

# 9

## REINFORCING EFFORT AND PROVIDING RECOGNITION

**C**lassroom Instruction That Works indicates that reinforcing effort and providing recognition affect student attitudes and beliefs. Krashen and Terrell's "affective filter" hypothesis (1983) describes how negative feelings and lack of self-confidence and motivation can reduce a student's ability to acquire a new language. If a student suffers from low self-esteem, inadequate motivation, and apprehension, an affective filter goes up like an imaginary wall, seriously affecting the process of language acquisition.

### Reinforcing Effort

---

Reinforcing effort is about helping students understand the relationship between effort and achievement. In order to improve student performance, we need to address their attitudes and beliefs about how they learn.

At the beginning of the year, I talked with the whole class about learning English. Even non-ELLs are in stages of language acquisition. Today we made a video and it was unbelievable. With my new ELLs, we had practiced and practiced and practiced the same song. They totally had it, so when the video was done, they said, "Oh! I can't believe I just did that!" Everybody came up to the ELLs saying, "You're doing a good job."

My class will not laugh if somebody says "tree" instead of "three." They are very positive with each other. By hearing "You can do it" from each other, I think it builds their effort up, and they want to do more. They are making every effort to use English, and if it's not perfect, it's OK, because the others are acknowledging that they're putting forth their best effort.

—D. H.

## Generalizations from *Classroom Instruction That Works*

Two generalizations can be drawn from the research about reinforcing effort. First, students are unaware of the direct effect that effort has on success. Second, students can learn that the effort they put into a task has a direct effect on their success. Research shows that students who are taught about the connection between effort and achievement do better than students who are taught time-management techniques or comprehension strategies. In addition, a strong belief in effort increases motivation. ELLs and English-dominant students alike will benefit from learning to operate from a belief that effort pays off.

## Classroom Recommendations

*Classroom Instruction That Works* makes two classroom recommendations related to reinforcing effort.

**1. Explicitly teach students the importance of effort.** This recommendation will benefit ELLs and English-dominant students alike. It involves telling students personal stories from your own life about times when effort led to success. You can also provide students with examples from the lives of well-known people (e.g., sports stars, historical figures, political leaders). If it is an Olympic year, remind students to pay attention to the "up-close and personal" stories of the athletes, which are loaded with examples of effort leading to achievement. One rarely hears athletes credit their success to luck.

Consider asking ELLs to share their language learning experiences. English-dominant students may not have any conception of what it takes to learn a second language.

**2. Track effort and achievement.** Students can use graphs or charts to see the correlation between effort and the progress of their achievement. Figure 9.1 depicts an effort rubric from *Classroom Instruction That Works*. Preproduction and Early Production students will benefit if the linguistic complexity of the chart in Figure 9.1 is reduced, as shown in Figure 9.2.





For mainstream students, you can use an achievement rubric like the one shown in Figure 9.3. Figure 9.4 depicts an achievement rubric adapted for ELLs. Depending on their language stage, students can either read the chart themselves or have the teacher or another student help them with it. Both ELLs and English-dominant students can use the effort and achievement chart in Figure 9.5.

**Figure 9.1**  
Effort Rubric

4	I worked on the task until it was completed. I pushed myself to continue working on the task even when difficulties arose or a solution was not immediately evident. I viewed difficulties that arose as opportunities to strengthen my understanding.
3	I worked on the task until it was completed. I pushed myself to continue working on the task even when difficulties arose or a solution was not immediately evident.
2	I put some effort into the task, but I stopped working when difficulties arose.
1	I put very little effort into the task.

Source: Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001), p. 52.

**Figure 9.2**  
Effort Rubric Adapted for ELLs

4		I worked until I finished. I tried even when it was difficult. This lesson helped me learn more English.
3		I worked until I finished. I tried even when it was difficult.
2		I tried, but I stopped when it was too difficult.
1		I didn't try.

**Figure 9.3****Achievement Rubric**

4	I exceeded the objectives of the task or lesson.
3	I met the objectives of the task or lesson.
2	I met a few of the objectives of the task or lesson, but did not meet others.
1	I did not meet the objectives of the task or lesson.

Source: Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001), p. 52.

**Figure 9.4****Achievement Rubric Adapted for ELLs**

4	I did more than learn the objective or lesson.
3	I learned the objective or lesson.
2	I did some things, but I didn't learn everything I needed to.
1	I did not learn what I needed to or do the lesson or activity.

**Figure 9.5****Effort and Achievement Chart for All Students**

Name: _____			
Date	Assignment/ Activity/ Lesson	Effort Rubric	Achievement Rubric
Oct. 20	Homework— 5-paragraph essay	2	1
Oct. 25	Quiz	4	4

Below is a classroom example in which students tracked their levels of effort and resulting achievement. You will need to help ELLs by using strategies appropriate to their level of language acquisition. As always, keep in mind your tiered questions and the Word-MES formula.

## Classroom Example

*Subject:* Physical Education

*Content Objective:* To understand the relationship between effort and achievement when running 100 meters.

For two weeks, students in Ms. Pickering's physical education class kept track of their level of effort using the rubric in Figure 9.6. They also tracked their times for running 100 meters. At the end of the two-week period, they discussed what they had learned about themselves.

**Figure 9.6**  
Physical Education Effort Rubric

4	I ran until I finished. I tried even when it was difficult.
3	I ran until I finished. I knew I couldn't do any better.
2	I tried, but I stopped when it was too difficult.
1	I didn't try.

### *Preproduction*

Students will need your help understanding the effort rubric. You can use pantomime, gestures, and body language to aid understanding. Students can participate in the discussion by showing, pointing, or nodding.

### *Early Production*

Students will initially need help understanding the effort chart as well, but they will then be able to complete effort and achievement charts independently. As for discussion, you will not hear whole sentences from them, but you can expect to hear key words. To include Early Production students in the discussion, plan to ask questions that require one- or two-word answers.

### *Speech Emergence*

Students can complete their effort and achievement charts with little or no assistance. They are able to produce whole sentences and can be engaged in producing language to describe and report. Some question starters to draw these students into the discussion could include "What did you do when . . . ?" and "How did you react when . . . ?"





With kids who are learning a second language, you really need to cheerlead because otherwise they feel overwhelmed, and they feel that they aren't doing as well as the other kids. But you must also find a way that's intrinsically motivating for them, so that they aren't looking to you all the time. That is very difficult, and for each kid it's a little different. Some kids, especially in the beginning, end up really needing recognition, like one ELL who doesn't like to talk very much. I had to almost coerce it out of her, but now in small groups she is very expressive. She doesn't use two words when she knows six words that she can string together. So for some kids, it initially takes a lot more praise up front, but then you need to start weaning them once you see that they are there. I think that is a huge, huge task for any teacher.

—E. B.

### *Intermediate and Advanced Fluency*

Students can independently complete the charts and participate in the discussion. Ask "why" questions to solicit their opinions, judgments, and creative replies.

## **Providing Recognition**

Providing recognition involves giving students rewards or praise for accomplishments related to the attainment of a goal. Most of the strategies from *Classroom Instruction That Works* are cognitive, but providing recognition is an affective strategy because it deals with attitudes and beliefs. The research, however, shows that the effects of rewards and praise have been misunderstood.

### **Generalizations from *Classroom Instruction That Works***

The authors of *Classroom Instruction That Works* drew three generalizations from the research on providing recognition.

1. **Rewards do not necessarily have a negative effect on intrinsic motivation.** Although educators once thought that providing recognition decreased intrinsic motivation and did not improve student achievement, more recent research has proved otherwise.
2. **Rewards are most effective when they are contingent upon the attainment of some standard of performance.** Rewarding a student for simply completing a task can have a negative effect on motivation. You do not want to convey the message that students have to get paid off in order to accomplish something. Rewarding a student for reaching a specific performance goal, however, can have a positive effect and enhance intrinsic motivation.  
Have you ever walked into a classroom and seen ELLs relegated to a corner and assigned to completing jigsaw puzzles while the rest of the class is engaged in academics? Rewarding ELLs for finishing jigsaw puzzles would undermine achievement and the students' perceptions of their abilities. Feel confident in the modifications you make for these students, as long as your expectations are high. ELLs will meet or exceed your expectations.
3. **Abstract recognition (e.g., praise) is more effective in improving performance than are tangible rewards (e.g., candy, stickers).** In fact, the more abstract and symbolic the reward, the more powerful a motivator it can be.

Verbal praise is one type of abstract recognition. Effective verbal praise specifies the particulars of the accomplishment. Preproduction and Early Production students will need to see and hear effective verbal praise. You can provide visual cues by pointing to what they accomplished or by adding pantomime, gestures, or body movement to verbal praise. Hearing you explain the details of their achievement will motivate higher-level ELLs.

## Classroom Recommendations

*Classroom Instruction That Works* offers three recommendations for recognition in classroom practice.

**1. Personalize recognition.** A good time to do this is following the achievement of a specific performance goal. Because praise is most influential when attached to goal attainment, you are encouraged to ask students to identify the targets to be achieved.

Although ELLs may have different targets than English-dominant students, the ways in which you personalize recognition will be the same in many instances. If you choose to send letters home to parents when targets have been met, be sure to have them in a language the parents will understand (if possible).

**2. Use the pause-prompt-praise strategy.** This strategy is most effective when used with a student who is struggling with a particular task. The “pause” component of the strategy is implemented when the student is in the middle of a difficult task. Ask the student to stop for a moment. During this pause, talk about the difficulty the student is experiencing. During the “prompt” stage, you give the student specific suggestions on ways to improve performance. If the student’s performance improves as a result of the pausing and prompting, you provide “praise.”

The following scenario provides an example of how to implement the pause-prompt-praise strategy. An ELL was struggling with long division. His frustration must have been obvious, because the teacher stopped at his desk and asked him to put down his pencil. When the teacher saw that he was making mistakes mainly because his columns were sloppy, she gave him a piece of graph paper and showed him how to use it. He was surprised at how well it worked. The next time the teacher stopped at his desk, it was to congratulate him on having completed four problems with no mistakes.

**3. Use concrete symbols of recognition.** In addition to verbal acknowledgment, concrete symbols of recognition can include such items as awards, certificates, or coupons. These can be given for

I am a big fan of scratch-and-sniff stickers. I loved them when I was a kid, and that is my favorite thing as a teacher. I try to give them out for actions and accomplishments—not necessarily “You did a good job on this”; maybe it’s more “You really took a risk,” or “You really practiced this so you could read this to the class.” I want to commend students for their effort in reaching a goal.

—E. B.

attaining a certain performance goal, but should not be provided for simply completing a task. These tokens of praise should not be offered as rewards per se, but simply as concrete symbols of recognition. Different students might enjoy different types of tokens. For ELLs, a happy face sticker can have more meaning than a written comment.

### **Adapting Personalized Recognition to the Stages of Language Acquisition**

Let’s examine how you can personalize recognition by praising ELLs for attainment in English language development. Let your ear be your guide when recognizing important milestones in language acquisition.

#### ***Preproduction***

Students experience an important milestone when they move from being nonverbal to speaking in English.

#### ***Early Production***

Students should be recognized for speaking in complete sentences.

#### ***Speech Emergence***

Students deserve recognition for using expressions that are more linguistically complex.

#### ***Intermediate and Advanced Fluency***

Students should be recognized for their growing repertoire of academic language.

### **Summary**

Generalizations from the research tell us that rewards are most effective when tied to reaching a specific standard of performance. English language learners are always trying to accomplish two main goals: improvement of academic achievement and an increase in their English language proficiency. They need to be recognized for this double duty, as they not only have to learn new subject matter but also have to learn it in a new language.

Students should be recognized for progressing to a different stage of language acquisition. When it comes to personalizing recognition, there may not be anything more personal to an ELL than being recognized for becoming bilingual—a feat that perhaps only a small number in the school will accomplish.



# 10

## GENERATING AND TESTING HYPOTHESES

When we hear the phrase “generating and testing hypotheses,” our minds jump to science; we think of laboratories, test tubes, and people in white coats. However, science does not have an exclusive claim on this instructional strategy, which engages students in complex reasoning that can be used in other content areas.

The process of generating and testing hypotheses requires ELLs to access prior knowledge, apply new knowledge, and explain their conclusions. Anytime we use “if-then” reasoning, we enter the realm of generating and testing hypotheses. (For example, when studying transportation, we might ask students what would happen if they had to travel by train rather than by car.)

Berman, Minicucci, McLaughlin, Nelson, and Woodworth (1995) wrote about the need to create new classroom environments that help ELLs acquire higher-level language and reasoning skills. They also note that these students do not always have full access to middle school science and math classes, where inductive and deductive reasoning are generally taught. With that in mind, it is particularly important not to wait for middle school science and mathematics classes to introduce students to inductive and deductive reasoning.



We had homophones a couple of weeks ago, which is horrible for 2nd grade ELLs. We made a flip chart with pictures for "plane" and "plain," and we acted them out. For "through" and "threw," we acted out going through a tunnel.

—L. M.

## Generalizations from *Classroom Instruction That Works*

*Classroom Instruction That Works* suggests the following two generalizations about generating and testing hypotheses.

1. **Hypothesis generation and testing can be approached in an inductive or deductive manner.** When ELLs know how to apply the rules of English when writing, they are using deduction; when they read a passage and figure out the rules of the English language, they are using inductive reasoning.
2. **Teachers must encourage students to explain their hypotheses and conclusions.** Having students explain their hypotheses and conclusions presents an excellent opportunity for ELLs to develop oral and academic language. When students are explaining hypotheses and conclusions, it is important to find time to facilitate English language development using the Word-MES formula.

## Adapting the Generation and Testing of Hypotheses to the Stages of Language Acquisition

### *Preproduction*

Students will need help with the vocabulary (word selection) involved in an explanation. By attaching pictures to key vocabulary and concepts, they will be able to point to items in the description.

These students will always need help learning multiple-meaning words. Attaching visual representations to words will help them learn and remember the differences, for example, between the word "fair" used as a noun (a carnival) and as an adjective (pale, light).

### *Early Production*

You can help students by modeling correct English. Let's say you are engaging students in a historical investigation of George Washington and the cherry tree. If a student says, "He chopped (pronounced chop-ped)," you can model correct English by saying, "Yes, he chopped (pronounced correctly) down the cherry tree." Avoid overt corrections; repeat what the student said, but with correct pronunciation or grammar.

### *Speech Emergence*

Students can benefit from having their language expanded. If a student says, "George Washington chopped down the cherry tree," you

can expand by adding an additional phrase: "Yes, George Washington chopped down the cherry tree with his hatchet."

### ***Intermediate and Advanced Fluency***

Students need language stimulation that will help them develop academic language. You can accomplish this by helping them sound like a book. Rephrase what they may have said and then add: "This is how the author of a book might say that."

## **Classroom Recommendations**

*Classroom Instruction That Works* offers two classroom recommendations regarding hypotheses: Teachers should use a variety of tasks that emphasize generating and testing hypotheses, and they should require students to verbalize their hypotheses and conclusions. Tasks for generating and testing hypotheses include complex reasoning processes such as decision making, problem solving, invention, experimental inquiry, historical investigation, and systems analysis. ELLs can participate in generating and testing hypotheses in a mainstream classroom, but the language complexity must be reduced. For example, you may want to assign Preproduction students to any part of the process that requires hands-on activity. They should also be noting new vocabulary in notebooks and creating visuals to associate with the words. Early Production students will do well with manipulatives and opportunities that allow them to practice the vocabulary of the lesson. Speech Emergence students will understand the task at hand and will be able to communicate in short sentences. Intermediate and Advanced Fluency students will be participating at close to the same level as English-dominant students.

## **Classroom Example**

Let's look at a mainstream lesson designed to help students understand inductive reasoning and then review how to adapt it for ELLs at various stages of language acquisition.

*Subject:* Social Studies

*Content Objective:* To learn that conclusions should be based on a number of observations.

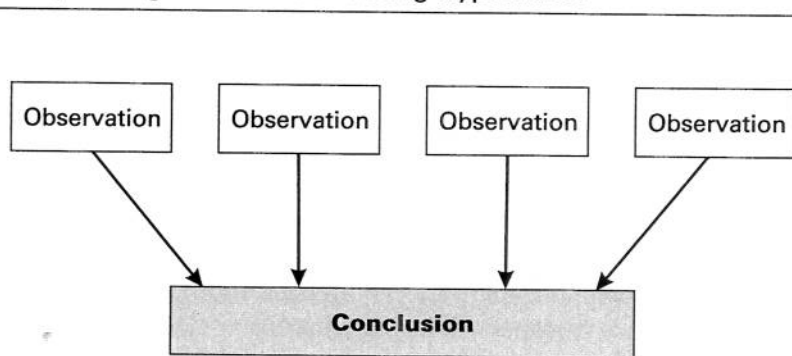
Tell students to take 5 to 10 minutes to go on an inductive outing. This means that you want them to walk around a designated area and carefully observe everything around them. Ask students to make

a list of several specific things that they observe. When they return to the room from a walk around the school grounds, ask them to write a conclusion that they can draw about the area—about the building, the grounds, or the people they have seen. Remind them to make sure their conclusions are supported by three or four observations.

Likewise, when students return to the classroom from a walk around the neighborhood, explain that they need to be ready to share the pieces of evidence that led to their conclusions. For example, if they noticed that a particular house had skis hanging in the garage, a basketball hoop above the driveway, tennis rackets on the porch, and a volleyball net in the backyard, they could reasonably conclude that the people living there are very involved in sports. Figure 10.1 presents a graphic organizer that you can use to help students understand what kind of information you are looking for.

**Figure 10.1**

Graphic Organizer for Generating Hypotheses



### *Preproduction*

Students can draw what they see. Upon returning to the classroom, you can help these students with word selection by giving them vocabulary for what they have represented in their pictures.

English language learners will need multiple encounters with words they are discovering in order to learn and remember the meaning of these new words. Encourage students to continue their language learning outside the classroom by developing a fun method for them to bring in evidence of seeing, hearing, or using identified vocabulary words outside of the school environment.

**Early Production**

Students can also use pictorial representations for what they've seen. When they return to the classroom, you can work with them on getting them to name what is in their pictures. This is a good time to model English; if an ELL says, "That a mower," the teacher correctly models, "Yes, that is a mower," but does not blatantly call attention to the grammatical error.

**Speech Emergence**

Students will be able to list what they observed and draw conclusions. Their writing will likely be composed of short, simple sentences, so they will benefit from you showing them how to expand their written language with adjectives and adverbs.

**Intermediate and Advanced Fluency**

Students will be able to write observations and conclusions. Help them "sound like a book" by asking them (as well as the English-dominant students) to write their conclusions as though they were detectives reporting on a news program.

The induction outing is a good way to introduce inductive reasoning to a class. You can use the strategies described in this chapter in any situation where students can make rich observations: on a field trip, during an assembly, when a movie is being shown, and so on. It is an experience that students enjoy, and it helps them to understand two important points about inductive reasoning: To discern patterns and connections, conclusions should be based on a number of observations; and conclusions that are based on inductive reasoning may or may not be accurate or true.

Preproduction and Early Production students should not be required to draw conclusions during the induction outing; they could work on vocabulary. Though there may be times when the language objective takes precedence over the content objective, this does not mean that ELLs are not learning or are not engaged in inductive reasoning. If you have ever been in a situation where you did not speak the language, you will know that you were constantly engaged in inductive reasoning as you were trying to figure out what was going on.

**Summary**

Generating and testing hypotheses is a strategy that emphasizes inductive and deductive reasoning. These two reasoning processes are usually reserved for particular classes at higher grade levels, but can be taught in the earlier grades using a variety of structured tasks.



To engage all ELLs in the process, you may need to reduce the linguistic complexity of the task. At other times, you will be paying close attention to how students are using their second language as they explain their hypotheses and conclusions.

Second language acquisition requires a significant amount of listening and speaking in order for the student to internalize the new language. Time set aside in the classroom for students to verbally explain hypotheses and conclusions will not only assist in the oral language development of ELLs, it will also help them develop academic content knowledge.

Sometimes, students' language needs will outweigh their academic needs, and you will have to develop their English language skills for the content-specific language demands. When you begin to focus on language learning in addition to content learning, you are helping your ELLs with what they need the most: an integration of language and content instruction.