

Content Strategies by Domain

In order to be proficient in a language, students need to develop proficiency in four domains: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Intentional practice each day in content area classes will help students to acquire the language they need to be successful in school. Here are some strategies that could be incorporated into daily practice. Although the tasks are separated by domain, many of them are integrated. In other words, they help develop language in two or more domains.

Listening

1. **Listening Triads**- Place students into groups of three and give each a number from one to three. Write three statements or concepts on the board (can use graphics to support). Statement/concept 1 is explained to the group by Student 1 and so on. (I.e. social studies: 1- What is a local community? 2- What is a national community? 3- What is a global community?)
2. **Hands Up**- Students are given a set of questions based on a text. The text is read aloud, and as students hear the information, they raise their hands. The questions should be in the order that information is given in the text.
3. **In Addition**- Students offer information about a topic. Others listen carefully and add onto the first idea. Sentence starters can be used to help add to the ideas (I.e. *One thing I could add... I have a different idea about that...*)
4. **Closing Affirmation**- A large part of African Pedagogy, affirmations help students acknowledge their role in learning. The affirmation is read aloud sentence by sentence by the group leader. The group repeats the affirmation. The same affirmation can be used for the close of each day. Affirmations can be written by a class. (See example)
5. **Information Extraction**- A task could be written for students to listen to facts or opinions. You could use a documentary, film, recording of a debate (etc.) For facts, prepare a sheet in chronological order corresponding to facts as they are presented. Students then transfer the information to the the sheet as they are listening. They could make predictions about information before listening as well.

Please, in the name of all that is good in language and thinking, please let the children talk.

Let them talk a great deal; listen to the equivalent of a book a day; talk the equivalent of a book a week; read the equivalent of a book a month and write the equivalent of a book a year.

-Walter Loban

6. **Picture Dictation**- Students have a number of individual pictures that correspond to a story, text, sequence to an experiment (etc.). As the story, text or directions are read aloud, the students put the pictures into the right sequence.
7. **Describe and Draw**- This can be a teacher-directed or pairs activity. One student draws a series of shapes (could be related to academic content). The partner cannot see what is drawn. The artist gives instructions to the partner about how to recreate the drawing. (I.e Draw a circle in the middle of the page. Then, draw a triangle in the middle.)
8. **Barrier "Games"**- These are activities that are done in pairs and involve solving a problem. They involve an "information gap" where each player has different information that each player needs in order to solve the problem. Players should not be able to see the other's information but should communicate to each other in order to solve the problem together.

Speaking

1. **Stand and Deliver/Just a Minute**- Invite students to talk about a subject for one minute without hesitation and repetition. If the student hesitates or repeats, another student may gently interrupt and take on the topic. This should be modeled so no one feels discouraged about participation. Encourage students to keep trying to make it to the one minute mark! (Note: It may be easier to start with Social/Instructional language such as: "Talk about your best friend" before moving into language of content areas.)
2. **Inquiry and Elimination**- Choose a large picture showing a range of objects within a set. One member of the group chooses one picture from the set. The others must guess what it is by asking yes or no questions only. This works best if you limit the number of questions that can be asked and encourage students to ask questions that elicit the maximum amount of information.
3. **Taboo**- Students can make cards about content concepts. One student must describe the idea on the card without saying the taboo words. Can be played in teams for points.
4. **Opening Affirmations**- Start each day with a "call and response" that is positive and affirms that all students in your classroom are learners. (See example)
5. **Think/Pair/Share**- Pose a question or idea or math problem to students. Ask them to think about it individually to form ideas. Allow them time to work with a partner to work on the problem and construct an answer together. Partners pair then share their work with the whole group. This is a powerful idea that can and should be used in multiple content areas.
6. **String Along**- Have students each choose from a baggie filled with string or yarn of varying lengths. Give a topic and some time for them to reflect on what they will say. (I.e., "Tell us something about your best friend." or "Tell us about your favorite...") After

a moment to think about the prompt, students take turns talking. They talk about the subject while slowly wrapping the string around a finger. When the string runs out, the talking stops and moves to the next student.

7. **One Minute Buzz-** “For one minute (perhaps shorter for younger students) talk with your partner about what we just learned. What was the important learning for you?” Ask students to be prepared to share this with the class. (I.e. the buzz can be about the water cycle or a math concept)
8. **Luck of the draw fishbowl-** Place students’ names in a container and pick two or three names at the end of class. The students whose names are chosen prepare a brief summary of specific information recently learned for the next class meeting.

Reading

1. **Modeled Reading/Read-alouds/Think-aloud-** Students listen to the teacher read aloud from a variety of genres. Teachers choose text according to personal and classroom interests, content topics, authors and strategies being taught. *Special attention is paid to fluent, expressive oral reading.* Selected teaching points are based on on-going observation and assessment and target students’ current needs. *Read-alouds* teach vocabulary, concepts, comprehension strategies, writing crafts and traits, etc. Teachers frequently reread texts to teach additional concepts and extend learning. In a **think-aloud**, teachers pause and interject their own thinking about the text. A *think-aloud* will model specific reading comprehension strategies and provide students with a model for metacognition. **Read-alouds** are **usually paired** with **think-alouds** so that the teacher is reading and thinking aloud as he/she demonstrates fluent reading and the metacognitive process (thinking about one’s thinking).
2. **Shared Reading-** The teacher and student engage in an interactive reading experience using a common text and/or a text with large print. This interaction may be structured so that the teacher reads aloud while students read along orally or silently. Usually, the teacher rereads the text many times over a period of days with students joining in orally during repeated readings. The use of big books, large charts, pocket charts, transparencies, or multiple copies of text ensures that everyone can see the print. In *shared reading* attention focuses on specific teaching points based on ongoing observation and assessment to target students’ current needs. Teaching points may include concepts of print, rhyming, predicting, letter or word recognition, building common background knowledge, demonstrating and practicing intonation and pausing, practicing fluency, etc.

3. **Reader's Theater-** Provides an opportunity to review or extend a modeled or shared reading. Students can be grouped heterogeneously because parts can be assigned based on language and literacy strengths. Simple props such as masks or puppets (provided or created) can increase motivation.

Reader's Theater routine: (multiple copies of text are needed)

- Leader reads the story aloud.
 - Everyone reads the story together.
 - Partners read the story aloud.
 - Everyone is assigned a part.
 - Students practice parts on their own.
 - Students practice their parts together.
 - Students perform for the class.
4. **Jigsaw Reading-** Students are placed into groups of four and are given different passages about a topic containing information that the whole group needs about a question or hypothesis. Passages can be assigned at the student's independent level. Each student reads the passage independently, taking notes. The group convenes and shares information. With the shared information, they form an answer to the hypothesis or question. (Can be used at a listening station as well.)
 5. **Story Innovation-** Use an original story as the basis for creating a new one. Working in groups (or as a teacher-led activity), key words are changed to create a new story while retaining the underlying structure. For example, the characters could be changed and events are changed to fit the new characters. As changes are made, the story is written on a piece of chart paper. Students take turns making suggestions and reading the story as it is created to ensure that it makes sense.
 6. **Sequencing-** Cut up sections of text and place them in envelopes. Hand them out to small groups and give the groups time to organize them into logical order. The sections could be glued and then they can discuss and defend their decisions in a larger group. (I.e. a sequence of events related to an historical event)
 7. **Wallpapering-** Give groups of students small pieces of paper to write down one thing they know about a topic, or one idea that they have about a controversial issue. Students then stick the pieces of paper on the wall. Students walk around the room and read other students' ideas. Later they can comment on the ideas of others: *I agree with the one that said... I didn't know that... I don't think that's right...*
 8. **3-2-1-** Have students write three things that they consider to be important to remember from what they have read, two things they would like to investigate further and one thing they would like to do for a project.

Writing

- 1. Dictogloss-** Students listen to the teacher reading a passage without writing anything. On the second read, students write as much as they can. Students then work in pairs to try to recreate the passage. Then students move to groups of four to negotiate what they heard. The passage can be read again with students self-correcting the passage or can be collected for information.
- 2. Snowballing-** Pair up students and ask them to discuss a theme or topic or story. Give them three minutes to discuss and write down their most important ideas on separate pieces of paper. Have them crumple their ideas and throw into the center of the room. The pair joins another pair to make a group of four and they have another three minutes to come up with three new ideas to add to the snowball pile. You can continue making bigger groups. Read from the “snowball pile” or have students choose a “snowball” to write about that day.
- 3. Word Splash-** Key content-related word is written on board for students to spontaneously add words/phrases associated with the topic.
- 4. Graffiti Write-** Groups of students respond to content-related question prompts introducing a topic on stations around the room in a sequential manner. Allow them to grow through the stations at least two times to respond to the ideas of others.
- 5. Response Journal-** Students react regularly in journal form to question prompts based on what they have read.
- 6. Sticky Notes-** With sticky (post it) notes, have students write down “I wonder if. . .” or “This reminds me of. . .” prompts to demonstrate possible questions or thoughts. Can also be used for comprehension strategies (predicting, making connections, etc.)
- 7. Exit Slips-** Have students provide a brief written summary of what they have read just prior to the end of the lesson. Can be formal or informal slips.
- 8. Sequencing-** Use a set of pictures that illustrate a sequence. Individually, in pairs or in groups, students put the pictures in the proper order. They describe the sequence and problem-solve until they come to agreement on the order. Students then write about the sequence or create an original story. A challenging adaptation is to give each student in the group one card and tell them not to show the card. Each student describes the card (anyone can start). When all have finished describing the cards, the group negotiates the order of the cards based on the descriptions. They then place the cards in order based on the discussion.