Research Based Strategies in Reading and Writing for Content Area Teachers:

A Website to Support Growth in Academic Language

By

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#### **Research Question**

The question that I chose to answer for this research was: *What are the best practices in reading and writing for content area teachers to use to make academic language accessible to middle school and high school ELLs that will result in increasing proficiency on standardized tests and close the opportunity gap*?

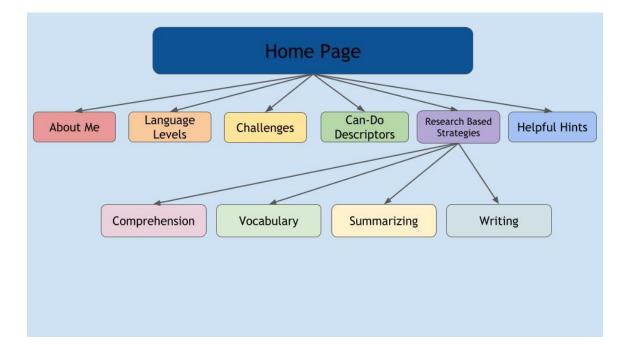
#### **Project Summary**

When I began teaching English Language Learners (ELLs) many years ago, it became evident to me that classroom teachers need support in the classroom to assist them in making content comprehensible to their ELLs. I found myself being asked the same questions every year. Teachers wanted to know how to support ELLs in specific reading and writing skills. Not only do they want support with what to do with newcomers but they also want support with students who have been in the ELL program for a long time. Therefore, I created a website as a resource that teachers could access when they had questions about the ELLs in their classroom. The website address is ellsupportforclassroomteachers and it provides teachers with information on language levels of language learners, the challenges they face in and out of school, plus a description of what students can do at each of the language levels in reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The main content of the website includes research based reading and writing strategies in the form of videos and instructional handouts that teachers can use to boost academic language proficiency in the classroom and helpful hints section.

The website that I have created is designed for middle school and high school content area teachers in my school district. The content of the website could also be useful for our elementary teachers as well.

#### **The Project**

The format chosen to use for the website is Google Sites as this is the platform our school district uses. Templates on Google Sites were used to design the web pages. According to Krug (2013), user experience is important to good website design. Krug discusses that a good website should be learnable, memorable, effective, efficient, desirable, and delightful. These principles were used as a background for the website design. A sitemap was also utilized to determine how the webpages were to be laid out.



As shown on the sitemap, the website contains a home page with a navigation bar that leads to five main sections. The five sections are: *About, Language Levels, Challenges, Can-Do Descriptors, Research Based Strategies,* and *Helpful Hints.* The information presented on these pages is based on research and supports the goal of the project to provide information and strategies to content area teachers as they work to support the ELLs that are in their classrooms.

### **Home Page**

The Home page includes information about who the website is designed for and a navigation bar on the side. Users can get to each of the subsequent pages by clicking on the link to each page. The Home page also has a link to a survey so users can provide feedback regarding their experience using the website. This will be used to make improvements to the website as needed.



### **About Page**

The About Me page gives the reader some background information about me, my

education, my career experiences, and my contact information About Me ELL Support for Classroom Teachers Kathy Schmidbauer - ELL Teacher Hudson High School and Hudson Middle School Education Master of Arts Degree in TESOL - Hamline University Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education - UW River Falls **Contact Information** Email: schmidbauerkathv@hudsonraiders.org Phone: Hudson High School - 715-377-3800 x6525; Hudson Middle School - 715-377-3820 x4641 Middle school and high school youth have always been a part of my teaching career. My experience includes a wide variety of rels and subject areas including English, social studies, science, co mputers, German, and English as a Second Language. ighly enjoy working with teenagers and have years of experience working with all language levels from newcomer to ed learners. In my spare time, I enjoy being active outdoors with activities such as bicycle riding, hiking,

### Language Levels Page

This page gives the user information about the six language proficiency levels of ELL students as stated in the WIDA Can-Do Descriptors Booklet, Grades 6-8 (2012). These levels include: Level 1 - Entering, Level 2 - Beginning, Level 3 - Developing, Level 4 - Expanding, Level 5 - Bridging, and Level 6 - Reaching. There is a bullet pointed list of what language acquisition for the learner looks like at each level.

ELL Support for Classroom Teachers	Language Levels       Page         Each language level 1-5 is described on this page.
Home About Me	At these levels of English proficiency, English language learners will process, understand, produce, and use:
Language Levels	
Challenges	Level 1 - Entering - Beginning Pre-Production <ul> <li>pictural or prophic representation of language in the content areas</li> </ul>
Can-Do Descriptors	<ul> <li>pretures or graphic representation of anguage in the content area</li> <li>words, phrases, or language checks with one-step commands and directions</li> </ul>
Research Based Strategies	<ul> <li>wh-questions, choice, yes/no questions, or statements with sensory, graphic, or interactive support</li> </ul>
Helpful Hints	<ul> <li>oral language often impedes the meaning of what students are trying to say even with the use of visuals such as graphics or images</li> </ul>
	Level 2 - Beginning - Pre-Production
	• general context longuage
	phrsical vision
	<ul> <li>and language may impose the meaning of what students are trying to say ones with the use of visuals such as graphics or images</li> </ul>
	Level 3 - Developing - Intermediate
	<ul> <li>general and some specific content language</li> </ul>

### **Challenges Page**

The Challenges page discusses some of the challenges from the research that ELLs at each level encounter as they progress through school and live in our community (de la Riva Whisler, 2015; DelliCarpini, 2009; Ferlazzo & Sypnieski, 2012; Tonogbanua, 2016). When ELLs begin to learn language, they can be classified as newcomers, intermediate learners, or long-term learners. This page provides a bulleted list of challenges they may encounter at each of these stages.



### **Can Do Descriptors Page**

This page uses WIDA's Can-Do Descriptors as a backdrop and informs the reader about what ELLs are able to do based on their language proficiency level with the key uses of recounting, explaining, arguing, and discussing. There is an explanation of each key use and there is a document linked under each explanation that users can click on for more information on what learners can do at each language level.

ELL Support for Classroom Teachers	Can-Do Descriptors
Home About Me Language Levels	The WIDA Can Do Descriptors give examples of what language learners can do at the different stages of English development in the four domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The examples provide key uses of language for these specific purposes:
Challenges Can-Do Descriptors Research Rased Strategies Helpful Hints	RecountExplainDisplay knowledge or narrate experience or eventsClarify the Why' or 'how' of ideas, actionts, or phenomenaTelling or summarizing storiesDescribe life cycles,Prodace reports with informationShare how or why things workSharing past experiencesCause and effectSharing results of experiments
	WCK.GP 00 Interpreter     Production       0     minimum     minimum<

### **Research Based Strategies Page**

This page brings users to a page where each of the subsections of reading or writing skills are located, each with its own clickable button. Those strategies include: comprehension, vocabulary, summarizing, and writing. When users click on those buttons, they are brought to a subsequent page with research based strategies that have been proven to be successful with that particular reading or writing skill. The individual strategies pages contain a short video explanation of the strategy along with printable directions.

ELL Support for Classroom Teachers Home	Research Based Strategies
About Me Language Levels	This page is dedicated to the research based strategies for teachers. Click on the name of the strategy to be directed to each individual strategy's page.
Challenges	······································
Can-Do Descriptors	
Research Based Strategies	
Helpful Hints	Comprehension Vocabulary Summarizing Writing
	0 [schmidbeuerkathy@hudsonreiders.org] [715-377-3800 ext. 6525]

### **Individual Strategy Page**

Each individual strategy page contains links to each strategy in the form of a short video and printable handout. Users click on the Research Based Strategies link to access

ELL Support for Classroom Teachers	Comprehension
Home	
About Me	House Nos Traction Activity         Rev Ansat Time Activity         Partner Ross         Partner Ross           • Roden contragentier from         • Instruction contrading operation from your         • Instruction contrading • Instruction contrading of the first contradiction complete - First contradiction         • Instruction contrading operation from your         • Instruction contrading on complete - First contradiction
Language Levels	<ul> <li>Image: Section of the s</li></ul>
Challenges	Apparto formation     A sub-and approximation     A s
Can-Do Descriptors	💪 "Numbered Heads Togelh 🕹 "Read Aloud/Think Aloud 🕹 "Partner Reading webm 🕹 "Text Data Set webm
Research Based Strategies	
Helpful Hints	Nuclear Industry     Number of Head S Together.     Number of Head S Together. <th< th=""></th<>
	Ormannel Lossen Ram - Sex ani nais Count         Same: Description         Annownine Lossen Ram         Description           • August Description Lossen         • August Description         • Managements to reduced         • Same description

## **Helpful Hints Page**

This page gives users general classroom help and more ideas for use in the content areas as well as language related ideas and information on how to use cognates in classroom instruction.



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