

Mentoring for Teachers of Language Learners

A Guide

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Initial Meeting Questions

- Use a selection of these questions to get to know the teacher and start building a relationship
- Important takeaways from this time: teacher's values as an educator, goal for themselves and their students, and areas of strength
 - Can you tell me about how you got to this point in your career?
 - What brought you to teaching?
 - What would you like me to know about you as we start our work together?
 - If you were to run into a former EL student 10 years from now, what would you want them to share about what they remember from their experience in your classroom?
 - It is important to our work that we honor your experience and what you value. What do you value in your classroom?
 - What are your greatest strengths as an educator? What areas do you hope to grow in?
 - Thinking about your EL students specifically, what are your goals for your practice this year? What are your goals for your students?
 - In our PD, we talked specifically about four areas of practice to support ELs: vocabulary, syntax, oral language, and identity. Of those, which do you feel like you do well? Were there areas you want to grow in?

Goal setting

- This can be done either in conjunction with the initial meeting
- Teachers should identify a goal, the coach should help narrow specificity and next steps

Questions	Teacher response
When you think about your language learners, what do you see as their biggest need?	
You said in our last meeting that you thought you might want to focus on ... Is that still true? What impact would that have on student learning?	
What is a specific goal you have around that? (i.e. teaching vocabulary during guided reading, helping students use more academic language in science, etc.)	
What do you need to do to meet that goal? What support do you need from me to meet that goal?	
What next steps make sense? (be prepared with a next step: an observation, planning, modeling, etc.)	

Student Discourse Template

- Record the language use of up to 4 students during a lesson. This tool can be used to track how different students are using language in the classroom.
- Students can be jointly agreed upon beforehand.

Name 1:

Name 2:

Name 3:

Name 4:

Teacher & Students Action Recording Template

- Use this tool during an observation to elucidate a common understanding of the differences between teacher and student time
- This tool can also be used just for EL students and teacher. It may be helpful to look specifically at what the expectations and output of ELs

Time 5-10 minute increments	Teacher says/does	Students say/do

Reflection Questions

- Pick from these questions during a post-observation conference as appropriate

General

- When was student learning best?
- What were you hoping students would learn? How did you assess if they'd learned it?
- What impact did your strategy have?
- When could student learning have been better?
- If you were to do this lesson again, what would you do differently?
- If you were to do this lesson again, what would you keep unchanged?
- How did students engage with the material/language?
- I noticed when you.... students What does that make you think?
- Let's look at the data I collected (any of the templates from earlier) what sticks out to you?

Vocabulary

- We talked about try ... strategy for vocabulary... how did it work?
- What words were you hoping students would learn? How did they demonstrate that?
- What opportunities did students have to practice the words themselves?
- As you were teaching, what did you notice about students use of new words?

Syntax

- We talked about implementing ... strategy to support student syntax... what did you notice?
- What supports did students need to help grow in their ability to use more complex language?
- What did you notice about how students were engaging with more complex language functions?
- What opportunities did students have to practice using complex language? What did you notice during those times?

Oral language development

- You wanted to try ... to help students practice academic language. How did it support students?
- When students were talking, what did you hear? I saw.... What does that make you think about?
- How have you noticed increasing students' talking time impacting their work?

Identity

- When planning for this lesson, how did you consider your students' identities?
- When you gave your students a chance to share about themselves, how did that impact their learning?
- As you think about what your students need going forward, how are you considering who they are and their cultural/racial backgrounds?

Strategies for language learning

- This section should be used selectively by the mentor and should be guided by the goals of the teacher
- Introduce only one strategy at a time or offer two as a way to give choice, more than that can be overwhelming and get in the way of implementation
- It is best to look at the strategies together and then discuss ways to implement, not merely introducing the strategies
- Each strategy addresses which area of language learning it helps students grow in (vocabulary, syntax, oral language). Many of the strategies enhance all three aspects.

Language Supports

Creating language supports in a classroom is vital to any language learners. When looking at the WIDA Can-Do descriptors, there are three types of support listed: sensory, graphic, and interactive (WIDA Essential Action Handbook, 2013).

Sensory supports

Sensory supports are usually things students can reference during instruction. They include things like diagrams, pictures, photographs, models, videos, and manipulatives. Most often they are visual supports designed to help students understand learning as it is being delivered. They are a jumping off point so that students can begin to grasp the content. Sensory supports can be used throughout a lesson.

Bringing back the same sensory supports both during instruction and with independent work can give students the ability to gain a deeper understanding of content.

Ways to incorporate sensory supports

- On your learning targets, include a picture of what you will be learning about
- Play a short video about a topic before discussing it
- Give picture exit directions for an activity
- Put a picture next to a story problem so students understand what the problem is about
- Have a real object to explain a concept

Graphic supports

Graphic supports include charts, timelines, graphic organizers, and number lines.

Graphic supports give students a framework for what we want them to do. Graphic organizers help students make sense of their thoughts and put them into a format that we hope will offer them some clarity for later writing. Number lines give students the opportunity to visualize the numbers when they may not be sure of the words themselves. By having these supports available, we give students the opportunity to construct their own meaning.

Ways to incorporate graphic supports

- Have individual number lines students can access
- Pick graphic organizers that help generate a specific skill (a box and T for comparing and contrasting)
- Making a chart

As teachers, we often make and include these already. We make anchor charts, put up number lines, write down ideas for students to access. The difficulty we run into is helping students actually use the things we make independently.

Interactive supports

Interactive supports are often the most difficult to implement, but also create the most momentum and language growth for students. The reason behind it is this: we can't do this for the students.

Interactive supports must include the whole class and the impetus to make this work is on the students themselves. Because the lion's share of the work is on the students, they need to be the most carefully planned and executed. However, when they are done well and often, true learning takes place. When we get students involved in their own learning, we start seeing results.

Interactive supports come in many shapes and sizes from whole group, small group, pairs, and home language support. By utilizing cooperative learning structures, students are able to begin using language with their peers to increase both their language and their content understanding simultaneously (Zwiers, et. al., 2011).

All of these supports range in their effectiveness for two main reasons: how strategically supports are implemented and how much students take ownership of them. When teachers consider when and how to give

support and students feel they can adequately use those supports, students are able to learn, engage, and prosper in their classroom.

Creating Visuals Students Can Use

We will repeatedly say that ELs need visual supports and sentence stems to acquire language and access content. As elementary teachers, we generally like to have lots of pictures, posters, and anchor charts on our walls. However, often our students don't know how to use these tools to help themselves succeed. The following are examples to help students access the resources available to them.

Word Walls:

Word walls have become relatively standard practice in schools. We put them up in August with the best intentions of adding all the words our students will need throughout the year. Often, they end up with sight words and other common words students will need frequently.

Many students know how to use these, and can find those words. When they don't, however, telling them, "Go look at the word wall," leaves both them and you frustrated. They write the word "went" instead of "what" and the student remains reliant on the teacher for help.

When using an alphabetic word wall, it is easy to amplify its effect by adding a visual to the word. "Went" with a person walking and an arrow and "what" with a question mark, this gives the previously frustrated student a clue as to what word they should use.

Word walls, however, can go beyond the sight words we dutifully put up throughout the year. Creating a content word wall for a subject gives students access to the vocabulary they need to be successful in a unit. A content word wall has the vocabulary a student needs for a current unit all in one separate spot and is accompanied by a visual to indicate what the word is.

A content word wall is simple to create and can support your students throughout a whole unit. When introducing science and social studies vocabulary, a pocket chart is a great tool.

At the beginning of a unit, you can think about the necessary vocabulary and make word and picture cards. Print them and have them available as those words are introduced in the unit. Reveal the words as they arrive in context rather than at the beginning of a unit.

This helps for two reasons, the first is that your resources are ready anytime you get to that vocabulary word. The second is that it focuses you on what words students might struggle with. It is often easiest to think of ten or fewer words that all students will really need to be successful. Once you know what those words are, it becomes easier to think of how you can support them.

When students know where to go to find the words they need, attached to an image, they are more able to begin to incorporate it into their own vocabulary and use it appropriately. By using word walls, we wean students off of their reliance on us, and help them grow both their vocabulary and independence.

Sentence Stems and Sentence Starters

For some students, getting started is the hardest part. Creating their own sentences out of thin air presents a barrier to the content itself. By providing students with a sentence stem, we help them start their thoughts and give them the tools to engage in a discussion rather than a one-word answer.

Using sentence stems also helps teachers focus on what language the students need to use to be successful. Putting a vocabulary word in the sentence stem ensures that students will have more practice using it. This is particularly valuable for "power verbs" that students will regularly encounter.

Example sentence stems:

- "I observe that..."
- "My inference is... because..."
- "The reason the author wrote ... is because ..."
- "The evidence is ..."
- "My opinion is ..."

- “I classified by ...”

By using sentence stems such as these, we are being deliberate about what language students need to know and the format in which we want it presented.

Sentence stems are also a valuable support when students work independently. When students have the first few words they need to write, they are able to get started on their own and many will be able to continue once they feel as though they can be successful.

Depending on the makeup of a class, sentence stems can be posted on the board, written out on slips of paper, or just written on a post-it for a single student.

Adding pictures

Sometimes the simplest way to help students understand new vocabulary is the easiest to forget. When creating and presenting new material to students, having a picture of what that is creates a concrete way for students to connect to the learning. When presenting learning targets using pictures allows students to have some connection to their learning.

Cooperative Learning Strategies

Cooperative learning strategies are a critical component in building students' language access and acquisition. Giving students the opportunity to speak to each other gives students immediate language feedback, enhances understanding of content, and builds students' agency and confidence in their own learning abilities.

As teachers we often feel that setting students off on their own to talk about their learning can result in off-task behavior, one student dominating the conversation, silence or chaos. Those fears, however, can be mitigated by engaging students in structured cooperative learning activities. When students have a format with which to discuss their learning, they will have the opportunity to share their thoughts and process their learning.

Building a routine

In thinking about any of the strategies in the following pages, know that the first few times may not go as smoothly as you would hope. When employing cooperative learning strategies, it is important to remember that they are classroom routines that need to be modeled, practiced, discussed, and practiced some more.

They should also be repeated regularly as they are introduced. As students grow to know how to do them, the time they require decreases and student engagement increases.

I have discovered (through trial and error of my own) that the first time a strategy is introduced it should be either with content that students have already mastered or non-content related at all. The lower the cognitive load, the more easily students access the activity and are subsequently able to repeat the activity with content.

Repeating

In our society, we value individualism and students generating exclusively their own ideas. While this is a critical skill, for students acquiring language it can be incredibly difficult if not impossible. They need the help of their peers to come up with an idea or the language with which to frame their own idea.

We accept that students will take our ideas and put them on paper, but we cringe at the idea of them doing that with a classmate.

We need to reframe our thinking, and understand that students learn best when they learn from each other. In cooperative learning activities, it is acceptable for students to repeat what a classmate has said. As students grow, they can be pushed to use their own language or add to an idea, but at the outset we can allow them to repeat or rephrase the idea of a partner.

Creating space for student conversation

One of the most difficult parts of cooperative learning is finding time. Schedules are crammed with mandatory minutes of math and literacy. It is easy to cut talking time out of a lesson to make sure content is covered.

Most of the strategies in this guide, once routinized, take under ten minutes for students to do. These ten minutes more than make up for themselves when students are then able to work independently, freeing the teacher up to work with groups or individually with students. If what the student practice together directly correlates to what they are expected to do alone, students' chance of success and independence skyrockets.

The following strategies can be done in almost the same time it takes for a good turn and talk.

When students get stuck

One fear that teachers often have when starting cooperative learning is how to make sure everyone can be successful. There will always be students who struggle and get stuck. To make cooperative learning as successful as possible, we can help students by proactively giving them strategies to help each other and elicit help.

To elicit help, we need to explicitly teach students to ask. They can practice saying, "I'm stuck, can you help me?" before they even begin.

The more difficult aspect for students is giving the help. When students see that a peer is struggling they usually have one of two reactions: to complain - "they can't do it!" or complete the task entirely for a friend even before help has been asked for.

Teaching students to wait until they've been asked to help a peer is critical in making sure student agency and voice are preserved throughout the lesson. When a student has asked for help, students should have a fairly discrete way of showing that they can be helpers -- I have students put a thumb on their chest -- and wait to be called on. Once help has been given, students should still be responsible for producing the language their partner provided them with.

By making sure students are able to provide support to each other, cooperative learning becomes much more successful and you, as the teacher, can focus on other students as well.

Quiz-Quiz Trade (Rojas, 2010)

Quiz-Quiz Trade is a fairly simple game that can be played in a variety of subject areas with minimal preparation. It is best used with information that requires shorter output. This strategy is great for review or a quick practice.

Group size: Whole class - works best with ten or more students

Materials: Question cards **or** picture cards **or** realia

Time: 1-2 minutes for setup, no more than 5 minutes for playing, 1 minute for clean-up.

Steps:

1. Give each student one question card (or picture or object).
2. Students make sure they know what their card is and how to talk about it.
3. Students stand up and find a partner.
4. Each student asks their question and gets an answer.
5. Students trade cards and find a new partner.
6. Repeat as many times as needed.

The beauty of this strategy is its simplicity. Every student needs one thing to hold. They can either talk about what they have or answer a question from their partner. As students answer questions and trade, they are able to interact with most of the questions or materials over time.

If you are writing questions, students do not each need a unique question. For a class of 24, there might only be 6 unique questions.

You can also play with realia, like coins in math. As teachers, our job is to consider what I want students to be saying. When playing with coins, sometimes I want students to know the word value and also the value of a specific coin. One partner would ask, "What is the value of a dime?" The other partner would have to answer in a complete sentence, "The value is ten cents."

To support this kind of learning, you can put both the question and the sentence frame for the answer on the board. Many students will not need to see it, but it will be available to those who do, without attaching any stigma to using it.

With specific questions, you can put the answer on the back of the card depending on your class's needs.

In management of the strategy a critical point to consider is how students should find a new partner. Some teachers have students wait to hear a signal (this tends to work well for younger children); others may want students to find a new partner as soon as they finish. Some teachers have students raise their hands as they walk around to find a partner. To make this strategy work efficiently, consider the logistics around how to find a partner before you teach.

Ideas for use

- Math flash cards
 - Partner A: What is $6+2$?
 - Partner B: 8. "What is $3+7$?"
 - Partner A: 10.
 - Trade cards

- Picture cards about vocabulary (an example from a unit on circuits)- ask a partner to describe what is on your card
 - Partner A: What do you see?
 - Partner B: I see a battery connected to a lightbulb. What do you see?
 - Partner A: I see a broken circuit.
 - Trade cards

- Literacy questions
 - Partner A: What was the setting of the story?
 - Partner B: The settings were the witch's house and the forest. Who are the characters in the story?
 - Partner A: The characters were Hansel, Gretel, and the Witch.
 - Trade cards

- Science materials - if you have hands on materials, you can give each student one real thing to hold and trade
 - Partner A: What are the properties of your rock?
 - Partner B: My rock is black, rough, and shiny. What are the properties of your rock?
 - Partner A: My rock is white, smooth, and dull.
 - Trade rocks

These are just a few ideas of content to use with quiz-quiz trade. It can be done in any content area.

Talking Chips (Rojas, 2010)

Talking Chips is an activity that is best used when you want students to generate a variety of ideas on a topic or have a lengthier conversation to explain a sequence of events.

Group size: 2-4 kids per group. Can be done in small groups or with a whole class

Materials: 3-4 talking chips per student

Any language supports you think your students may need

Time: 1 minute for set up, 3-10 minutes to play, 1 minute for clean up

Steps:

1. Put students in groups of 2-4 students.
2. Give each student 3 or 4 talking chips. Each student should have their own color.
3. Students take turns giving answers. Every time they say something, they put one of their chips in the middle.
4. Students continue until all of the chips have been used.
5. If there is additional time, pick up the chips and keep playing!
6. When the game is over, pick a color and have all students with that color collect the talking chips and return them.

Using talking chips helps students develop a variety of ideas around a topic, and requires them to respond to a group. This strategy helps ensure that all students have to opportunity to talk and that the conversation is not dominated by one or two students, while others are able to sit silently.

There are a variety of ways talking chips can be differentiated to meet the needs of different student groups.

With younger students who cannot read or newcomers, you can print talking chips that have pictures of what the students need to say on them.

You can print sentence stems onto the talking chips. These can be differentiated by level in the class or be a variety of sentences that you want them to use around the same topic.

Color code your talking chips and your groups. Tell certain students what color to get, and they have to go in order, making sure your highest students go first so that your lower language students have the opportunity to listen.

Ideas for use

- Pre-assessment
 - Tell your group everything you know about X
- Generating ideas around a new topic: Put a picture on the board and have students describe all the things they see.
 - "I notice a large tree"
 - "I notice tall mountains"
 - Students keep going until they've gotten a large variety of things from the picture
- Characters in a story, when there are many characters
- Problem solving a science experiment
 - "We could try..."
 - "One idea is..."
- Generating details for a paragraph or essay

- Students come up with a topic sentence together, then use talking chips to say as many details as they can for the paragraph
- Using accountable talk sentence stems to have a conversation
 - "I agree with you because..."
 - "I disagree with you because..."
 - "Can you explain that again?"
 - "I would like to add..."

Triangle Talk

Triangle Talk is one of the best strategies for breaking down tasks into discrete parts so students gain confidence and create a well-rounded understanding of a skill or concept. The strategy also gives students the opportunity to practice speaking, reading, listening, and (sometimes) writing with peers who can assist and encourage them to be independent. This is a versatile strategy that is usable for everything from sight words to complex comprehension questions.

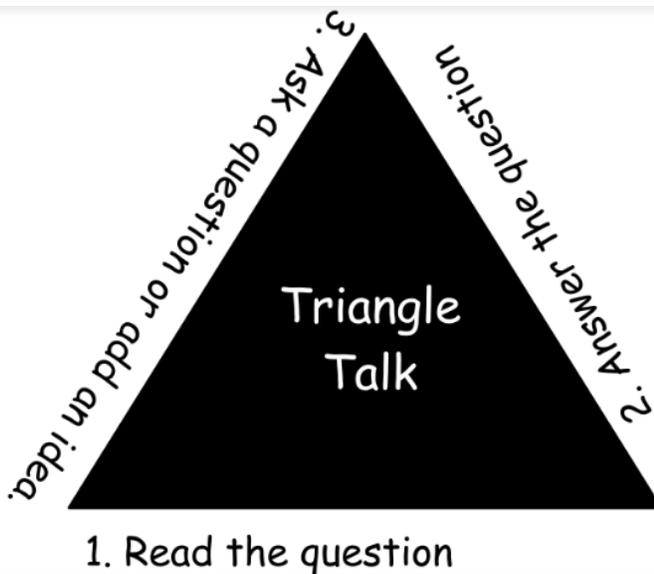
Group size: Any group 3 or larger

Materials: A triangle board

Time: 1 minute for setup, between 5-15 minutes to play

Steps:

1. Put students in groups of 3 and have them each sit on one side of the triangle. They should identify the number they have in front of them.
2. Explain to students the different jobs on the triangle. See example triangle below.
3. Give students question cards.
4. Student 1 does the first job, student 2 does the second job, student 3 does the third job.
5. When all three jobs are completed, the students rotate the board so that everyone has a new job.
6. Students continue rotating and performing all three jobs until time is completed.
7. At the end, pick a number and whoever is sitting at that number returns the materials.



In Triangle Talk, students are able to develop a sense of accomplishment through supported practice. When students are in a group, they are able to share ideas and practice skills a little bit at a time. Once students understand the concept of playing the game, changing the jobs around the outside is a simple task.

When working with newcomers or very low language students, they can keep the same task the whole time. Often, they are able to repeat the answer or choose the card. By allowing newcomers an opportunity to participate in a way in which they can easily succeed and by giving them a chance to listen to their peers, they more quickly gain access to the language. Additional supports can be doing a job, by having a classmate help them read or repeating each time.

This strategy is also usable when the teacher is busy doing something else. After a guided reading group, when I need to work with other students, I will send my group away with a Triangle Talk to answer questions about their book. As a routine, students understand how to play and even six-year olds can be expected to play it independently.

Ideas for use

- Sight words: give students sight word cards
 - 1. Read the word
 - 2. Spell the word
 - 3. Write the word and/or use the word in a sentence

- Literacy comprehension questions
 - 1. Read the question
 - 2. Answer the question
 - 3. Ask a follow up question or add an idea OR find evidence in the text

- Math story problems
 - 1. Read the story problem
 - 2. Write an equation to match the story
 - 3. Solve the equation and explain what you did

- Vocabulary words
 - 1. Read the word
 - 2. Give a definition
 - 3. Use the word in a sentence

- Letter sounds and identification
 - 1. Say the letter
 - 2. Say the sound
 - 3. Write the letter OR say a word that starts with that letter

Pass and Write

Pass and Write works well when students need to practice putting words on paper with a little less inhibition and support from a partner. It is a great pre-writing strategy where students work together to synthesize ideas and get them written down. The premise is that one partner writes, while the other partner dictates the ideas, helps with spelling, and gives the sentence structure.

Group size: Partners, a group of 3 if absolutely necessary. This can be done in small groups or with a whole class.

Pairing: These groups should be heterogeneous.

Materials: Paper; two different color markers, pencils, or pens per pair; language supports as needed

Time: 1 minute of setup. 5-10 minutes to write.

Steps:

1. Decide which partner is writing first. The student writing first should have one color. The other partner tells the first partner what to write.
2. After about a minute or two -- longer times may be necessary for struggling writers -- the writer has to immediately stop, even mid-word. The partners switch jobs.
3. The speaker becomes the writer and writes in their own color, and the writer becomes the speaker helping their partner decide what to write.
4. This process continues until you feel that students have completed the writing to the degree necessary.

Pass and Write can be used in a variety of ways with almost any age group. It works best as a prewriting strategy before students are sent to do their own independent writing, usually the next day. The strategy works because it lowers students' fears around writing and makes it a game where they have support.

To help students be accountable when they are the speakers, it helps to give them a word box, sentence stem, or some kind of visual that they can use to help their partner spell or generate ideas. This is especially critical to make sure the lower level language student feels as though they can help their partner. You can also put words or visuals on the board or around the room where the speaker can go find information.

Giving students different colored writing utensils has a dual purpose: first it is engaging for students. They love the opportunity to write in color. Secondly, it allows you and them to see that both partners are participating and writing. When they go to do their independent writing, they can see that they were able to produce writing and have the confidence to try on their own.

Pass and writes can be used for almost any topic where there is not a personal opinion component. Students need to be able to agree on a basic set of facts so that they can create a coherent piece of writing.

Ideas for use

- Practicing a paragraph with a topic sentence, three details, and a conclusion
 - Give students some of the stems they need to write a sentence around a topic you have decided on.
 - Students can practice saying and writing each part of a paragraph
- Summarizing a story
 - Using sequencing words, students can write the most important parts of a story
- Writing observations about science
 - Plant parts

- Properties of rocks
- The rock cycle
- Parts of a circuit
- How to solve a math equation using sequencing words

Order These

Order These is a multi-day strategy that builds students' ability to create their own language and promotes both reading and writing skills. By the end of the week, students should be able to independently write about the given topic with limited or no support. It is a little more time consuming, but the outcome is worth it. Once students understand the concept, they can begin to complete all days but the first on their own.

Group size: Small groups, usually not more than 6

Materials: Pocket chart and sentence strips

Time: 10-15 minutes with a teacher, 10-15 minutes independent

Steps:

Day 1

1. Create a shared group of sentences around a topic including all student voices. Write the sentences on sentence strips.
2. Give each student a sentence and have the students put the sentences in order in the pocket chart.
3. Read the sentences together.
4. Students then write the sentences with the help of the pre-written sentences.

Day 2

1. Prep: Cut the sentences into phrases.
2. Give each student one sentence that they have to reconstruct.
3. Have students put their sentences in order in the pocket chart.
4. Read the sentences together.
5. Remove some of the phrases from the pocket chart.
6. Students write the paragraph again, and fill in the missing words on their own.

Day 3

1. Prep: Cut the sentences into words.
2. Give each student one sentence that they have to reconstruct.
3. Have students put their sentences in order in the pocket chart.
4. Read the sentences together.
5. Remove most of the words from the pocket chart, leaving only key pieces like sentence starters and or necessary vocabulary words.
6. Students write the paragraph again, and fill in the missing words on their own.

Day 4:

1. Construct the sentences together.
2. Remove all or most of the words.
3. Students write a paragraph on their own.

Order These can feel a little daunting because of how long it takes, but once students get used to doing it, they can do a lot of it independently. It works well as an independent activity after guided reading or another small group lesson. Order these is an effective strategy because it provides students with a gradual release of responsibility, coupled with reading and writing.

The strategy helps students with both syntax and vocabulary in their reading and writing. When students are guided to create their sentences as group at the beginning of the week, you can encourage them to use vocabulary that may be difficult for them. As they have time to practice using the words they will become integrated into the student's vocabulary.

At the outset of the week, the goal is simply to have students copy the sentences and be able to read them back. However, by the end of the week, students should be able to paraphrase some ideas creating their own

meaning. When students have the repeated opportunity to write about the same thing in the same way they gain the ability to create sentences on their own as well as develop a deeper understanding of the content.

With lower level students, this activity can be done with one or two sentences to begin with and increase in complexity as students progress.

Ideas for use

- Summarizing a fiction text
 - Have students summarize the book and write the sentences with the ordering words
 - Include characters, setting, and events
- Explaining a process
 - Explain the water cycle
 - Students put sentences in order to show understanding of a scientific process
- Writing a paragraph with main idea and key details in a nonfiction text

Write (or draw or solve) This! (Rojas, 2010)

Write This! is one of the most manageable cooperative learning strategies for getting students to both talk and write. Students work with a partner to write, draw, or solve what their partner tells them to do. It is versatile and can be used as a precursor to longer strategies like Pass and Write, or be done for its own sake.

Group size: Partners (you can make a group of three with an odd number of students)

Materials: 1 white board and 1 marker per pair or 1 pencil and one paper. Question cards, word cards, or whatever you need them to have so they can talk to each other

Time: Set up: 1 minute, play time 5-15 minutes, clean up 1 minute

Steps:

1. Partner A reads a question and tells Partner B what to write as an answer.
2. Partner B writes the answer.
3. After either a certain number of questions or at a predetermined time, they switch.
4. Partner B tells Partner A what to write.
5. This continues until the game stops.

The thing that makes Write This! so successful is how easy it is for students to understand. It is almost like having a turn and talk with a white board involved. Students know they are going to have to participate, and must remain fully engaged the whole time. I tell students they are not allowed to put anything on their board that their partner has not told them to write.

In this strategy, students are developing all four language modalities. They have to be careful listeners to their partners, read their answers to check that they make sense, write what their partner says, and tell their partner what to do.

You can also include a share out component depending on the type of questions students are answering. This builds additional speaking and listening practice for the class, while lowering students' affective filter because they've had the chance to practice already.

With this strategy, it is important to remind students that their job is to use their words to help their friends. Many students will want to either write for their partner or trick their partner. The key to success with this strategy is helping students realize that success is both of them doing their jobs well.

In working with teachers of older grades, they love it because students can stay in their seats and work with a neighbor. For younger students, it works because they want to engage and work with a friend. It can be used in all subject areas with a variety of supports as necessary.

Ideas for Use

- Math problems
 - Put a math problem on the board.
 - Partner A has to tell the strategy they use to solve
 - Partner B draws the strategy
 - They make sure the answer is correct
- Word work
 - When working on a phonics skill, students can have a basket of words that have that skill.
 - They take turns reading the words to their partner
 - The partner's job is to use the new phonics skill to write it

- Visualizing a story
 - Partner A tells their partner all of the details they can remember about a story.
 - This can include setting, characters, character traits, events
 - Partner B draws.
 - They switch
- Vocabulary
 - Students can read a vocabulary word.
 - They describe the word to their partner and their partner either writes a definition, or draws a picture that matches the description
-

I Heard You Say (Rojas, 2010)

I Heard You Say is a powerful tool for helping students develop their listening skills. When students engage in a conversation, they are often so focused on what they are going to say that they forget to take in anything that their group or partner is saying -- much like many adults. Employing I Heard You Say, requires that students listen to their partner to help build their own comprehension or help correct a misconception.

Especially for language learners, they are often so focused on having to share that they forget to listen.

Group size: 2-4 people

Materials: Language supports or nothing at all

Time: 3-10 minutes

Steps:

1. Partner A shares.
2. Partner B says what Partner A said using the sentence stem "I heard you say..."
3. Partner B shares their own idea.
4. Partner C repeats Partner B, using the sentence stem, "I heard you say..."
5. This continues as all group members have a chance to share and listen.

One of the things that makes I Heard You Say such a valuable activity is that it can be used just as you would use a turn and talk or it can be added to another cooperative learning strategy. As students practice, they engage deeply in listening and it becomes a habit to learn from each other.

When playing this game, students are able to understand what their partner is saying or ask for clarification when they don't get it.

This strategy also helps students develop stronger speaking voices, without having to be explicitly taught. ELs often speak softly as they develop their confidence, making it difficult to hear them. It's amazing how easily students prompt each other to speak loudly when they are responsible for repeating back what the other said.

When I am using this strategy in my classroom, I often see students prompting each other to use sentence stems, to listen carefully, and speak clearly. Adding the responsibility of listening with purpose helps all students participate more deeply in their learning.

Ideas for Use

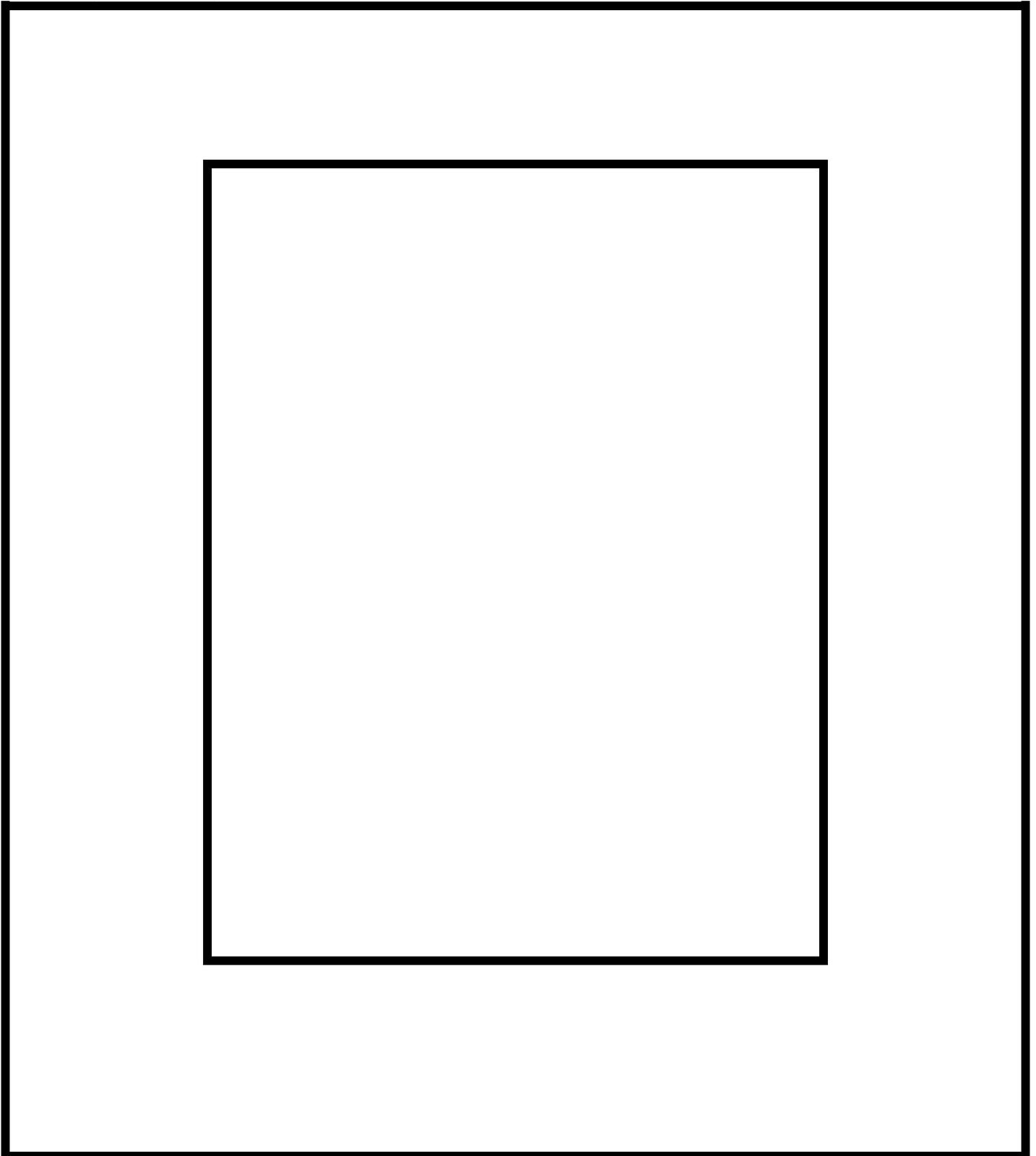
- Add this on to a turn and talk to make sure partners actually listen to each other.
- Whole class share outs: when one person shares, the next person who goes must repeat/rephrase what the person before them shared
- Summarizing: have students slowly build a whole story. One partner shares what happens first, the second says, "I hear you say..." and then adds the middle. Students take turns until they can say the whole story independently.
- Add this to talking chips: Before a student can put down their own talking chip and add an idea, they say what the person before them said. This tends to add more ideas instead of many repeats

Identity Activities

- In this section are three options that the teacher can use with their students to learn about who they are
- There are also a series of questions adapted from Ghody Muhammad's *Cultivating Genius* (2020) that can be used by the teacher to learn about their students, they may also be used by the mentor to help figure out what the teacher knows about their students.

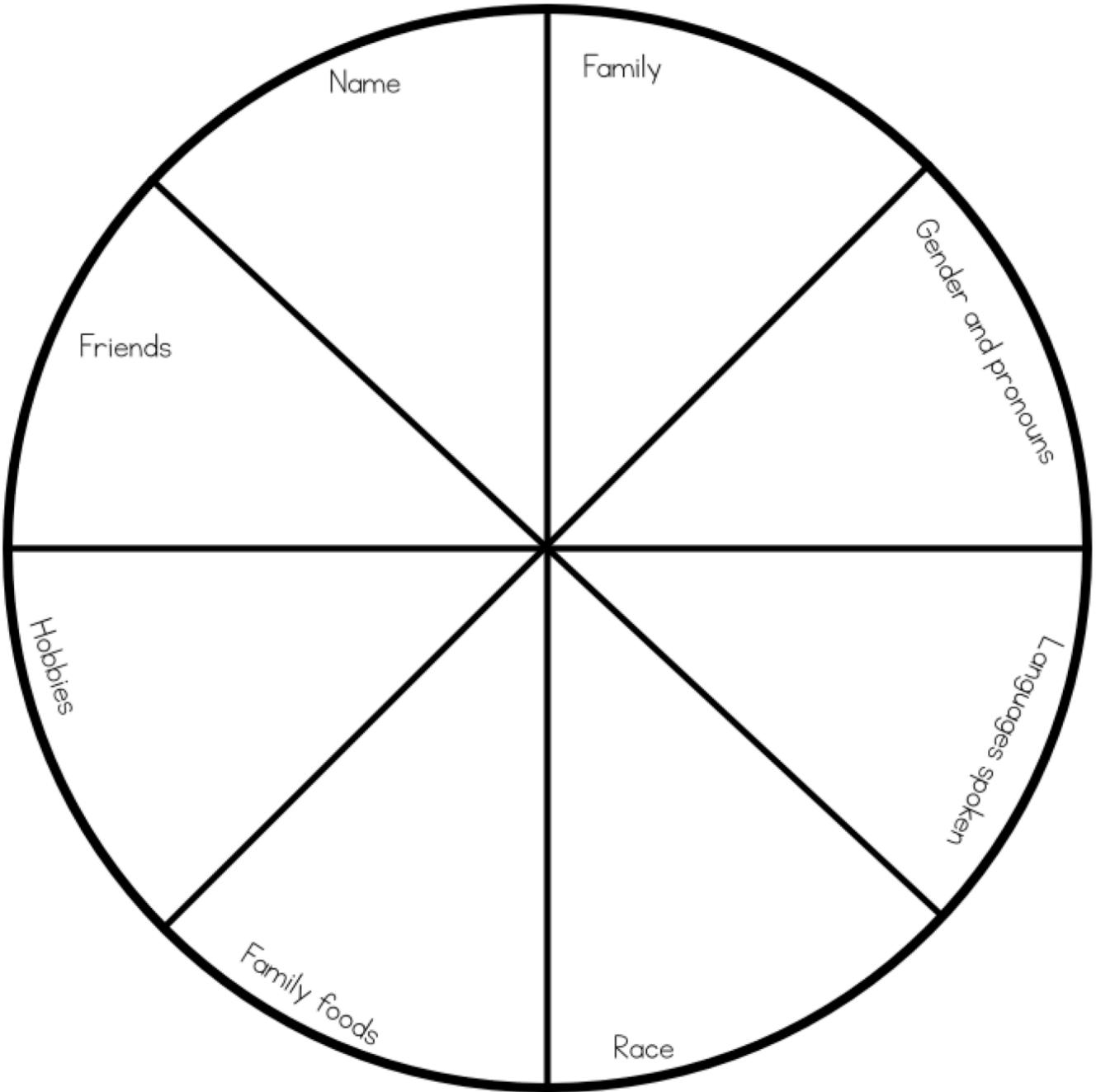
All About Me!

- Draw a portrait of yourself in the inner box
- Around the outside draw pictures or write words about people, places, and things that are important to you

The image shows a worksheet for a self-portrait activity. It features a large outer rectangle and a smaller inner rectangle, both defined by thick black lines. The inner rectangle is positioned in the upper-left quadrant of the outer rectangle, leaving significant white space around it for drawing and writing.

Identity Wheel

- In each of the sections write or draw about the topic to share about yourself



Questions about Identity

- These questions are meant to be asked of students over a period of time to get to know them and understand their backgrounds. They are taken from Gholdy Muhammad's *Cultivating Genius* (2020 p. 72)
1. What is your name? What does it mean?
 2. What are your cultural identities?
 3. How would you describe yourself to someone who doesn't know you?
 4. What would your friends say about you?
 5. What do you read, write, or think about in your home and community?
 6. How are people like you depicted in society and in the media?
 7. How is (content area) important in your culture?
 8. Do you feel like