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ABSTRACT

Four classroom activities useful for language immersion instruction are described and specific applications and extensions are noted. All are best used to teach content and language at the same time. The first, entitled "Think-Pair-Share," is a cooperative learning technique that increases student participation in classroom experiences and increases opportunities for students to learn from one another. It establishes teacher expectations for students' attention and participation by requiring that students think about and interact with all questions. The second activity encourages students to use questioning to discover the common attribute of a collection of items. The items may be revealed one at a time or all together. An exercise called "comparison circles" is an instructional technique based on the logic of Venn diagrams. Relationships among groups of objects in science and social studies are demonstrated to help students learn to classify objects according to common characteristics. Finally, the "guess box" uses a technique similar to "Twenty Questions." A mystery item is placed in a box and students must identify the item by gaining information through questioning. A list of prompts for the guess box activity is included. (MSE)

IMMERSION STRATEGIES

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Instructional Strategies
Immersion Teacher Guides

The descriptions of each instructional strategy that follow outline the "how to's" in one document in order to avoid repeating explanations each time a strategy is referenced in immersion teacher guides.

Collections, Comparison Circles and Guess Box are strategies developed and refined by the Program of Assessment, Diagnosis and Instruction (PADI). PADI staff assisted in the dissemination of these practices to immersion teachers during summer training conducted at Rolling Terrace Elementary School, during the summer of 1987.

I. Think-Pair-Share
   Penser-Partenaire-Partager
   Pensar-Parejar-Compartir

2. Collections
   Une Collection
   Una Coleccion

3. Comparison Circles
   Les Cercles de Comparaison
   Los Circulos de Comparacion

4. Guess Box
   Une Boite a Devinette
   La Caja de Adivinar

All of these instructional strategies are used to teach content and language, <u>together</u> . No strategy should be used without consideration of:

- o students' knowledge of content
- o students' knowledge of the target language
- o content objectives
- o content-obligatory and content-compatible language objectives

Content-obligatory language is comprised of language functions, structures, and vocabulary required for comprehension and mastery of a concept.

Content-compatible language is language functions, structures, and vocabulary which are easily integrated into the content objectives of a lesson, but strictly speaking, are not required for mastery of a targeted concept.

THINK-PAIR-SHARE

Think-Pair-Share is a cooperative learning technique that increases student participation in classroom experiences and increases opportunities for students to learn from one another. It is an instructional strategy developed by Dr. Frank Lyman of Howard County Public Schools.

Think-Pair-Share establishes teacher expectations for students' attention and participation by requiring that students think about and interact about all questions. Following a question or a request, the teacher uses signals to students for the:

- Think Phase - time for students to reflect on a posed question
- Pair Phase - time for students to share thoughts with a partner
- Share Phase - time for students to share thoughts with the whole group

Concurrent use of the immersion language and predetermined signals from the teacher serve to cue students to the appropriate phase of this strategy--thinking, pairing or sharing. Use of visual and verbal signals reinforce language and the meaning of the signals within the context of a variety of activities.

For example, during a grade 2 social studies lesson focusing on natural features such as streams, hills, and forests, the teacher may ask, "What are some of the natural features in this picture?", using a Sherwood Print or another visual as a focal point. Students receive a cue to think about a response, a cue to share ideas with a partner, and a cue to share ideas with the whole group.

Think-Pair-Share is particularly effective for immersion classrooms because:

1. "wait-time" is provided during the Think Phase. Wait time gives students the opportunity to not only search for ideas and thoughts, but to find the language or alternate ways to communicate their responses (gestures, objects, circumlocution);

2. student-to-student interaction is promoted during the Pair Phase. The Pair Phase is a natural conversational situation during which communication is encouraged. More opportunities to practice language in a meaningful context promote second language acquisition. In addition, student-to-student exchanges are less threatening to students than individual student recitation in large-group settings. During the Pair Phase, students are given the opportunity to "rehearse" both what they have to say and how they want to say it.

3. the Share Phase also gives students the opportunity to interact with a larger group, sharing content and modelling language for peers. Thoughts communicated in language similar to that which a student might choose reinforces or confirms language proficiency. Concept mastery is also promoted and reinforced through multiple discussions focusing on the same concept. Ideas and thoughts expressed through new language or other channels of communication present new options to students.

Suggestions for implementing Think-Pair-Share at the beginning level, for students' with limited language proficiency include:

1. Teacher demonstration (modelling), including nonverbal communication, should clearly indicate what is expected during each phase of Think-Pair-Share. In addition, as the directions are given by the teacher, it is important that students be encouraged to communicate with each other during the Pair and Share Phase.

2. Students should work with sets of objects with which they may demonstrate a concept. For example, a kindergarten class may use cuisinaire rods to demonstrate different sized rectangles constructed with available rods. The teacher might say, "Think of how many different rectangles you can make with the cuisinaire rods." (Think Phase) "Work with your partner to make as many different rectangles as possible." (Pair Phase) "Let's look to see how many different rectangles you have made." (Share Phase). Having concrete objects available increases both contextual support of any incomplete communication and the possibility of nonverbal communication which may be necessary because of students' limited language proficiency.

COLLECTIONS

A collection is a group of items which share a single attribute. The students' task is to discover, through questioning, the unifying attribute. The "Collections" strategy was developed by PADI (Program of Assessment, Diagnosis and Instruction) under the direction of Dr. Donnelly Gregory, Montgomery County Public Schools.

Analysis and classification of attributes are the thinking tools used by the students to discover why items form a particular collection. Students receive assistance in their discovery of the uniting concept of a collection from teachers' open-ended questions and clues.

There are two types of collections--serial and revealed. In a serial collection items are displayed one at a time. In a revealed collection items are displayed simultaneously. A serial or revealed collection of objects may be used to introduce or summarize a concept. A science unit on position and motion might be introduced through: a globe, a record, a hand mixer, a frisbee, a lazy susan, a top, a boomerang and a toy helicopter.

In a serial collection, the teacher removes one item at a time from a container (bag, box, etc). As each item is displayed, students describe its attributes, which are recorded on the board by the teacher. As more items are displayed, students compare displayed items with recorded attributes. Attributes common to all items remain on the list, while those which no longer describe new items in the collection remain displayed on the board, but should be marked (coded) to indicate that students no longer consider them as descriptive of the collection. Suggested attributes that no longer pertain to the entire collection may be used in later discussions to reflect upon possible reclassification of items in a collection or creation of a new collection based on these attributes.

Continuing with the example from the collection of items which all rotate, if the frisbee, top and toy helicopter are the first three items displayed, students might say, "The frisbee is a toy; it's made of plastic; it turns." "The top is a toy; it's made of plastic; it turns." "The helicopter is a toy; it's made of plastic; it turns." Therefore, the listed attributes of the three objects would be:

all are toys
all made of plastic
all turn

Students should always be required to support identified attributes and their presence in all items. In the collection of objects that rotate, imagine that the next item displayed is a hand mixer; the teacher would ask the students if all attributes previously listed are represented by the hand mixer. Although "toys" has been previously listed, it would most probabl be removed, since a hand mixer is not a toy. It is however possible that students not make this request, and teachers should not impose recognition, acceptance, or rejection of an attribute. The purpose of this activity is that students generate understanding of identifying attributes.

A request for new categories might elicit the responses:

- all need energy to move (electric and people power)
- all items are found in homes
- all items are man made
- all items are bought in a store
- all items are plastic or metal (revision of plastic category)
- all items turn

Disagreement among students is likely to arise and an attribute should remain "active" on the list of attributes until class consensus is reached. As additional items in the collection are displayed, students should decide if the attribute in question should remain or be designated as no longer pertaining to the collection. Leaving an attribute in dispute on the list until dissenting students also agree that it should be removed gives students the opportunity to arrive at a decision on their own.

As previously defined, all items in a revealed collection are displayed simultaneously. Students are asked to identify attributes common to all items and to support their suggested attributes. Once the unifying attribute of a collection has been discovered by the class, the teacher may leave the collection displayed. It is recommended that use of the collection be extended in following class sessions by requesting students to reclassify items from same collection using different attributes as guidelines. Various attributes may be suggested by the students, followed by classification activities based on their suggestions. This second classification activity using the same collection will lead to creation of new sets and provide students with practice of language structures.

Students may bring additional items from home to add to an existing collection. This activity allows students to demonstrate understanding of attributes that unite a given collection and to extend a collection through recognition of other possible relationships among a given set of objects.

Serial and revealed collections are effective techniques in an immersion classroom because:

1. they link abstract ideas with concrete objects through language
2. they provide a setting in which teachers can model questions that promote students' higher level intellectual skills;
3. they provide a meaningful activity during which students with limited language proficiency may respond with "yes-no" and students with more advanced language proficiency may produce language beyond "yes-no" responses; and
4. they increase student-to-student interaction and communication.

Comparison Circles

"Comparison Circles" is an instructional strategy based on the Venn diagram, a technique most frequently associated with demonstrating relationships between sets in mathematics. Comparison Circles extend use of the Venn diagram to demonstrate relationships among groups of objects in science and social studies. This work was developed by the PADI Project (Program of Assessment and Diagnosis) under the direction of Dr. Donnelly Gregory, Montgomery County Public Schools. The following description is an adaptation of the PADI description of Comparison Circles

The purpose of "Comparison Circles" is to assist students in classifying objects according to common attibutes. The teacher begins with two circles, each labeled with an attribute. Objects to be classified are displayed and students are requested to place each item in the appropriate circle.

Comparison Circles should always be introduced using attribute blocks, regardless of the grade level of the class. Introductory activities should limit students' focus to one attribute per circle. For example, one circle might be labeled BLUE and the other SQUARE--supported by drawings. If a student inappropriately places a block in a circle, the teacher poses questions to assist students in identifying why the placement is incorrect.

Classifying objects made from two different materials may serve as another activity, once students are familiar with Comparison Circles. One circle is labeled Wood (and a piece of wood may be glued to the card) while the other circle is labeled Plastic (and a piece of plastic may be glued to the card). The entire collection is displayed on the floor and students take turns selecting items and placing them in one of the two circles. The teacher responds with either a "yes" or "no" to indicate that the placement is acceptable or not. If students' level of language proficiency permits, the teacher should request the student to defend the placement of each item. Students learn that items which do not belong in either circle are to be placed in the space <u>outside</u> the circles. An item made of metal might be selected by the teacher to demonstrate this concept of meaning applied to space outside of either circle.

The concept of the intersection of the two circles should not be <u>taught</u> but rather <u>discovered</u> by students. Teachers assist students' discovery of the intersection through a problem solving process. Let us continue with the above example using attribute blocks in which one circle is labeled BLUE and the second circle labeled SQUARE. A student who selects a blue square may or may not realize that it may be placed in both circles. Instead, the student may simply place the block in one of the two circles. However, within a group or a class, <u>one</u> student is very likely to raise the dilemma

that the block belongs in both circles. Assisted by the teacher's probing questions, the class may solve this problem by moving the two circles together to form the intersection of the two circles which then serves as the third category for blocks that are blue squares. It is extremely important to remember that until the majority of the group demonstrates understanding of the intersection, this structure should not be imposed by the teacher, but rediscovered by students as many times as necessary.

As students become familiar with Comparison Circles with displayed attributes, the attributes may be "hidden"--written on a card placed face down, next to each circle. Students' classification of items is either accepted or rejected by the teacher; based on the items that they successfully classify in each circle, students then formulate hypotheses about the attributes noted on each card. Students test these hypotheses by placing other items in the circle. Acceptance or rejection of the item by the teacher confirms or negates the student's hypothesis.

Depending on the objective, class situation, and objects selected to be classified, a number of options are available for comparison circles. Two circles may be:

1. drawn on the board (especially helpful if magnetic boards are in the classroom as pictures of items may be easily classified);
2. made from macrame rope and placed on the floor(pictures or objects may be classified); or
3. made from yarn and given to individual students or pairs of students to work at their desks (pictures or objects may be classified).

In language immersion classes, teachers should be sure to provide students with the tools in the second language to participate in comparison circle activities successfully. This goal may be achieved by modelling and frequent use of comparison circles in a variety of instructional situations to provide students with practice of this technque. Use of simple objects to introduce and provide practice with this activity may be followed by use of more complex concepts, such as rotation, once students are familiar with comparison circles.

The value of comparison circles in immersion classrooms is that this instructional strategy:

1. links abstract ideas with concrete objects through the use of language;
2. provides a meaningful activity during which students with limited language proficiency may participate and students with more advanced language proficiency may use language beyond "yes-no" responses;
3. provides a strategy through which teachers model and pose questions that encourage higher level intellectual skills; and
4. increases student-to-student interaction and communication.

The Guess Box

The Guess Box is based on a technique similar to twenty questions. A "mystery" item is placed in an attractively decorated box and students must identify the item by gaining information through questioning. The Guess Box is an instructional strategy about attributes, developed by PADI (Program of Assessment, Diagnosis and Instruction) under the direction of Dr. Donnelly Gregory, Montgomery County Public Schools. The following is an adaptation of the PADI description of Guess Box.

The teacher selects an item related to a particular instructional objective, to introduce or summarize a unit. The object must be one that students recognize and which has been previously used for instruction in the immersion classroom. Beginning level Guess Box items should always be real objects. Once students have gained experience with this activity, a representation of an item may be placed in the box. In order to orient students towards a particular area of study, the teacher begins with a clue. A beginning clue might inform the class that the item in the box is the real item, that relates to the study of Japan (social studies). Students must then formulate questions to gather information about the mystery item. The teacher may only respond yes or no to questions. One student is designated to count questions posed.

Students' initial questions usually deal with broad categories of possibilities for classification, such as, "Is it living?" Once broad categories of items have been eliminated, questions become more specific. For example, "Is this living thing a mammal?" might result from students' learning that the item is living. The teacher's refusal to allow students to ask the direct question, "Is it a_____?" requires them to think about categories and attributes that might characterize an item. The teacher and other students assist classmates in reformulating unacceptable questions, as well as restating and recording information gained through questioning.

After ten questions, the teacher stops and asks students to review what they now know about the contents of the box. During the review, positive attributes are cited by students and listed. In upper grade classes, a student may record the attributes. The teacher's assistance is sometimes needed to express attributes in a positive way. For example, if a student says, "We know that it's not wide." The teacher may say, "How can we express this attribute positively? Can we say that the item is narrow?" Based on available information, students decide whether or not to list "narrow" as an attribute.

Another clue may then be presented to the students and the questioning process resumes. Direct questions about naming the contents of the box, such as "Is it a typewriter?" are not accepted. Teacher and classmates give assistance by rephrasing the question, based on information that will either confirm or negate the student's hypothesis about what is in the Guess Box. Another way of asking an information gathering question, "Is it a typewriter?" might be, "Is it a machine that I can use to write letters?"

When the question counter informs the class that another ten questions have been asked, the teacher again requests a review of new information gained through questioning. Attributes are added to the list, and another clue may be given to the class at this time. Students who wish to name the item should be required to pose a question that reflects the item they believe to be in the Guess Box. When a number of students have demonstrated through questions that they have identified the item in the Guess Box, it is time, one student may name the object and cite clues that lead to this choice.

Students who have limited language or whose language is more limited than that of other members of the class may experience some frustration with Guess Box activities. A technique to lend support to such students is to provide them with prompt questions written on 3X5 cards, and accompanied by a visual cue whenever possible. Once the "prompt questions" become part of a student's repertoire, a new set of prompt questions may be formulated by the class or the teacher. Prompts, listed on chart paper, and displayed for the class is another technique that may assist the entire class to learn the process and categories of questions that are acceptable and most efficient. A list of suggested prompts is attached.

As students gain experience with the Guess Box a number of extending questions may serve as follow-up activities. Students might be asked: "Based on the list of attributes and the given clues, what other items might have been in the Guess Box?"; or "What question gave you the information you needed to identify the item in the Guess Box?"

The value of the Guess Box in the immersion class setting is that it:

1. links abstract ideas with concrete objects through language;
2. provides a meaningful activity during which students with limited language proficiency may participate and students with more advanced language proficiency may use language beyond "yes-no" responses;
3. promotes questioning skills involving higher order intellectual skills through use of prompts and peer modelling; and
4. encourages student-to-student interaction and communication.

GUESS BOX PROMPTS FOR IMMERSION STUDENTS

1. Is it living or nonliving?

2a. Is it _____(color)? (blue, red, green, brown)

2b. Is the color important?

3. It is bigger than a piece of chalk (1 meter, a book, me)?

4. Is it smaller than a piece of chalk (1 meter, a book, me)?

5. Is it made by people?

6. Is it natural?

7ccc. Can you eat it?

8. Can you smell it?