

ELL CENTER

Focus: Learning Goes From Whole to Part

Providing Context

Students need to see the whole so that they know what to do with the parts. Providing students with meaningful contexts for their learning gives students the “whole” so that you can then begin to teach the specifics. The greater the contextual support, the lower the need to rely solely on new English skills. Learning is enhanced when we build on children’s background knowledge and interests, making the new language comprehensible while encouraging active language use.

Strategies for Providing Context

Provide your own ideas – how can you use this strategy with your ELL students?

Strategies for Providing Context	Ideas for the classroom.
1. Connect the new language to the student’s interests or background.	
2. Using pictures to show context about things outside of the classroom.	
3. Using role-play to provide context for situations.	
4. Provide an outline that emphasizes main points prior to a reading passage.	
5. Work in small groups to provide greater contextual support.	
6. Use “preview, view, review” to go back and forth between the first language and the second language to establish context.	

Organize Lessons around Big Ideas

Organizing Ideas	Examples	
Themes Macro-Concepts Big Questions Content Area Concepts Generalizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post the unit “big understanding” on the board to refer to during the unit. • Big questions or “essential questions” should refer to the conceptual big idea for the unit and be posted in the classroom. • Concepts are best understood when they are in relationship with one another; such as “rights and responsibilities” • Use metaphors to explain the meaning of concepts. 	