

Useful strategies¹

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION
Aural cloze	A cloze or fill-the-gap exercise with a focus on listening. It involves reading a text aloud but leaving out some words for the student to provide.
Brainstorming	Is used with a group to generate as many ideas as possible and encourage creative thinking. It can also be used to gauge students' prior knowledge. All suggestions are accepted.
Buddy reading (or pair reading)	A student reading to another student.
Bundling	Students write statements about a topic on paper strips and then group all the related statements together. These groups of statements are expanded to form paragraphs with an emphasis on using language which links ideas into a cohesive piece of writing.
Cloze	A written text where some words are deleted. For example, a teacher can cover some words in a text and students fill in the gap (eg 'The dog _____ to the park').
Concept map²	A group of words clustered around a central topic which shows the relationships between ideas or concepts. It represents a student's understanding of the topic and can be used to organise information.
Dictogloss	An activity where the teacher reads a short text twice. During the first reading the students listen. During the second reading they take notes, focusing on key words. In groups, they then reconstruct the text. It is best done after brainstorming the topic, preferably from a picture stimulus.
Directed reading and thinking activity (DRTA)	An activity where the teacher asks the student to predict what the text will be about, then directs the student to read a section of the text to check his/her predictions. This process of pausing, predicting and checking continues until the entire text has been read.
Fact and opinion	A student reads a number of statements and identifies whether they are facts or opinions. The statements can then be grouped accordingly.
Flow charts	Can be used to sequence ideas, procedures or events. They can be used to plan or they can represent a timeline or final action plan.
Graphic outlines	Help students to see how texts are organised and to understand how layout features can help them to access information and record it by filling in the outline.
KWL	Is a framework to find out what students Know (K) , Want to know (W) and then at the end, what they have Learnt (L) .
Language experience	A teaching approach which is based on providing an experience, eg an excursion or an activity, and using this as the basis for preliminary and follow-up language activities.
Listen and identify key words	This is an important skill and is the first part of Dictogloss.
Listen and retell	A particularly useful way of checking student understanding.
Mind maps	These are diagrams that visually record students' thinking and understanding of a topic. Information can be recorded as words or images. The central image on a mind map depicts its topic or issue. From the centre, coloured stems emerge which reflect the components of the topic. Beginning with a stem, students draw a series of branches that show the interrelationship and connections between the ideas.
Minimal cues	An activity which provides students with practice in the important skill of predicting. The teacher writes a message which is relevant and predictable to the student. For example: 'Today is _____ . At sport w_ p_____ s_____.'
Reader questions	Students are presented with a title or a picture relating to a text. They are then encouraged to form questions which they would like to be answered. They look for the answers to these questions when they read the text.
Repeated readings	By re-reading familiar texts, students have the opportunity to develop confidence and fluency.

1. This table has been adapted from, Luizzi, P. *I wish it was everyday ... OSHLSP Tutor Training Resource*, CMYI (unpublished draft, 2007)

2. See Stewart-Dore, N. PEN 159: *Learning with graphic organisers*. PETA, 2007.

Running dictation	A team activity where the teacher puts a copy of a text up on the wall. The first team member runs over to the text, reads the first sentence and dictates it to the team to write down. When everyone has finished writing, the second team member does the same. This is repeated until the complete text has been dictated.
Sentence expansion	An activity to make sentences more interesting that requires modelling and practice. For example, the sentence <i>The dog barked</i> can be expanded to <i>The small white dog barked loudly at the car</i> .
Sentence reconstruction	After cutting up a sentence into words, the student reconstructs the sentence. The student may initially need to match the words to a model of the sentence.
Structured overviews	Frameworks which show the relationship between ideas within a topic. These are usually arranged hierarchically. They can be used to help students understand a text or build up a piece of writing.
Talking books	Are available from libraries on tapes and CDs. They can be used to support students who can listen to the text before or as they read it.
Text reconstruction	After cutting up a text into sentences or paragraphs, the student reconstructs the text by putting it into the correct order.
Three level guides or questions	After reading a text, the teacher prepares a number of statements or questions to help students locate information, interpret what the author means, and apply the information. The statements are divided into three levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✦ level one (literal): the student reads the lines to work out what the writer says ✦ level two (interpretative): the student 'reads between the lines' and infers what the writer means ✦ level three (applied): the student reads beyond the lines and relates the knowledge to other contexts.
Timelines	Can be used to represent events and personal histories as well as characters' lives and events in texts.
Who/what am I?	Students need to guess who or what the person is, using only yes/no questions.
Word banks	Used to store or display word cards, word banks can be used for reading or writing activities or games.
Word lists	Examples include vocabulary lists, consonant or phonic (sound-symbol) groups. These can be displayed or stored and added to as students learn new words.
Writing frames	Contain some structure words appropriate to the text types. They provide a framework in which students can record their thoughts so they can concentrate on what they want to say. It is important to model how to use a writing frame, and then do a shared writing activity using it, before using it for an independent writing activity.

About the authors

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