Notes for ESL TExES Test

Language Acquisition

- Language is used for communication and meaning making. Language instruction should focus on meaning over correctness.

- Language comprises four main areas—listening, speaking, reading & writing. And two of these areas are described as receptive (listening and reading) and expressive (speaking and writing).

- Language acquisition takes time – an average of 1-3 years for social or “playground” language (BICS) and an average of 5-7 or even 9-10 years of academic or “school” language (CALP).

- Language is best acquired in classrooms that take into consideration students’ affective needs, research on language acquisition, and have high expectations of all students.

- Know the main areas of language and what they pertain to:
  - Phonology (sound system)
  - Morphology (words, like prefixes, suffixes, roots)
  - Semantics (meaning)
  - Syntax (grammar, structure)
  - Pragmatics (social context of language use, appropriateness, manners)
Instruction for ELLs

- A beginner ELL has different needs than a student who is more advanced. We need to differentiate our instruction accordingly. **Study tip: Make a continua from beginner to advanced…list things that beginners would need or teachers are more likely to see/do under “beginner” and that advanced students would need more under “advanced”**. The English proficiency level is more important than age for teaching an ELL!

- Tapping into background knowledge is an important step in teaching ELLs. We should ask students what they know about a topic, provide experiences related to the topic, and integrate as many areas of language as possible (listening, speaking, reading & writing).

- Authentic assessment is encouraged over the traditional assessments:
  - Traditional: true/false, multiple choice, short answers
  - Authentic: Portfolios, student presentations, group presentations, journaling

- Rubrics for scoring projects are important because they give clear and concise expectations for the student’s performance.

- There must be formal and informal assessments in the classroom.
  - Formal (also called summative or evaluative assessment): examples include end of unit assessment, standardized tests
  - Informal (also called formative assessments): examples include performance (how did the student do in the center?), anecdotal records, continual observation and feedback prior to the final assessment
• Think about making your classroom instruction as student based as possible…this includes always giving students experiences related to a topic, hands on learning, student created projects, student choice, collaborative learning, etc.

• There should be clear language and content objectives in your lessons. Classroom activities must match the objectives.

• Reading should be taught through literacy programs that are balanced not isolated programs such as phonics or whole language.

• The teacher must always consider the strengths and the needs of the learner.

• Encourage the use of centers in the classroom. They allow the child to socialize and learn at their own pace.

• Always promote self esteem

**Cultural Diversity:**

• Celebrate diversity in the classroom.

• Encourage students to talk about their cultures/use or introduce native language.

• Encourage projects which explore cultural diversity and choice (i.e. if you are teaching an event in history, include multiple perspectives; if you are asking students to research a “hero” let them research one from their native country, etc).

• When doing class groupings make sure the groups are diverse (heterogeneous grouping—for ESL this means diverse proficiency levels also, i.e. native speakers with non-native speakers of English, advanced with beginner, etc).

• Invite community guest speakers to come in and share cultural experiences with the class.
• Model cultural respect and value students’ native language and culture—this helps lower the affective filter.

AVOID THESE:

• Absolutes (always, must, never, will, should, etc)

• Any activity that is not supervised.

• Teacher led discussions.

• Any answer choices that could be considered negative – look for word choice to determine this. For example, we differentiate instruction and teach to a students’ level. That is preferred over the language “bring in materials from a lower grade level” (even though it could be the same thing in some instances, one sounds negative the others sound positive).

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive terms:</th>
<th>Negative terms:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>engage</td>
<td>lecture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interact (ive), collaborate</td>
<td>Assimilate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holistic, interrelated</td>
<td>Subtractive (bilingualism)</td>
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<tr>
<td>facilitate</td>
<td>Immersion (no help, no program at all)</td>
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<td>Acquire (vs. learned)</td>
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<td>differentiate</td>
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