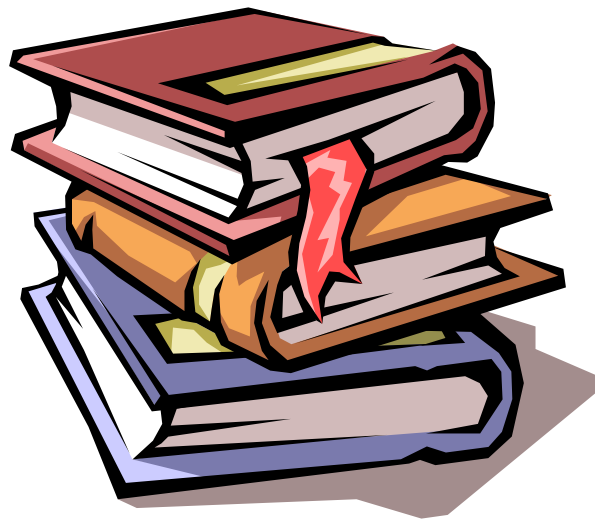


English: **Strategies for Teaching** **Limited English Proficient (LEP)** **Students**

**A Supplemental Resource Guide to the
K-12 English Standards of Learning
Enhanced Scope and Sequence**



Virginia Department of Education

Division of Instruction

January 2006

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P.O. Box 2120
Richmond, Virginia 23218-2120
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I. Purpose

This document serves as a supplement to the K-12 English Standards of Learning Enhanced Scope and Sequence, which helps teachers align their classroom instruction with the revised English Standards of Learning that were adopted by the Virginia Board of Education in November 2002. The purpose of this document is to provide language arts and content teachers with a brief overview of second language acquisition theory and suggest effective strategies for differentiating instruction for limited English proficient (LEP) students. Differentiated instruction is particularly effective in helping LEP students acquire English and meet academic achievement standards in content classes as it recognizes students' varying background knowledge and experiences, language, culture, learning styles, and readiness.

Just as the school-aged LEP population throughout the United States has experienced significant growth over the past decades, so has the school-aged LEP population in some areas of Virginia. Since 1992 the number of LEP students in Virginia public schools has more than tripled, resulting in LEP students residing in all eight regions of the state, speaking over 118 different languages, and representing over 72 countries.

In addition to an increased number of LEP students, school divisions have also responded to the federal requirements under the reauthorization of Public Law 107-110, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB). One of the performance goals of NCLB requires LEP students to become proficient in English while reaching high academic achievement standards in reading/language arts and mathematics. NCLB also requires that LEP students participate in annual academic assessments in reading/language arts and mathematics, which are used to determine adequate yearly progress for schools, school divisions, and the state [Public Law 107-110, Sec. 1111(b)(3)(A)].

The rapid growth of the LEP student population in Virginia coupled with the increased federal accountability requirements under NCLB have resulted in an increased need for language arts and content teachers to understand the unique needs of LEP students in their classes. The strategies described in this document will provide these teachers with effective practices for incorporating their particular content Standards of Learning and the English Language Proficiency (ELP) Standards of Learning in daily instruction. The ELP Standards of Learning can be accessed through the Virginia Department of Education Web site at the following link: www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Superintendent/Sols/EnglishSOL02.html. Incorporation of these strategies will increase the likelihood of LEP student success in content classrooms.

II. Second Language Acquisition Research

According to second language researchers, acquiring a second language is a difficult and complex process (Collier, 1995; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). In the early stages of learning a second language, learners pass through developmental stages similar to those when learning a first language. Early on, LEP students may err in their use of grammar or vocabulary, just as first language learners do (Collier, 1995; Krashen & Terrell, 1983). Although the process of second language acquisition varies with each student, depending on various factors, it is important to acknowledge that all LEP students go through general developmental stages (Collier, 1995; Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

With increased exposure to the English language, LEP students progress from acquiring social language to the more complex academic language (Collier, 1995). Social language is considered conversational, contextualized language and can be developed within two to three years. Academic language is defined as the combination of cognitive skills and content knowledge necessary for successful academic performance at secondary and university levels (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Collier (1995) indicates that it can take a minimum of seven to ten years to achieve academic proficiency if all of the schooling takes place in the second language.

The chart below summarizes general behaviors of LEP students at each stage of language acquisition according to Krashen (1982).

| Stage of Language Acquisition | General Behaviors of LEP Students |
|--|---|
| Silent/Receptive Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 hours to 6 months • 500 receptive words | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • point to objects, act, nod, or use gestures • say yes or no • speak hesitantly |
| Early Production Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 months to 1 year • 1000 receptive/active words | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • produce one- or two-word phrases • use short repetitive language • focus on key words and context clues |
| Speech Emergence Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 years • 3000 active words | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • engage in basic dialogue • respond using simple sentences |
| Intermediate Fluency Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-3 years • 6000 active words | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use complex sentences • state opinions and original thoughts • ask questions |
| Advanced Fluency Stage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-7 years (Krashen, 1982) • 7-10 years (Collier, 1995) • content-area vocabulary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • converse fluently • understand grade-level classroom activities • argue and defend academic points • read grade-level textbooks • write organized and fluent essays |

Krashen's (1982) five stages of language acquisition described above are a general framework for understanding how LEP students progress; however, language

learning is an on-going, fluid process that differs for every student. Students may move back and forth between stages, depending on the academic demands of a lesson and the amount of participation required. For example, a LEP student may be functioning at the intermediate fluency stage when performing routine tasks or accessing previously learned skills. However, when the academic content is new and the student lacks adequate background knowledge or experiences, the student may regress to the prior stage (early production).

For language acquisition to occur, students must (1) receive understandable and meaningful messages that are a little beyond their comprehension level; and (2) learn in an environment where there is little or no anxiety (Collier, 1995; Krashen, 1981, 1982; Vygotsky, 1978). Recognizing these two principles can assist teachers in creating a natural language learning environment in their classrooms.

Outlined below are five key elements of an effective language learning environment. Use of these strategies can assist all students in accessing the content material.

- 1) Comprehensible input—Teachers can make their language more comprehensible by modifying their speech by avoiding colloquialisms and speaking clearly, adjusting teaching materials, adding redundancy and context, and scaffolding information within lessons.
- 2) Reduced anxiety level—A student’s emotions play a pivotal role in assisting or interfering with learning a second language. Teachers can assist students by creating a comfortable environment that encourages participation and risk-taking without fear of feeling embarrassed or foolish (Collier, 1995; Krashen, 1981; Krashen & Terrell, 1983).
- 3) Contextual clues—Visual support makes language more comprehensible. For example, a grammar lesson using manipulatives may be more understandable than an explanation of the grammar rule. Even social language is more comprehensible when context is added. For example, understanding a face-to-face conversation in which facial expressions and gestures are used is easier than understanding a telephone conversation when context clues are non-existent (Cummins, 1981).
- 4) Verbal interaction—Students need opportunities to work together to solve problems and use English for meaningful purposes. They need to give and receive information and complete authentic tasks.
- 5) Active participation—Lessons that encourage active involvement motivate LEP students, engage them in the learning process, and help them remember content more easily.

Section VI of this document provides a more detailed description of effective teaching strategies specific to differentiating instruction of language arts and content areas for LEP students.

Types of Language Proficiency

Another theory about language acquisition that can help teachers understand the challenges of LEP students is the distinction between social and academic language proficiency. Jim Cummins (1981) suggests that there are two types of language proficiency:

- 1) Basic interpersonal communications skills (BICS)
- 2) Cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP)

According to Cummins, LEP students generally develop conversational fluency (BICS) within two years of studying a second language whereas developing fluency in more technical, grade-appropriate academic language (CALP) can take from five to seven years depending on the student's age and level of native language literacy. Failure to understand the distinction between these two types of language proficiency can lead to false assumptions about a student's language ability (Cummins, 1984). For example, LEP students may be exited prematurely from direct English instructional programs because they appear fluent in conversational English; however, they may lack the necessary academic language and reading and writing skills to succeed in mainstream content classes. Several more years of direct English instruction may be required before the students are fluent in all four skill areas (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) necessary for academic success.

Factors that Influence Learning a Second Language

The pace at which a LEP student moves through the five stages of language acquisition and develops conversational and academic fluency in English depends on a number of influencing factors.

1. Age of student – Age affects second language learning in a number of ways.
 - Many older language learners enter the second language classroom with prior knowledge and skills in a first language that can transfer to a second language. For example, students do not have to learn concepts such as the scientific method, skimming and scanning for information, and taking notes if they already possess these skills in another language. However, older language learners need to learn the English vocabulary to discuss and study the concepts they are learning in a second language (Cummins, 1981).
 - Younger students do not have as much prior knowledge and skill. If they have not learned a concept in their native language, it may take them

longer to learn the new academic content than native speakers. These students are learning a new concept and the accompanying English vocabulary simultaneously.

- Older language learners are often more inhibited to speak in front of peers because they feel vulnerable about taking risks and making mistakes.
- Class discussions and the reading level of textbooks are more academically demanding for the LEP student at the secondary level than at the elementary level. As a result, it may take older language learners longer to achieve on grade level in content-area classes.
- Younger students generally achieve native-like pronunciation more easily than older language learners.

2. Limited or interrupted schooling and literacy in a first language

Literacy in a first language can positively influence the process of learning a second language. LEP students who are literate in another language have more background knowledge and skills to draw on to support them in learning a second language. However, this is not the case for all LEP students. Some may enter U.S. schools with limited and/or interrupted schooling. Some may come from rural communities where literacy and schooling were not emphasized, while others may come from countries where political turmoil prevented them from attending school regularly. Some may have had no prior school experiences.

These students face the additional challenge of learning appropriate school behaviors and expectations at the same time they are learning English and content-area concepts. Recent preliminary research indicates that students with such backgrounds and no first language support may take from seven to ten years to achieve academic parity with their peers (Thomas & Collier, 2002).

Teachers can assist these students by explicitly modeling appropriate school behaviors such as: 1) raising their hand before speaking; 2) organizing a notebook; 3) working in collaborative groups; 4) taking notes and paying attention; and 5) reacting appropriately during a fire drill. Teachers can also assist these students by assessing their background knowledge before a unit of study to identify gaps and create experiences to build background knowledge that may be missing. See Section VI: Strategies for Teaching LEP Students.

3. Family and home circumstances that bring students to the United States

The circumstances that bring LEP students and their families to the U.S. vary greatly. Some students come from war-torn countries or refugee camps, while others follow their families to seek employment, join family members, or

obtain a better education. The circumstances that surround a family's decision to move can greatly affect the emotional and psychological well-being of LEP students, thereby affecting their motivation and academic achievement.

Sound/Letter Correspondence in English

Another consideration in understanding the difference between acquiring speaking/listening skills and reading/writing skills is the deep orthographic system of English. While some languages have a consistent sound/letter correspondence in their written forms, English has an inconsistent sound/letter correspondence. For example, note how the regular past tense marker /ed/ changes pronunciation in the following words: *looked, planned, painted*. Consider the sound of /ough/ in these words: *cough, enough, though, through*. LEP learners may have difficulty making the connection between the aural form and the written form of the same words. For example, students may be able to participate in class discussions and in oral lesson reviews using new vocabulary. However, if they do not attend to the written form of new vocabulary in classroom activities, they may not be prepared to decode and understand the word in written form. Several repetitions may be necessary for LEP students to acquire new vocabulary for tests and assessments. With daily activities that integrate reading and writing, LEP students can be exposed to all forms of key vocabulary in language arts and content-area classrooms.

III. Misconceptions about Language Learners

Following are some common misconceptions about second language learners. Understanding the process of learning a second language can help avoid making these faulty assumptions.

- 1) A LEP student who appears to speak English well is a fluent speaker.

A LEP student who can converse comfortably in English (i.e., social language) is not necessarily fully fluent in English. Oral language skills often precede reading and writing skills. Gaining fluency takes time and exposure to the language in many different contexts.

- 2) A LEP student who appears to speak English well is able to read and write at the same level.

A LEP student may converse comfortably in English, but not be able to read and write at a similar level. Research suggests that it can take up to five years of English language instruction before a LEP student will be able to read and write proficiently in English (i.e., academic language). Research also indicates that LEP students who have little or no prior education and who may be illiterate in their first language may take seven to ten years to achieve grade-level proficiency (Thomas & Collier, 2002). Achieving academic fluency is a long, gradual process that is strengthened with effective instructional strategies (Cummins, 1979; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).

- 3) A LEP student who is silent in class does not understand anything.

A LEP student who does not participate in class discussions is still acquiring an understanding of the English language and its grammatical structures. During this “silent period,” LEP students are attending to and internalizing the vocabulary and common patterns and structure of the English language.

Most LEP students bring a wealth of content knowledge and life experiences, as well as reading, writing, and thinking skills to the classroom that transfer from their native language to English (Cummins, 1981). LEP students may know the answer to a question because they have studied the concept in their native language; however, they may not have sufficient skills in the English language to produce an answer that can be understood by others. Typically listening comprehension precedes speaking, reading, and writing fluency (Krashen, 1983).

- 4) A LEP student who reads aloud well understands everything.

A LEP student who can decode (sound out) words while reading aloud may not necessarily understand the meaning of the text. Some LEP students have

learned the sound/letter correspondence in English. They may “sound” as if they understand what they read; informal assessments can be done to ascertain if understanding is occurring.

A more detailed description of effective assessment strategies for LEP students can be found in Sections VI and VII of this document.

Multiple Challenges for Students and Teachers

In addition to learning the English language, LEP students confront a number of challenges upon entering the U.S. classroom. LEP students must also learn about U.S. cultural norms and behaviors as well as learn new academic concepts and vocabulary in content-area classes. For example, many LEP students struggle with even the most basic routines of school such as opening a locker, buying lunch in a cafeteria, or finding the bus. LEP students are not only learning a new language but also a new way of life.

Teachers of LEP students may face a number of challenges as well in meeting the instructional needs of this culturally and linguistically diverse group. For example, most teachers of LEP students do not know how to read or speak the native languages of their students, and they often do not know the cultural norms of their ethnically diverse group of students. Teachers’ inability to communicate with LEP students can lead to miscommunication, mismatches in teacher and student expectations, under- or over-estimation of student abilities, and frustration.

The table below summarizes the cultural, linguistic, and academic challenges addressed in later sections of this document.

| What Students Must Learn | How Teachers Can Help |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • U.S. cultural norms and behaviors | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek information about the cultures represented in the classroom • Understand the impact of cultural differences on classroom behaviors and academic performance |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The English language (for social and academic purposes) • New academic concepts in content areas • How to transfer already-known skills and concepts into English | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a safe, comfortable classroom • Modify speech: Speak clearly and avoid colloquialisms • Integrate language and content instruction • Design activities that integrate reading and writing • Use a variety of proven effective strategies (See Section VI) • Provide explicit instruction and practice in using academic vocabulary unique to a content area • Assess LEP students’ English comprehension and mastery of academic concepts |

Section IV describes some of the general cultural differences that teachers of LEP students may observe in their classrooms and suggests strategies for addressing diversity.

Section V describes cultural differences related to teaching and learning language arts and content areas in the U.S. and in other countries.

Sections VI and VII offer instructional and assessment strategies that language arts and content teachers can use to give LEP students more opportunities to participate in class, demonstrate their comprehension, and succeed in content-area classes.

IV. Cultural Differences in the Classroom

Teachers can assist LEP students and avoid misunderstandings by becoming knowledgeable of their students' linguistic, cultural, and academic backgrounds. Researchers suggest learning: 1) the basic facts about the LEP students (native country, duration in the U.S., student's first language); 2) former school experiences (number of years of education or interrupted education, literacy and math levels in first language); 3) basic information about the home culture (religious beliefs, food restrictions) (Ovando & Collier, 1998; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Students' cultural perspectives and experiences can greatly impact their behavior in the classroom, relationship with the teacher and classmates, and academic performance.

1. Cultural norms related to body language

LEP students often come from cultures that have different norms about interacting with other people. Teachers play an important role in fostering an appreciation for and respect of different cultural norms among students in a class.

Following are several examples of differing cultural norms:

- a. Eye contact: Some LEP students, such as those from Middle Eastern, Asian, and/or African countries, may avoid direct eye contact, especially with an authority figure, as a sign of respect. They may feel more comfortable looking down or away. This type of behavior should not be misinterpreted as evasive or disrespectful.
- b. Speaking distances: Some LEP students, such as those from Latin American countries, have differing norms about personal space. They may stand next to or face-to-face with another person at a closer distance than is commonly accepted in the U.S. This behavior can be perceived as an invasion of personal space and can lead to discomfort when students are working in pairs or small groups.
- c. Girls holding hands: In some cultures it is common for girls to hold hands with one another. Educating students about this cultural norm can prevent students from being teased or ridiculed for their behavior.
- d. Styles of clothing: Some LEP students wear traditional clothing from their native country to school. They may come from cultures that require women to cover their heads, arms, and legs when in public. Other students in the school may not be accustomed to this type of clothing and teaching them the cultural reasons may assist in preventing misunderstandings. On the other hand, some LEP students may wear clothing that is inappropriate. These students may need guidance about appropriate clothing for school.

2. Method of instruction used in U.S. classrooms

Some LEP students are not familiar with collaborative activities and active learning, which are commonly used in U.S. classrooms. In many of their countries, the classroom instruction occurs in the form of a lecture, copying from the board, or rote learning. Students are not considered active participants in the learning process. Class work is generally completed silently and independently. When designing lessons, teachers of LEP students need to consider the following issues:

- Vary instructional groupings (individual, pair work, small group work, and whole class instruction) often throughout a lesson. This gives all students an opportunity to work in a way that is most comfortable to them.
- Introduce collaborative work gradually to LEP students. First, let LEP students work in pairs, and then introduce small-group activities to them. It can be overwhelming and intimidating for a LEP student to speak in a group, especially with primarily native-English speakers.
- Consider gender as well as the ethnic, racial, and religious background of LEP students when designing collaborative groups. Some students have never been in mixed gender classes and/or may feel uncomfortable working with some ethnic groups.
- Consider grouping LEP students with native-English speakers. Listening to and talking with a fluent speaker helps LEP students internalize the structure of the English language.
- Teach LEP students that collaborative learning is not acceptable during a test. Sometimes LEP students, new to the concept, may think they can ask a classmate to help on a test as well. In some countries it is considered acceptable to assist another student during a test. Failure to understand this cultural difference can lead one to assume that a LEP student is trying to cheat.

3. Acculturation

Newcomers to the U.S. may experience a variety of emotions ranging from unhappiness, loneliness, homesickness, frustration, or anger during the first six months in a new culture. In addition to not speaking or understanding the English language, they are learning to live in a foreign culture (home and school). Even for students who have studied English before coming to the U.S., it is likely that their previous experiences will not have prepared them for being a student in a U.S. school.

The process of acculturation (i.e., the process of adapting to a new culture) often follows the four stages described below:

- 1) Excitement and euphoria – Newcomers are initially excited about their new surroundings.
- 2) Culture shock – Newcomers begin to feel disoriented as they recognize cognitive and emotional differences in the new culture.
- 3) Recovery – Newcomers gradually accept the different ways of thinking and feeling in the new culture.
- 4) Acceptance – Newcomers adapt or assimilate to the new culture (Brown, 1994).

Following are some strategies that teachers may want to use to help the newcomer acclimate to a new culture and feel more comfortable in their new school environment:

- Foster an appreciation of and respect for cultural diversity among the students in the classroom. Display objects, photographs, and maps of the different cultures represented in the classroom.
- Assign buddies to LEP students. Buddies do not necessarily have to speak the same native language. Assigning a native English-speaking buddy can often be just as effective. What is important is that the buddy is helpful, patient, and culturally sensitive to the new student. A buddy may be at any level of English proficiency.

In addition to helping students during class, buddies may also help LEP students adjust to many basic routines in U.S. culture, i.e., using a locker, buying lunch in the cafeteria, finding the bus, dressing for P.E., understanding the bell system.

- Create predictable daily routines (starting class, collecting homework, moving into groups) and visual/verbal cues so that LEP students will understand the teacher's expectations. These routines will let LEP students focus on learning the content rather than expending energy to understand the classroom behavior.
- Find ways for LEP students to give non-verbal responses, especially during the "silent period." Students can use flashcards, raise their hands, write or draw, nod their head, or point to an object to indicate comprehension.
- Label common classroom objects in English and in native languages.
- Learn how to pronounce the names of LEP students.

- Incorporate LEP students' cultural backgrounds and experiences into lessons and class discussions whenever possible. Ask LEP students to bring in items that represent their culture and show them to the class.
- Encourage LEP students to use bilingual and/or picture dictionaries.
- Let LEP students speak to one another in their native language at times throughout the lesson to clarify what they are learning and clear up misunderstandings. Explain to the rest of the class the reason why LEP students are speaking to one another in their native language. Failure to understand the behaviors of LEP students can lead native-English speakers to assume incorrectly that the LEP students are talking about them.

V. Cultural Differences Related to Content Areas

Content-area classes can be particularly challenging to LEP students for a variety of reasons. While LEP students are learning English, they must also learn the unique concepts and issues of their content areas. Content-area knowledge consists of three components: linguistic knowledge, conceptual knowledge, and procedural knowledge.

1. Linguistic Knowledge: LEP students must develop the linguistic knowledge pertinent to each content area. Science and social studies textbooks present information in expository discourse. The structures of these texts are complex and cognitively-demanding with little contextual information. For example, science textbooks use many passive voice structures and cause/effect constructions. Many social studies textbooks assume a certain amount of background knowledge when presenting new topics of study.

Acquiring new vocabulary for content areas can be overwhelming for all students, not only LEP students, as they move into higher grade levels. LEP students need to become aware of certain words that may have specialized meanings in different content areas. For example, LEP students need to realize that the term *branches* has different meanings in science and in social studies and that *tree* and *plane* have unique meanings in mathematics.

2. Conceptual Knowledge: LEP students must develop the conceptual knowledge of each content area. This learning is best accomplished when the teacher finds ways to build on previous knowledge. For example, some LEP students may come with some background information in mathematics. However, they may not be able to articulate the mathematical processes in English. In such cases, the LEP student does not need to re-learn the concept, but must learn the English words to talk about the concept. In addition, LEP students in social studies classes may arrive with a rich understanding of their own country's geography and history. This conceptual knowledge can be the basis for expanding the LEP student's learning to other, related topics and themes. To help LEP students succeed in content areas, teachers need to connect previous knowledge and experience to new concepts.

LEP students may come to science and social studies classes with misconceptions from home or from previous schooling experiences. LEP students may never have studied world history and certainly not Virginia history. If concepts are new to the LEP students, it is helpful for the content teacher to make the instruction concrete, visual, collaborative, and hands-on.

A more detailed description of effective instructional strategies for teaching content to LEP students can be found in Section VI of this document.

3. Procedural Knowledge: LEP students must develop an understanding of the procedural knowledge related to each content area. In mathematics, in many

cultures, commas are used instead of decimal points in some cultures. For example, 7.5 is written as 7,5.

Similarly, in science classes, LEP students may need to become familiar with activities that help them understand scientific concepts. They may have to learn how to explore scientific phenomena, gather and organize data, and follow directions for hands-on experiences—all practices as part of the preparation of learning the scientific method.

In social studies, LEP students may not have had extensive exposure to expository writing, which commonly demands higher-level thinking skills. Many social studies texts, in addition to assuming previous conceptual knowledge, also assume understanding of embedded clauses, reduced clauses as modifiers, and complex passive voice forms and past perfect tenses.

Teachers of LEP students can assist the students by:

- being aware of cultural differences so they can understand academic behaviors and performance in content-area classes.
- explicitly teaching LEP students the class expectations about taking notes, writing in notebooks, completing homework assignments, completing class projects, working in groups, and studying for quizzes and tests.
- presenting class activities during which LEP students receive input from English-speaking peers and have opportunities to manipulate the new vocabulary and concepts in meaningful ways.

VI. Strategies for Teaching LEP Students

For LEP students who are still acquiring academic English, teachers must design lessons that consistently integrate the study of academic vocabulary and grammatical structures with concepts of the content areas.

It is critical to integrate language and content for the following reasons:

- Students learn a second language more successfully when instruction includes social and academic language in each lesson (Collier, 1995).
- Students can learn language and academic content simultaneously through meaningful academic content (Collier, 1995).
- Studying English in isolation without learning grade-level concepts can delay a LEP student's academic progress. Native speakers of English have not stopped learning content as their LEP counterparts catch up (Collier, 1995; Ovando & Collier; 1998).

To increase comprehension and make content areas more accessible to LEP students, teachers may want to use a variety of strategies:

1. Classroom Management Strategies

- Design a classroom that shows a respect for and appreciation of cultural diversity in the classroom. Decorate the classroom with items from other cultures.
- Post labels and vocabulary cards around the classroom. Label in English and in other languages to foster an appreciation of the languages and cultures represented in the classroom. Students who feel valued are better learners (Collier, 1995).
- Consider seating arrangements to be conducive for cooperative (or collaborative) learning activities. Experiment with desks/chairs; arrange them in a U-shape, in pairs, or one circle. LEP students learn social and academic language through face-to-face interactions focusing on content-area activities and projects (Ovando & Collier, 1998; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).
- Seat LEP students purposefully (near the teacher or next to a buddy).
- Establish classroom routines (morning announcements, circle time, working in groups, daily warm-up exercises) so that LEP students will readily pick up on expectations. By knowing the predictable routines, LEP students will not have to expend energy understanding classroom behavior. Instead, they can focus their energy on learning the content.

- Morning announcements is a routine that is easy to implement and can be used in many different forms. Use the morning message to preview the day's activities. Write down the activities on the board or on an overhead. Say the words as you write them or have students take turns reading the morning message. By using the morning message on a daily basis, teachers model the function and form of writing and show the interaction of reading and writing in a natural way.
- Use consistent formats for warm-ups, worksheets, quizzes, and tests. Go over the expectations orally. For assignments, give the instructions in both written and oral form.
- Back up oral discussion with key words written on the board. LEP students need constant, redundant auditory and visual exposure to make the connection between hearing the word and seeing it written. They need practice in making sound/letter correspondences (Brown, 2001; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).
- Write legibly and in print. Some LEP students may not be familiar with cursive and/or the Roman alphabet. Try to be aware of your own idiosyncratic letter formations that may not “translate” for LEP students.
- When asking questions, allow for “wait time.” LEP students need time to process the question and then formulate an answer. One way to allow a natural, predictable wait time is to count aloud, “I see one hand up, two hands up, ...ten hands up.” Over time such a routine sends a message to the class that 1) the teacher has acknowledged when a student has raised his/her hand; 2) the teacher is giving LEP (and other) students the time to process the question and the answer. Such a technique gives LEP students a better chance to participate. Calling on the first students to raise their hands often results in dialogs between the teacher and a few students. Send the message that all students are invited to participate by simply giving more “wait time” between asking a question and having the question answered.
- Design activities that encourage participation from all students. An exercise for small group work, for example, will naturally force a LEP student to become actively involved without much risk. In addition, it gives an opportunity for the LEP student to practice and rehearse in a smaller setting.
- Allow LEP students to talk to a peer in their native language when necessary to clarify understanding. LEP students should feel that their first language is valued (Collier, 1995). In addition, using the first language to clarify is often the most efficient way to stay on track and not distract from the flow of the lesson.
- Establish a classroom library containing age-appropriate fiction and non-fiction books at varying reading levels. Books related to the themes and issues of the students' content areas can serve as a basis for a natural recycling of vocabulary

and concepts. Include visual and bilingual dictionaries in the class for LEP students to use as quick references.

- Become familiar with the background information about the students. Know the number of years of former education in the students' native countries, the literacy level in their first language and in English, and their academic strengths and weaknesses, according to transcripts or documents. Learning such information will help you better understand your students and inform your instructional practices (Ovando & Collier, 1998; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).

2. Instructional Strategies that Increase Comprehension

Integrate language and content

- Teach vocabulary.

If LEP students had former educational experiences, they may know content-area concepts. However, they may need to learn the English vocabulary that goes with the concept. They may also need to pay extra attention to spelling and pronunciation.

If they haven't learned the concept in their first language, LEP students will need to use the new vocabulary in different contexts to acquire the meaning. Most of us (even native speakers) need 6 to 20 meaningful repetitions to learn a new word and its concept (Drucker, 2003).

- Teach strategies to reinforce vocabulary learning.
 - Word walls: Keep a running list of the new vocabulary on a word wall. Such a visual cue can help students with word recognition, automaticity, decoding, and spelling.
 - Student-made dictionaries: Have students establish their own dictionaries in sections of their notebooks or as flashcards on spiral-bound index cards. Students can write definitions, draw pictures and diagrams, give examples, write in a sentence, or translate in their first language. Such practices influence independent learning and can motivate LEP students to take charge of their own learning (Brown, 2001; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).
 - Word games: Offer opportunities to encourage a love of words and their power, as suggested by researchers (Blachowicz & Fisher, 2004; Gaskins, 2004; Juel & Deffes, 2004).
 - Classroom library: Establish an informal system where students can access fiction and non-fiction books easily for outside reading.

Reading books related to their content areas is a natural way to reinforce vocabulary and concepts. Harvey and Goudvis (2000) have an extensive list of recommended titles.

- Teach by integrating the four language modes (listening, speaking, reading, writing) into content-area lessons. One way of ensuring LEP participation is by scaffolding instruction through the different language modes.

As a topic is introduced, make sure the oral language is backed up in writing so that LEP students can make the connection between the aural information and the written form. For example, when introducing vocabulary related to the Civil War, discuss the facts of the war and have key words written on the board, overhead, or in a handout.

- Design activities intermittently throughout a lesson to allow LEP students to say and test their pronunciation in authentic ways. For example, after an introductory lesson on the Civil War, LEP students could be asked to complete the following matching exercise:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ___ 1. The Civil War was also called | a. the Union. |
| ___ 2. Another name for the North was | b. Robert E. Lee. |
| ___ 3. Another name for the South was | c. the War Between the States. |
| ___ 4. The General of the North was | d. the Confederacy. |
| ___ 5. The General of the South was | e. Ulysses S. Grant. |

As they work to complete the exercise, LEP students are first developing sound/letter correspondence and concepts on their own through reading. When they check their answers with a friend, they are using social interaction and repeating vocabulary in an authentic setting. Note that when they state their answers orally to the class, they are reading aloud in complete (grammatical) statements, practicing decoding, and reviewing content-area facts: “The Civil War is also called The War Between the States.”

- Another sample activity below is a cloze exercise with a word bank. The word bank could be included depending on the English proficiency level of the LEP students. For example, students could be asked to complete the following exercise:

| | | | | | |
|-------|-------------|------|---------|--------|-------|
| North | Confederacy | army | General | States | years |
|-------|-------------|------|---------|--------|-------|

The Civil War is also known as the War Between the ____¹. The war lasted for four ____², from 1861 to 1865. Soldiers from the ____³, or the Union, fought against soldiers from The South, or the ____⁴. The Union army was led by ____⁵ Grant and the Confederate ____⁶ was led by General Lee.

Although this is a brief exercise, note the appropriately cognitive demands on LEP students. They progress by decoding prose, which more closely resembles textbook style. The students must concentrate on meaning of words and of concepts. They need to write the answers and focus on spelling, especially if there is no word bank. They use social interaction to check their answers. When checking their answers with the class, they are verbalizing in grammatically correct structures. They may even articulate the reasons for their answers. Note also that the cloze paragraph contains a higher level of grammar than the matching exercise. In this case, there is the insertion of passive voice. Such scaffolding builds on concept development and allows for incidental learning of critical thinking skills.

- A writing activity based on the same introductory lesson gives the LEP students confidence in paragraph writing and develop academic writing skills. For example, present the LEP students with the following chart:

| The Civil War | | |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| | The North | The South |
| Another name | | |
| Generals | | |
| Presidents | | |
| | | |

Have the LEP student fill in the information.

| The Civil War | | |
|---------------|------------------|-----------------|
| | The North | The South |
| Another name | The Union | The Confederacy |
| Generals | Ulysses S. Grant | Robert E. Lee |
| Presidents | Abraham Lincoln | Andrew Jackson |
| | | |

They can discuss their answers to ascertain that they are correct. Then have the LEP students write a paragraph using the information from the chart to guide them. In doing so, LEP students have successfully integrated all four language modes. By scaffolding the information, the teacher guides the LEP students to independent, learner-centered activities and allows for successful academic learning. Success is often the highest motivator for LEP students (Collier, 1995; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).

- Assess prior knowledge

Before beginning a unit of study, assess LEP students' knowledge. There are a number of techniques for ascertaining how much students know about a topic. These techniques also show where students' misconceptions need to be

clarified. Some solid, easy-to-incorporate techniques are a **KWL chart** and an **Anticipation Guide**.

- **KWL chart**

A KWL chart takes little planning. On chart paper, record the responses of the students when you introduce a topic: What do you **k**now about X? What do you **w**ant to know? What did you **l**earn about X?

Sample KWL chart:

| What Do You K now? | What Do You W ant to Know? | What Did You L earn? |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | |
| | | |

The students' responses can help inform instruction. By allowing for student input, teachers not only can focus their instruction but they can also help guide students to purposeful learning (Brown, 1995). As part of a review of the unit, the class can return to the KWL chart to complete the final column: What did you learn? Teachers may find it helpful to add a fourth column to indicate the source of the learned material. With an additional column, the KWL can also serve as a study guide.

- **Anticipation guide**

Anticipation guides can be used in a variety of ways: to assess prior knowledge, to give students a purpose for reading, and to assess reading comprehension during reading and post-reading. Anticipation Guides can also motivate students to read for meaning.

To write an anticipation guide for a chapter or a unit, prioritize 3-5 key concepts and/or vocabulary on which to focus. It is important to realize that not all concepts can be taught simultaneously. Too many concepts may be overwhelming and decrease motivation for these students. Ask students to respond to true and false statements related to the key points. The challenge is to craft the statements to elicit class discussion of key vocabulary and concepts. The statements cannot be too obvious or too obtuse. Through student-initiated discussion, key concepts may be clarified and established prior to reading the text.

Sample anticipation guide:

Read the statements. In the first column, write true or false, according to your opinion. Then check your answers with a classmate. Write your classmate's answer in the second column. Discuss your answers with the class.

Then read pages xx-xx in your text. What does the textbook say? Write the correct answer in the third column. (You may want to also put the page number to support your answer).

| My opinion | My classmate's opinion | What the textbook says | |
|------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 1. Sponges are animals. |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 2. All animals have symmetry. |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | 3. Animals can make their own food. |

In the sample anticipation guide shown here, the teacher offers grammatically simplistic statements that may depend on previous knowledge, but that may also cause heated debate. Note that the second statement includes the term *symmetry*. Through discussion with the classmate, the LEP student can learn the meaning of this key concept. Note that discussion of number three sets the students up for learning another key scientific concept in the textbook, *consumer*.

The teacher has an important role during the process of using an anticipation guide. During the peer and class discussions, it is very important for the teacher not to give away the correct answers. The students must remain motivated to use their reading strategies to discover the correct answer according to the text. A teacher who gives the correct answer before allowing the students to read for meaningful purpose takes away the intrinsic motivation of the activity.

Finally, after finding and documenting the source of the correct answers, students should understand the difference between opinion and fact. They may have and voice their opinions, but the third column, "What the textbook says," contains the fact. LEP students must understand that the final column must be correct and should be the focus of a study guide.

Note that throughout the anticipation guide process, LEP students are using the guide as a pre-, during-, and post-reading strategy.

- Scaffold instruction.

Teachers can gradually increase the cognitive demand of the lesson after first establishing the language proficiency of the LEP students. It is important to allow LEP students to feel successful in the classroom for motivation and continued involvement in the learning process (Brown, 2001; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Scaffolding requires the teacher to decrease the language demands, provide temporary contextual supports, and maintain high cognitive development. Using semantic mapping is one way to scaffold content instruction for LEP students.

- Semantic mapping

Semantic maps aid in vocabulary development and retention. For LEP students overwhelmed by concepts and words, making semantic maps may be a strategy that allows them time to organize information and reflect on meaning. Semantic maps can be developed individually, in small groups, or as a class. There may be many drafts of semantic maps as students negotiate meaning and placement of vocabulary.

After ascertaining that the information on a semantic map is correct, teachers can utilize them for review purposes. Have a completed semantic map on the board or on an overhead. While looking at the visual, have LEP students verbalize the information in statement form. “There are two kinds of metamorphoses — complete and incomplete. There are four stages in a complete metamorphosis....” With practice and continual exposure, LEP students will be able to focus explicitly on content without thinking about correct grammatical structure.

Sample of a semantic map.

| Metamorphosis of Insects | |
|--|---|
| Complete | Incomplete |
| Four stages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Egg • Larva • Pupa • Adult | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Born as young animals • No adult organs • (usually) no wings • They molt (shed exoskeletons) |

On a subsequent day, have the LEP students re-construct the chart from their collective memories. Fill in the information on the board or overhead as they give their responses. Then, scaffold the information. As they watch, erase all of the four stages (for example), but leave the first letter. Ask for a volunteer to tell you the stages. Then erase the four stages completely. Ask for volunteers to give you the answers. Continue de-constructing and re-constructing the semantic map, forcing students to use their memories to fill in the information until it is learned. On another day, ask the students to write a paragraph about the metamorphosis of insects. They can first re-construct the map and use the map as a scaffold for their writing. In this way, the students’ writing can be used as an informal assessment of the content as well as their academic writing ability.

- Use a variety of modes of instruction.
 - Design multi-sensory lessons (visual, auditory, tactile, kinesthetic).
 - Use visuals whenever possible to reinforce auditory instruction (i.e., charts, graphs, manipulatives, diagrams, models, real objects).

- Use manipulatives as a reading and writing strategy to scaffold instruction. Manipulatives can be Cuisenaire rods, pipe cleaners, beans, markers, or any tangible item that can be used to represent ideas. Have students work in small groups to represent the main ideas of a reading, a section of a chapter in a science textbook, for example, or an important historical document, by using manipulatives. In doing so, students will have to use oral language to negotiate meaning and to agree on ways to represent meaning. New vocabulary will be used naturally throughout the process. Misconceptions may be clarified as well. Students will have to use critical thinking skills to analyze and then build a representation of their understanding of the reading. When groups are finished, have each group verbalize their final representations. As each group discusses their product, LEP students will have read, listened, analyzed, discussed, and thought about each main idea while recycling related concepts and vocabulary.

Take a digital photograph of each group's product. On a subsequent day, have students paste the photograph of their representation into a word processing document. Then have the students label parts of their final product if necessary. Have students re-present the main ideas of the reading by using the photographs as the basis of a writing assignment. Having students write a paragraph or essay is another way to assess the LEP students' comprehension of content-area facts as well as their academic writing ability.

- Design hands-on activities that make all students active learners. Use Reciprocal Teaching (Herrell, 2000; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005; Orlich, Harder, Callahan, Trevisan & Brown, 2004; Ruddell, 2006), which involves step-by-step procedures that allow students to become responsible for teaching and learning.
- Vary groupings throughout the lesson (i.e., independent work, pair work, small groups, whole class).
- Vary the participants according to English language proficiency when assigning pair work or group work. At times, pair LEP students with native-English speakers. At other times, pair LEP students with other LEP students. Assess the dynamics of the different groups and monitor the activities.
- Use real-life problem-solving situations to teach new concepts.
- Make interdisciplinary connections whenever possible.
- Modify speech
 - Enunciate clearly and slowly without speaking louder.

- Pause between sentences or thought groups.
- Use gestures and visuals to help clarify the message.
- Avoid using idioms and slang words.
- Use key words frequently.
- Repeat, rephrase, and paraphrase.
- When LEP students speak, focus on the LEP students' message rather than their grammatical skills and pronunciation. Respond by modeling the proper grammatical form rather than overtly correcting their mistakes.
- Teach organizational skills
 - Demonstrate how to read a textbook. Point out the aids embedded in textbooks: chapter and section headings, the vocabulary in bold, the reading guides and vocabulary sections, the illustrations and charts, the glossary, indices, and appendices.
 - Teach students how to organize notebooks and binders and record homework assignments as well as scores on quizzes and tests.
 - Teach mnemonic devices that assist memorizing content.
 - Teach study and test-taking skills.
 - Teach note-taking skills. For beginner LEP students, copying notes is an effective way to begin learning writing conventions.

VII. Informal Assessments for LEP Students

Constant, consistent informal assessment is important to make sure that LEP students are understanding and participating in content classes. Since reading is a critical skill in learning, it is important for teachers to have some information about each student's reading level and interests.

Most students have a reading comprehension score in the form of a DRP (Degrees of Reading Power) or DRA (Developmental Reading Assessment) that indicates their reading level (RL) in English. In addition, teachers should be aware of the RL of their textbooks. This information can be received through the publisher or by searching www.Lexile.com. A textbook written at 6th grade RL (RL6) will be very difficult for the student who reads at RL3.

Teachers will also benefit from learning the interests of their LEP students. Being aware of students' interests and strengths may help the teacher involve the student in particular classroom or extracurricular activities. There are a number of Interest Inventories already prepared for collecting data (Herrell, 2000; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005; Ruddell, 2006).

Establishing Informal Assessments.

- Watching Students
One of the most reliable and natural ways to assess students is by observing expressions and body language. Teachers can see that a concerned expression may indicate a need for help just as a smile may indicate successful learning.
- Listening
Listen for cues when students read aloud, when they talk in small groups, when they ask questions. When they read aloud, consider the pace and sound of their utterance. Is the reading fluid? Does it sound as if they understand? If they struggle decoding the words, teachers can be assured the student is having difficulty understanding. Some students expend so much energy decoding the words that they cannot keep track of the meaning of what they are reading. On the other hand, keep in mind that some LEP students decode quite well. Ask comprehension questions to ascertain if they are reading for meaning.

When students work in small groups, listen to the conversations. Sometimes students are more willing to ask for help in small groups rather than in whole class situations. Also, LEP students may be more willing to take risks and indicate understanding in small groups. They may appear reticent to participate in front of the whole class, but may prove themselves in the smaller setting.

- Daily warm-ups
Present quick routines to review previously-taught information. Use the overhead projector (or individual handouts) for Morning Message (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005) in different ways. Focus on facts. A warm-up exercise is an opportunity to assess how much factual information the student has retained. Walk around the room and take notes on the progress of students.
- Reading and writing tasks
Keep in mind the critical need to reinforce all four skills (listening, speaking, reading, writing) on a daily basis. One strategy for assessing LEP students' comprehension is to use some form of a "Story Chain" (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000; Peregoy & Boyle, 2005). Review a chapter in U.S. History by having the whole class contribute their understanding of facts. Use a transparency on the overhead or chart paper to document their responses. Ask, "What happened first?...Then what happened?" and write the key words in logical order. Ask students to write a summary using the key words. Have students work in pairs or individually. Walk around the room and take notes on the progress of the students.
- Portfolios
Have students maintain a folder of their written work. The teacher and the student should decide together what pieces will enter the final portfolio. Remind students to date their work since the portfolio can be used to illustrate progress. Portfolio work is a way for students to see their growth as learners (Peregoy & Boyle, 2005).

One common but unreliable form of informal assessment is to ask, "Does everybody understand?" or "Are there any questions?" LEP students are often hesitant to admit publicly that they don't understand or, in some cases, they may not really know what to ask. In most classrooms, a few students will respond positively and often the well-intentioned teacher assumes those few speak for the class. Teachers of LEP students, especially, should rely on informal assessments such as those listed above to obtain a true understanding of comprehension

VIII. Assessment Accommodations for LEP Students

The Regulations Establishing Standards for Accrediting public schools in Virginia (SOA) and Virginia's implementation of the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* require students to participate in the Standards of Learning (SOL) assessments. The SOA allow for the possibility of a one-time exemption from testing, stating that a kindergarten through eighth grade LEP student may be granted a one-time exemption from testing in each of the four content areas. However, the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) requires states to assure that all students are assessed annually in reading or language arts and mathematics. Virginia's implementation of NCLB requires that all LEP students participate in SOL assessments for reading and mathematics. Under the SOA, students may still receive a one-time exemption per grade level and content area in science, social studies and writing.

Participation in SOL testing by students identified as LEP shall be guided by a school-based committee convened to make such determinations. Each school must form a committee to determine how the LEP student will participate in the SOL assessments, and which, if any, accommodations are required. The committee should include the following people: 1) a person responsible for the education of LEP students in the school or school division; 2) the student's content teacher(s); and 3) an administrator or designee (i.e., guidance counselor or reading specialist). If possible, the student's parent or guardian should also be invited to serve on the committee.

The committee should consider the following factors: 1) the student's level of English proficiency; 2) the level of previous schooling in the home language; and 3) the amount of schooling the student has received in the U.S.

The committee must specify how each LEP student will participate in the SOL assessment:

- with no accommodations
- with accommodations that maintain standard conditions (listing specific accommodations)
- with accommodations that are permissible, but do not maintain standard conditions (listing specific accommodations)

The committee's decision must be documented in writing and filed in the student's scholastic record.

The committee should only select accommodations that the LEP student routinely uses in classroom assessment and instruction. The purpose of the accommodations is to ensure that LEP students have the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do. Students should not be given unnecessary or inappropriate accommodations. Students

must take the test in English; translations of the test into a different language are not permitted.

Accommodations that Maintain Standard Conditions (Standard Accommodations)

Standard accommodations allow a student to take the test in a different way without changing what the test is measuring.

Examples of standard accommodations are listed below:

Timing/Scheduling

- time of day
- breaks during test
- multiple test sessions
- order of tests administered

Setting

- preferential seating (at the front of the room or in a study carrel)
- small group testing
- individual testing
- location with minimal distractions

Presentation

- reading the test items in English to the student (except on the English: Reading/Literature, and Research test)
- reading the directions in English to the student
- simplifying oral directions
- place markers to maintain place

Response

- student responds verbally/teacher or proctor marks answer document

Accommodations that are Permissible But Do Not Maintain Standard Conditions
(Nonstandard Accommodations)

Nonstandard accommodations significantly change what a test is measuring and do not maintain standard conditions of the test. This type of accommodation should be used only if the committee agrees that the student requires such an accommodation(s) to participate in the SOL assessments. Scores resulting from a nonstandard accommodation must be accompanied by an explanation that these scores resulted from a nonstandard administration.

Examples of accommodations that are permissible but do not maintain standard conditions include:

Presentation

- Reading test items in English on the English Reading/Literature, and Research test
- Bilingual dictionary

Response

- Dictation in English to a scribe (writing sample component of the writing test only)

Further information regarding the participation of LEP students in the SOL assessments can be located on the Web page for the Division of Assessment and Reporting at <http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Assessment/LEPsol.html>

IX. LEP Resources

Center for Applied Linguistics – <http://www.cal.org>

This Web site contains links to the latest articles, research projects, and publications in the field of second language acquisition.

Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) Resource Guide Online –
<http://www.cal.org/resources/faqs/RGOs/index.html>

Cole, R. W. (Ed.) (2001). *More strategies for educating everyone's children*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

CultureGrams – <http://onlineedition.culturegrams.com/world/index.php>

This Web site contains general information about countries around the world. Viewers can subscribe to an online database and download CultureGrams that contain more detailed information about a country's history, people, and customs.

ESL/Bilingual Resource Guide for Mainstream Teachers –
http://www.pps.k12.or.us/curriculumPDFs/ESL_Modifications.pdf

This guide, developed by Portland Public Schools in Oregon, contains a chart outlining the stages of language acquisition and several lists of useful tips for teachers of LEP students.

Help Kits produced by the Eastern Stream Center on Resources and Training (ESCORT)
<http://www.escort.org>

These resources explain some of the cultural differences that teachers may encounter when teaching LEP students in mathematics, English, science, and social studies. It also contains instructional strategies and techniques and sample lessons adapted for teaching LEP students.

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA)
<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu>

This Web site is funded by the U.S. Department of Education Office of English Language Acquisition and contains extensive print and Web resources related to LEP students.

Reed, B., & Railsback, J. (2003). *Strategies and resources for mainstream teachers of English language learners*. Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.
<http://www.nwrel.org/request/2003may/textonly.html>

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
<http://www.tesol.org/index.html>

Virginia Department of Education. (2002). English Language Proficiency Standards of Learning.
<http://doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Superintendent/Sols/EnglishSOL01.html>

Virginia Department of Education – ESL Web page.
<http://www.doe.virginia.gov/VDOE/Instruction/ESL/>

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