

Making Meaning

Expressive and Interpretative Considerations for Multilingual Learners

These classroom supports and strategies, grounded in an Integrated Multi-Tiered System of Support (iMTSS) brings together academic, behavioral, and social-emotional supports into a cohesive system, ensuring every student receives the right support at the right time.

EXPRESSIVE SKILLS

WRITING

- Sentence Frames & Paragraph Starters
- Shared Writing & Modeled Writing
- Graphic Organizers
- Personal & Culturally Relevant Prompts



SPEAKING

- Daily Speaking Opportunities
- Visual & Verbal Scaffolds
- Model Conversations
- Repetition and Rehearsal



INTERPRETATIVE SKILLS

READING

- Language-Appropriate Materials
- Pre-Teach Vocabulary
- Guided Instruction; Shared Understanding
- Scaffold for predicting, summarizing, & questioning



LISTENING

- Use Visual Supports
- Pre-Teach Key Vocabulary
- Break audio into manageable parts.
- Repeat & Rephrase



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EXPRESSIVE SKILLS: SPEAKING

Daily Speaking Opportunities

- Give MLs structured chances to talk every day
- Use Think-Pair-Share, Turn & Talk, or Interview a Partner activities
- Include sentence stems like:
 - “I think ___ because...”
 - “In my opinion...”
 - “One example is...”

Visual and Verbal Scaffolds

- Pair spoken prompts with pictures or word banks
- Use real-life objects or visual aids to support conversation



Model Conversations

- Teach discourse moves like agreeing, disagreeing, clarifying, & building on others' ideas
- Scaffold with language goals



Repetition and Rehearsal

- Let students practice speaking before presenting
- Use choral reading, echo reading, or rehearsal groups

Boosting expressive skills (speaking & writing) involves intentional strategies, supportive environments, & an iMTSS instructional support plan that honors students' diverse backgrounds and needs.

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EXPRESSIVE SKILLS: WRITING

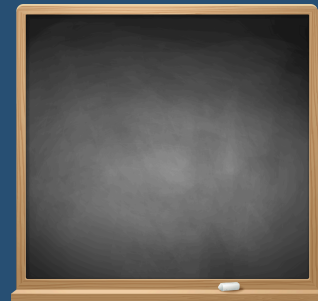
Sentence Frames & Paragraph Starters

Offer structured sentence starters based on proficiency level

- Example:
- Beginning: “I like ___.”
- Developing: “I like ___ because ___.”
- Expanding: “One reason enjoy ___ is because ___.”

Shared Writing & Modeled Writing

- Write together as a class
- Show your thinking out loud while writing



Graphic Organizers

- Use tools like T-charts, story maps, or Venn diagrams to help organize thoughts
- Empower written expression in all of a student’s linguistic ability

Personal and Culturally Relevant Prompts

Student profiles are useful & invite students to write about their lives, cultures, or interests to increase engagement and expression

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INTERPRETATIVE SKILLS: LISTENING

Use Visual Supports

- Pair audio with images, gestures, or realia (real-life objects)
- Watch short videos with closed captions or picture cues



Pre-Teach Key Vocabulary

- Preview unfamiliar words before listening activities
- Preteach vocabulary with context
- Use visuals, actions, & examples in multiple contexts



Break audio into manageable parts

- Pause often to check for understanding or summarize



Repetition and Rehearsal

- Replay audio multiple times
- Use echoing or paraphrasing to model understanding
 - “Did you hear that she went to the market? What did she buy?”

Strengthening interpretive skills (listening & reading) is crucial for overall language development. Strategies aligned with an iMTSS support plan for multilingual learners in becoming stronger listeners & readers, while honoring their diverse experiences & learning needs.

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INTERPRETATIVE SKILLS: READING

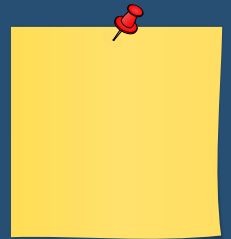
Language-Appropriate Materials

- Provide books & passages that match students' English proficiency
- Instructional text is scaffolded
- Independent text is leveled/decodable



Pre-Teach Vocabulary

- Choose 3–5 keywords to preview
- Use word walls, illustrated glossaries, or Frayer models



Guided Instruction; Shared Understanding

- Provide an audio option of the reading
- Read aloud together with discussion & questions
- Use finger-point reading, choral reading, & echo reading

Scaffold for predicting, summarizing, & questioning

Use sentence frames to help students express ideas:

“I think the main idea is...”

“One thing I learned is...”

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EXPRESSIVE SKILLS

WRITING AND SPEAKING INTEGRATED STRATEGIES

Oral Rehearsal Before Writing

- Let students talk through their ideas before writing them down.
- Use graphic organizers to bridge oral to written expression.

Dialogue Journals

- A back-and-forth written conversation between a student & teacher(s) or peers.

Multimodal Projects

- Use comic strips, photo essays, or videos w/captions for expression.

Remember:

- Honor & integrate the multiple linguistic abilities & use code-switching, or translanguaging, as a strength!
- Focus on growth over grammar, fluency first; language acquisition is a time-based process & accuracy increases with time.
- Encourage risk-taking and celebrate all attempts at self-expression.

INTERPRETATIVE SKILLS

READING AND LISTENING INTEGRATED STRATEGIES

Read-Aloud with Listening Focus

- Pause to ask comprehension questions.
- Encourage students to act out or sketch what they heard/read.

Language Experience Approach

- Students share an experience → teacher writes their words → students read the shared text.

Listening/Reading Logs

- Track what they've heard or read.
- Include one new word learned or one question they have.

Keep in Mind:

- Focus on comprehension over decoding at first.
- Build background knowledge to help them connect to new content.
- Create a safe space for students to ask for clarification and express confusion.

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Note Catcher

EXPRESSIVE SKILLS

WRITING

SPEAKING

INTERPRETATIVE SKILLS

READING

LISTENING