



# Strategies for Supporting English Learners Before, During, and After a Lesson or Unit

# Janna Corn

Director of the ELPA Indicator

Office of English Language Proficiency

Oklahoma State Department of Education [janna.corn@sde.ok.gov](mailto:janna.corn@sde.ok.gov)

405-522-1343

**Please post where and what you teach in the chat box.**

# Objectives

Upon completion of this training, you will be able to:

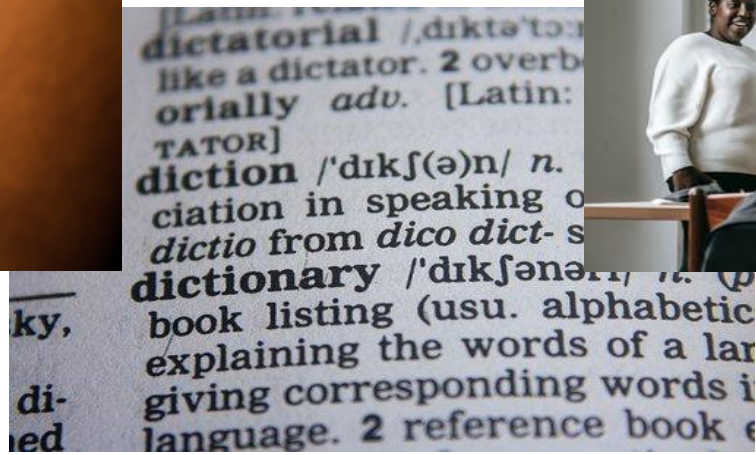
- Immediately implement strategies that support English Learners from the start of a lesson to the finish
- Build an *English Learner Unit Starter Support Packet* that will facilitate learning for all students

# Overview of Today's Session

Stages of a Lesson or Unit	Strategies for Supporting English Learners
Before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teach and Reinforce Vocabulary and Language Structures</li><li>• Build Background</li></ul>
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide Comprehensible Input</li><li>• Integrate Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking</li><li>• Conduct Formative Assessments</li></ul>
After	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Modify and Differentiate Summative Assessments</li></ul>



A.



B.



C.



D.

# Teach and Reinforce Vocabulary and Language Structures

Which picture(s) shows what teaching vocabulary should look like?

Post responses in the chat box.

# Tiered Vocabulary

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
<p>Basic words; survival vocabulary; high frequency in spoken language</p> <p>Ex. Give</p>	<p>High frequency words in print, not as frequent in spoken language</p> <p>Ex. Submit</p>	<p>Specific vocabulary related to content areas</p> <p>Ex. Liquid</p>

fish  
book

stated  
obtain

circumference  
narrative

# Vocabulary to Target

- Academic and specific content words/phrases (Tier 2 and 3)
- Culturally relevant words/phrases including idioms
- Collocations-phrasal verbs [Phrasal Verbs List](#)
- Focus on vocabulary ELs will encounter or will be required to use
- Select target words that are essential to comprehension and communication during the lesson

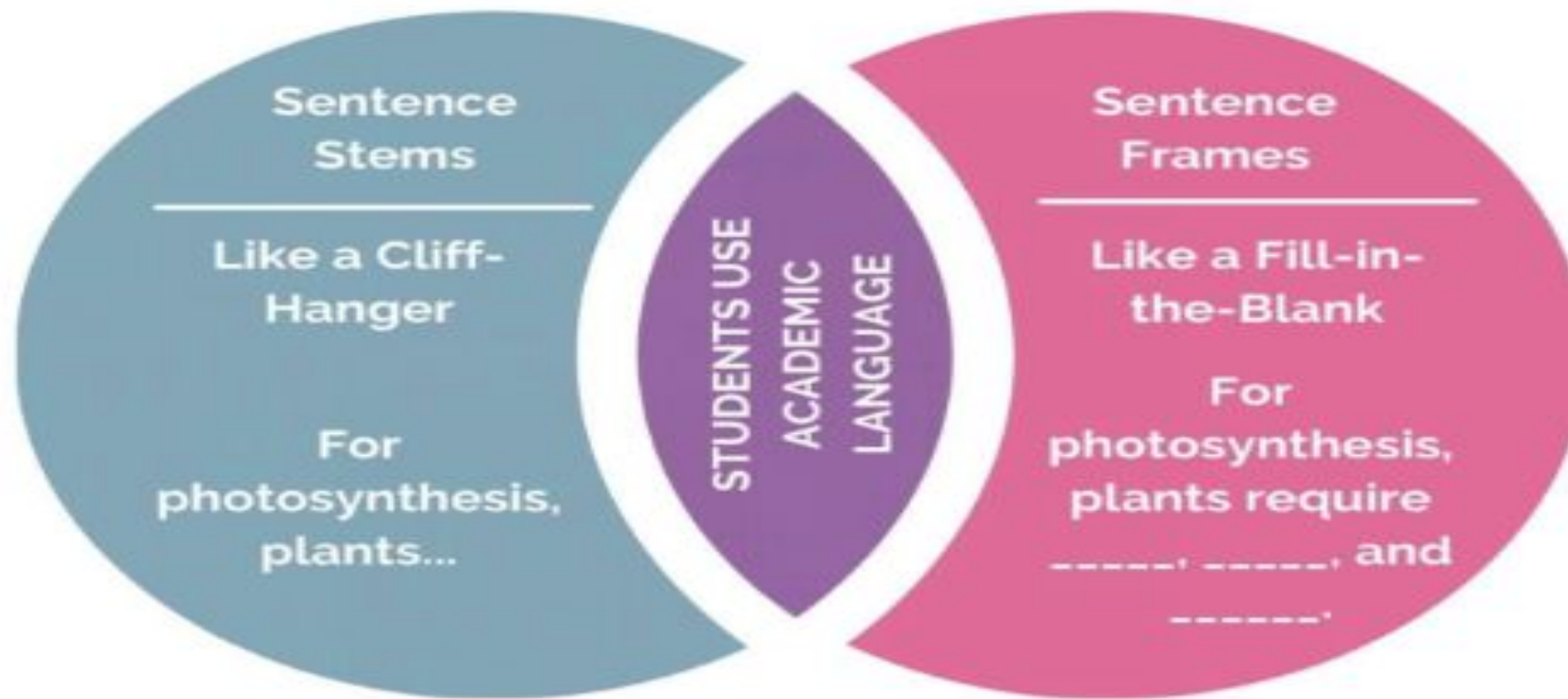
# Language Structures to Target

**Language structures are the formulaic spoken and written responses a student needs to produce in order to participate in learning** (sentence stems and frames, transitions, grammar, and vocabulary).

- Think of ideal student responses.
- Identify the language structures a student needs to provide that ideal response.



# Sentence Stems vs Sentence Frames



# Practice Choosing Vocabulary and Language Structures to Target

- **Content Area:** Science
- **Unit:** Circulatory and Respiratory Systems
- **Sample Text:**  
[https://padlet-uploads.storage.googleapis.com/341840543/5cc39d6209cf91e9f368d34481d78cf8/ex1\\_context.jpg](https://padlet-uploads.storage.googleapis.com/341840543/5cc39d6209cf91e9f368d34481d78cf8/ex1_context.jpg)
- **Directions:** Review the sample text and select and list target vocabulary and language structures

## Nouns

- Circulatory system
- Respiratory system
- Oxygen
- Cells
- Heart
- Lungs
- Arteries
- Carbon dioxide
- Veins
- Capillaries
- Blood vessels
- Trachea
- Bronchial tubes
- Alveoli (alveolus)
- Blood stream
- Diaphragm
- Blood

# Vocabulary

## Adjectives

- Latin root: inter-together  
Interconnected/  
Interdependent

## Verbs

- Pumps (through)
- Eliminate
- Absorb
- Exchange
- Rely (on)
- Inhale/exhale

# Teaching Vocabulary Words

- **Vocabulary Word:** acquire
- **Definition:** to get something, to make it your own, to gain knowledge
- **Parts of Speech:** acquire (v), acquisition(n), acquired (adj)
- **Example Sentences:** You are acquiring English. He has an acquired taste for French cooking. Nelly acquired a lot of debt in college.
- **Collocations:** n/a
- **Greek/Latin Roots:** n/a
- **Synonyms:** learn, achieve, gain, earn, collect, attain
- **Antonyms:** fail, lose, pass, throw away
- **Cognate:** adquirir



# Language Structures

- **Prepositions:** To and from, to and back to, through, carry away
- **Count and Noncount Nouns**
- **Sequence words and phrases**
- **Cause and effect words and phrases**

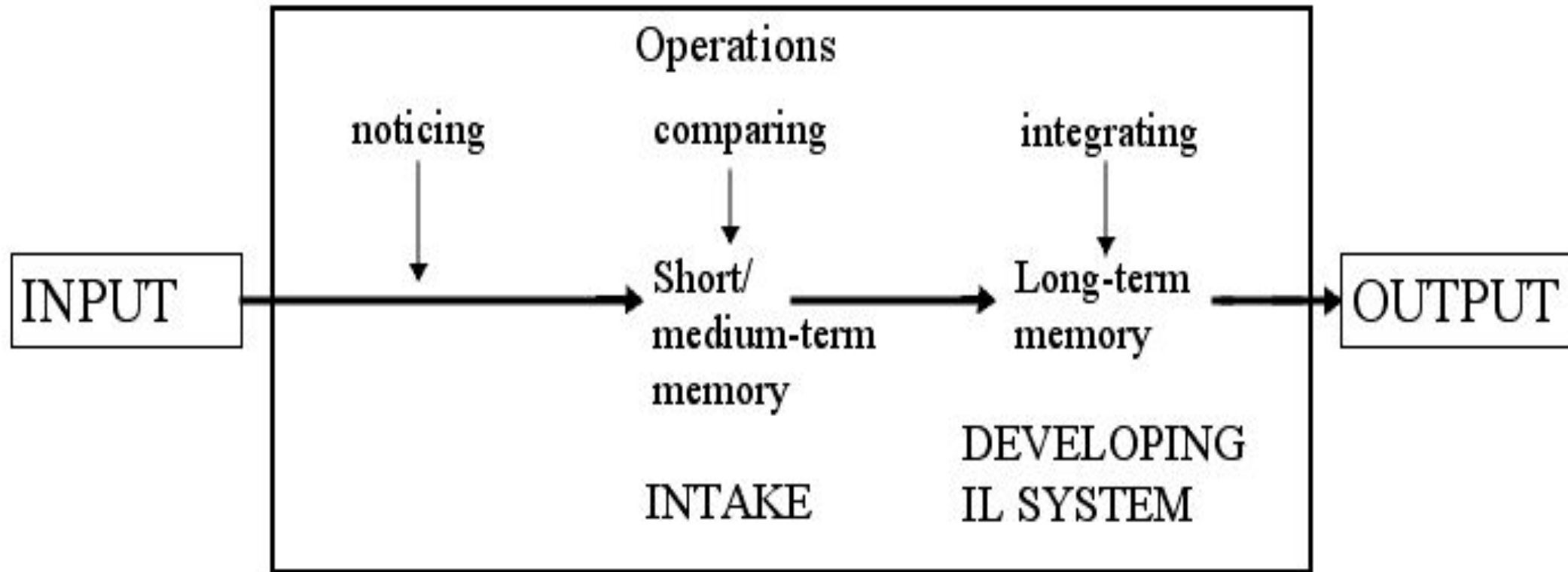
First	Second	Third
At first	After that	At last
At the beginning	finally	Then
As soon as	In the end	It started when
As a result	To start	After this
In the first place	Later on	Next

Type of word	Introducing a reason or cause	Introducing a result or effect
Conjunctions	as, since, because, for, due to the fact that	so
Transitions	[nothing]	as a result, consequently, therefore, thus
Prepositions	due to, because of, as a result of	[nothing]

# Teaching Language Structures

- **Provide mini lessons** on language structures (authentic, practical grammar, not as isolated rules)
- **Display word walls**, lists, charts, and visual tools

# Order of Language Acquisition





# Activities to Reinforce Vocabulary and Language Structures

- Word walls ([Interactive Word Walls](#))/Word Clouds
- Vocabulary journals and vocabulary sentences
- Require the use of words/language structures in context through speaking and writing activities or assignments
- Praise students who use words/language structures voluntarily
- Provide text, audio, or video with target words and language structures and use these yourself
- Word sorts and cloze sentences
- Chants and songs
- [Vocabulary Mini Games](#)



# Build Background and Provide Comprehensible Input

**How can explicitly teaching vocabulary help English Learners build background and understand content?**

**Post responses in the chat box.**

# Building Background

**Building background is the frontloading of prerequisite language and concepts a student must understand in order to participate in learning.**

## Strategies

- Connect content to students' experiences, cultures, and native countries
- Create anticipatory questions or guides
- Bridge prior learning with present learning
- Conduct chapter previews or book-walk discussions and have students make predictions
- Build formal schema around text genres, purposes, features, and organizational structures

# Providing Comprehensible Input

**Comprehensible Input strategies assist English Learners in understanding the meaning of aural and written language without necessarily comprehending every word.**

## Strategies

- Speak slowly, enunciate clearly, and use simplified syntax while supporting speech with concrete examples
- Summarize and review meaning in multiple ways through paraphrasing and repetition
- Use images, photos, videos, labels, realia, manipulatives, and gestures through body language or pantomime
- Chunk longer texts into shorter passages
- Provide step-by-step directions

# Strategies for Providing Comprehensible Input

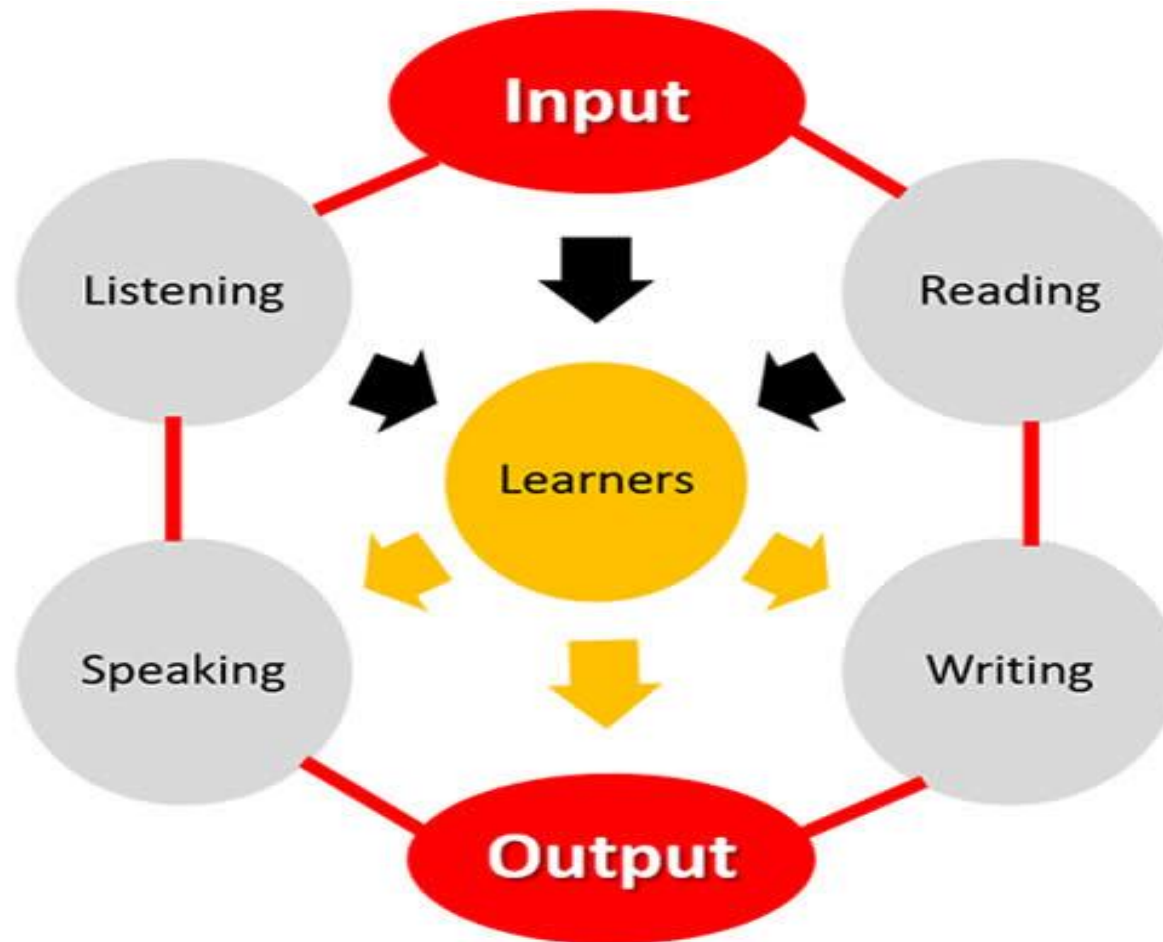
- Institute partner or group work
- Provide graphic organizers, study guides, or outlines with key words provided
- Engage students with hands-on activities
- Support close reading, audio, and video with sequenced text-dependent questions
- Display word walls; vocabulary journals
- Implement annotation of texts
- Model expectations, processes, activities, and assignments and provide exemplary work samples

# Integrate Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking

**Why is it important for English learners to use all domains of language?**

**Post responses in the chat box.**

# Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking Are All Required for Successful Language Acquisition



# Multimodal Strategies: Academic Discussion Stems

1. Prepare and distribute [academic discussion stems](#) handout.
2. Write questions about the content topic on the board.
3. Provide time for students to brainstorm and write answers independently.
4. Pair or group students.
5. Prompt students to share answers with their partners or groups and respond using the academic discussion stems.
6. Ask students to return to their seats and revise their answers.

[See What This Activity Looks Like](#)

# Other Multimodal Strategies

- Quick Writes
- Chalkboard Splash
- Line Ups/Inside Outside Circle
- Gallery Walk
- 3 Sentence Wrap-up (p. 20)
- A-Z Chart



# Conduct Formative Assessments

**How do we know if instruction was effective for English Learners?**

**Post responses in the chat box.**

# Formative Assessments

Formative assessments are frequent checkpoints, either formal or informal, used to ensure all students are acquiring mastery of the content standard(s).

## Types of Formative Assessments

- Graphic organizers
- Retell/Summarize
- Noticing nonverbal cues
- Observations from group or partner work
- Bounce Cards
- Exit tickets
- Misconception Checks
- Value Lineups
- 3-2-1
- Comprehension questions

# Modify and Differentiate Summative Assessments

Summative assessments should integrate content and language development (academic vocabulary and language structures).

# Modifying Summative Assessments

- “Include items that use context that will be familiar to students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and experiences (names, settings, scenarios)
- Use simple, clear vocabulary in test items (directions, stems, answer choices) and associated stimulus materials (e.g., passages, tables, graphs)
- Avoid using trade-specific jargon and culture-specific idioms and colloquialisms as both can be misleading to students who rely on literal interpretation
- Remove superficial details and complex phrases or sentence structures so students can dedicate their cognitive resources to selecting or generating the correct response rather than translating text
- Include items that provide clear, culture-neutral visual support (e.g., illustrations) as a reference, so students can verify their interpretation of text” (Abedi & Sato)

## Linguistic Modification

# Strategies to Differentiate Summative Assessments

- **Exhibits or Projects:** have students do presentations on concepts and procedures
- **Visual Displays:** have students complete a graphic organizer on vocabulary or concepts
- **Organized Lists:** have students create lists of concepts or vocabulary and explain how these things are organized or sequenced
- **Tables or Graphs:** have students create graphs or tables to show how data can be organized and have them interpret that data
- **Short Answer:** have students answer questions that focus on concepts

(O'Malley & Pierce, 1996)

# Build an English Learner Unit Starter Support Packet

**What are some things you think should be included in an English Learner Unit Starter Support Packet?**

**Please post answers in the chat box.**

# Build an English Learner Unit Starter Support Packet that Includes:

- Unit vocabulary, language structures, and helpful sentence stems and frames
- Schedule of the unit, due dates for assignments and projects, and dates of assessments
- Questions to build background
- Unit big ideas and essential questions
- Links to videos, audios, images, and articles related to content
- Useful graphic organizers for the unit

# Build an English Learner Unit Starter Support Packet that Includes:

- Academic discussion stems
- Exemplary work sample(s)
- Unit rubrics



<b>Stages of a Lesson or Unit</b>	<b>Strategies for Supporting English Learners</b>
<b>Before</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teach and Reinforce Vocabulary and Language Structures</li><li>• Build Background</li></ul>
<b>During</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide Comprehensible Input</li><li>• Integrate Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking</li><li>• Conduct Formative Assessments</li></ul>
<b>After</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Modify and Differentiate Summative Assessments</li></ul>

# References: Linked Articles

- [Assessing ESL Students in the Subject Classroom](#)
- [Accessing Students' Background Knowledge in the ELL Classroom](#)
- [Activating Prior Knowledge With English Language Learners](#)
- [Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement](#)
- [Connect Students' Background Knowledge to Content in the ELL Classroom](#)
- [Differentiated Instruction for English Language Learners](#)
- [Focusing Formative Assessment on the Needs of English Language Learners](#)
- [Help English Language Learners Build Background Knowledge in the Classroom](#)
- [How to Scaffold Lessons for English Learners in Any Class](#)
- [Improving Comprehensible Input for ELLs through Technology](#)

# References: Linked Articles

- Linguistic Modification
- Scaffolding CCSS Instruction for ELLs - New Resource Guides
- SIOP Component 2: Building Background
- Strategies to Cultivate Comprehensible Input
- The Comprehension Hypothesis Extended
- Total Participation Techniques
- Using Formative Assessment to Help English Language Learners
- Using Informal Assessments for English Language Learners
- 21 Ways to Build Background Knowledge—and Make Reading Skills Soar

# References: Books

- Beck, Isabel L, Margaret G. McKeown, and Linda Kucan. *Bringing Words to Life: Robust Vocabulary Instruction*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2013.
- Coxhead, Averil. *Essentials of Teaching Academic Vocabulary*. Boston, MA: Thomson Heinle, 2006.
- Echevarria, Jana, MaryEllen Vogt, and Deborah J. Short. *Making Content Comprehensible for English Learners: The SIOP Model*. Boston [u.a.: Pearson, 2017.
- Mihai, Florin. *Assessing English Language Learners in the Content Areas: A Research-into-Practice Guide for Educators*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010. Print.
- *Total Participation Techniques: Making Every Student an Active Learner* (1st ed.). Alexandria, VA:ASCD.
- Zwiers, Jeff. *Building Academic Language: Essential Practices for Content Classrooms, Grades 5-12.* , 2013.

# Questions?

**3-2-1**

**In the chat box, post:**

**3 things you learned today**

**2 things that were interesting**

**1 thing you still have questions about**

# Ready Together Oklahoma

Ready Together Oklahoma: An Action Plan for Supporting Students Through the Pandemic and Beyond

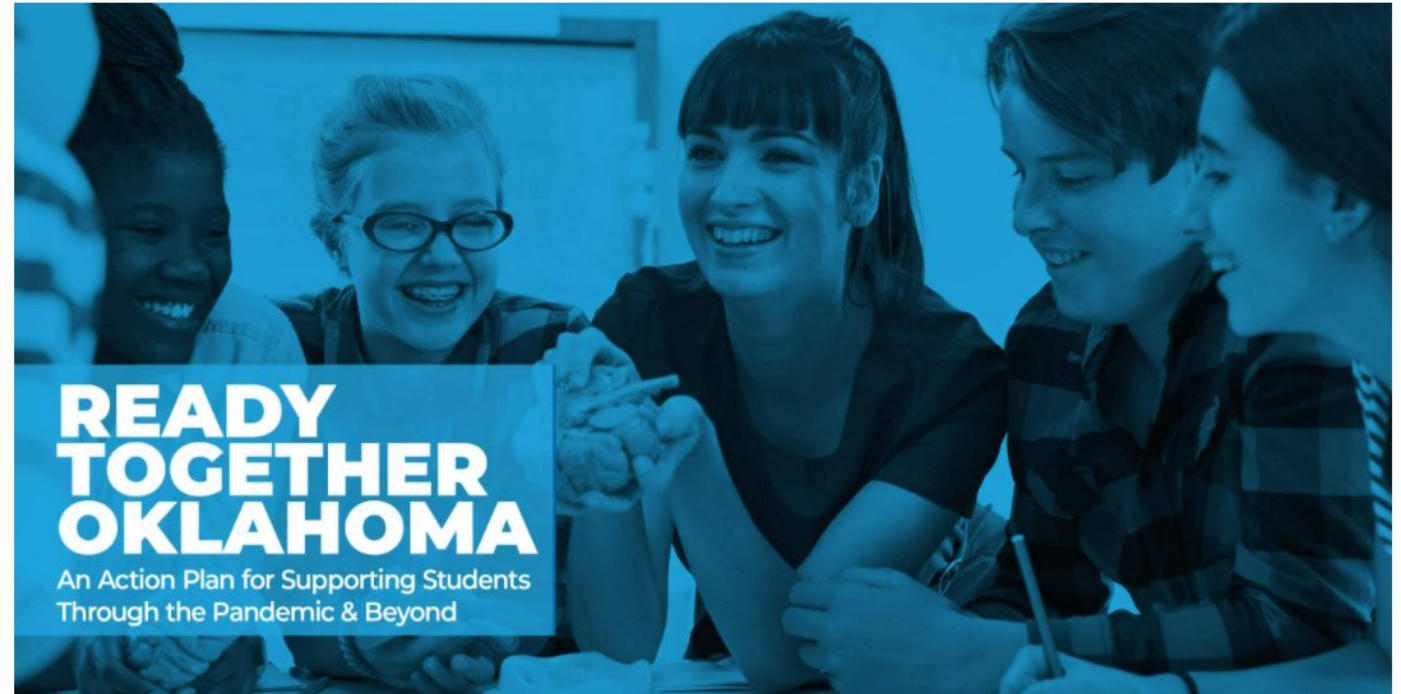
- ❑ Statewide Initiatives
- ❑ Guidance Documents
- ❑ Resources
- ❑ Webinars

Learn more at

<https://readytogether.sde.ok.gov/>



OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Student Learning  
& Success

Prioritizing Health &  
Well-Being

Ensuring  
Equity for All

Engaging Families &  
Communities

Supporting Teachers  
& Leaders



**Thank you for supporting Oklahoma's English Learners!**

**Janna Corn**

Director of the ELPA Indicator

Office of English Language Proficiency

Oklahoma State Department of Education

[janna.corn@sde.ok.gov](mailto:janna.corn@sde.ok.gov)

405-522-1343