word dictionaries
* Provide fill-in-the-blank study guides.
* Use visuals and realia (i.e., real items) to support language development
* Repeat and rephrase often
* Allow errors for verb tenses and other incorrect grammar (with the exception of writing content)
* Post word walls including visuals for key vocabulary.
* Align instruction to both content and language objectives
* Provide frequent opportunities for EL students to speak. Use small groups, pairs, cooperative groups.

**Assessment Accommodations for ALL Levels and Content Areas:**

* Avoid double negatives and other tricky language constructs.
* Avoid highly metaphorical speech, idioms, and unnecessary analogies.
* Test only key concepts.
* Each section of a test should be on one page.
* Provide word banks.
* Increase time allowed for assessment up to 1.5 times expected.
* Explicitly invite ELs to retake/correct tests.
* Use a highlighter or marker to identify key parts of directions.
* Avoid multiple-step directions.
* Use simplified sentences with target academic vocabulary in test questions.
* Include visuals with key vocabulary when eliciting short answer responses

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| **Level One** | **Instructional Accommodations**  **For ALL Subjects**   * Reframe questions to yes/no and either/or * Accept one- and two-word answers * Use visuals and realia (i.e., real items) to support language development * Writtenassessments must be restricted to the student’s current English vocabulary * Allow ELs to show what they know in multiple ways (e.g., through oral responses, drawing, labeling, acting out answers) | **Assessment Accommodations**  **For ALL Subjects**   * Format the assessment to be less visually busy. * Reframe questions to yes/no and either/or * Accept one- and two-word answers. * Use multiple-choice or matching instead of short answer or essay. * Divide matching exercises into several sections. * Ask students to label diagrams instead of explaining concepts in writing. * Provide simple sentence frames to help students write answers to questions. * Use matching with pictures for vocabulary. * Use fill-in-the-blank instead of short answer or essays. * Reduce volume of material on quiz/test * Reduce the number of multiple-choice answer options to two. * Avoid “none of the above” and “all of the above.” * Simplify language to a few words per sentence. * Provide manipulatives to support problem-solving in Math. |
| **Level Two** | **Instructional Accommodations**  **(Refer to p. 1 for accommodations needed for ALL levels and ALL content areas.)**  **Math**   * Use visuals and simple words for word problems. * Use math manipulatives: counters, 3-D polyhedrons, rulers, number lines, multiplication charts, fraction circles, flash cards etc. * Work in partners or small groups. * Model new concept many times. * For written math responses, allow students to show just computations.  Allow them to produce written explanation at their vocabulary level. | **Assessment Accommodations**  **(Refer to p. 1 for accommodations needed for ALL levels and ALL content areas.)**  **Math**   * Use visuals to accompany problems. * Eliminate or simplify the language of word problems. * Reduce the quantity of word problems. * When appropriate (when it doesn’t undermine assessment of the target skill), use manipulatives, number lines, multiplication charts, fraction circles, etc. * Avoid “none of the above,” “all of the above,” and multiple correct answers for multiple-choice questions. * Allow students to use simple words/phrases to explain problem-solving process. |
| **Level Three** | **Instructional Accommodations**  **(Refer to p. 1 for accommodations needed for ALL levels and ALL content areas.)**  **Math**   * Rewrite or re-phrase story problems in less complex English. * Provide manipulatives, number lines, and grids, as needed. * Break math problems or tasks into chunks. * Draw/model on the board, as you explain the tasks. | **Assessment Accommodations**  **(Refer to p. 1 for accommodations needed for ALL levels and ALL content areas.)**  **Math**   * Use visuals to accompany problems. * Eliminate or simplify the language of word problems. * Reduce the quantity of word problems. * When appropriate (when it doesn’t undermine assessment of the target skill), use manipulatives, number lines, multiplication charts, fraction circles, etc. * Avoid “none of the above,” “all of the above,” and multiple correct answers for multiple-choice questions. |
| **Level Four** | **Instructional Accommodations**  **(Refer to p. 1 for accommodations needed for ALL levels and ALL content areas.)**  **Math**   * Use simple language in math word problems. * Incorporate a math journal to process what they’ve learned and any questions they may have. * Allow bilingual dictionaries. | **Assessment Accommodations**  **(Refer to p. 1 for accommodations needed for ALL levels and ALL content areas.)**  **Math**   * Use visuals to accompany problems. * Assess only targeted skills (do not deduct credit for non-standard language usage). * Use simple language in math word problems. |
| **Level Five** | **Instructional Accommodations for All Content Areas**   * Pre-teach vocabulary and provide multiple activities to process it * Highlight key vocabulary * Provide hands-on activities and explanations * Provide study guides and/ or outlines and word banks * Accompany oral directions with written directions or vice versa * Giving extra time to complete tasks/exams * Provide a model of completed task * Make simplified language-notes available. | **Assessment Accommodations**  **(Refer to p. 1 for accommodations needed for ALL levels and ALL content areas.)**   * Use visuals to accompany text or Math problems. * Only assess targeted skills. |

References:

Haynes, J. (2007). *Getting Started with English Language Learners: How Educators Can Meet the Challenge*. Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Haynes, J. & Zacarian, D. (2010). *Teaching English Language Learners: Across the Content Areas*. Virginia: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.