Spanish/English Classroom Strategies

Accelerated Reader and ELLs

Accelerated Reader promotes reading growth in all students, but it is especially effective with English language learners for the following reasons:

- It encourages large amounts of reading practice, which builds background knowledge and reading endurance.

- It enables individualization so that every student reads at an appropriate level and learns vocabulary at an optimum pace.

- It provides a constant stream of data that can be used for monitoring, guidance, and intervention.

- It gets students excited about reading, which is fundamental to success in school.

Prepare

- Familiarize yourself with Accelerated Reader software. Set the TOPS Report Language preference, which is an individual student setting. Choose "Always English," "Always Spanish," or "Ask the Student."

- Schedule reading practice time. We recommend at least 30 minutes a day (20 minutes in high school) of reading practice in English and 20–30 minutes in Spanish, if possible.

- Determine each student's reading level for both languages. Use a nationally normed or state test, or do an informal assessment to find a starting point.

- Take inventory of your library collection. Order books and quizzes as needed. Base your purchases on students' ZPDs in Spanish and English, not on grade in school.

- Label books for which you have an AR™ Reading Practice Quiz with quiz number, book level, interest level, and point value. (Most of the time, English and Spanish quizzes for the same book have the same quiz number.)

Get Started

- Read an Accelerated Reader book (Spanish or English or one of each) aloud to your class and demonstrate how to take Reading Practice Quizzes on the computer. Show them the dual-language capabilities of the program.

- Teach students how to select books within their ZPD.

- Schedule goal-setting meetings with students who are established readers in at least one language. See our Goal-Setting Chart for guidelines.

- Present a power lesson on the Student Reading Log, which can be printed from the software in English or Spanish. Use an overhead projector to show students the form and explain how they will fill it out.

- Check in with students every day to monitor their progress, guide book selection, and reinforce achievement. Review Student Reading Logs and TOPS Reports and have brief conversations with students to see how they are doing. Use the Status of the Class Record Sheet to keep track of which students you have spoken with.

- Begin using simple motivational techniques in your classroom, such as book discussions, book displays, and a bulletin board that highlights student achievement of individual goals.

- Set Accelerated Reader preferences to enable the TOPS Report to print for both passed and failed Reading Practice Quizzes. Decide whether to have the report print in English or Spanish.

- Intervene at the first sign of difficulty. Adjust book levels or point goals as needed, and help students find books with which they will be successful.

- Print the Diagnostic Report weekly. You can choose to view results for Spanish quizzes only, English quizzes only, or both. Look for diagnostic codes, which alert you to students having trouble.