

Orchestrating Mathematical Discourse with English Learners

Language Proficiencies	Beginning	Intermediate		Advanced	
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Characteristics of an English Learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be familiar with some of the sounds and words of English • Responds to questions by pointing, gesturing, and drawing • May use first language to ask questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands and uses basic words, phrases, and commands • Follows conversations independently • Uses better grammar when communicating about mathematics, including asking questions and explaining the math 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participates in discussions about mathematics, including asking questions • Uses higher-order language skills to participate in academic discourse • Uses more precise vocabulary with more accuracy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a deeper understanding of language, including mathematics and academic vocabulary • Uses more sophisticated mathematical and academic vocabulary with fewer errors during academic discourse • Seeks clarification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses more complex grammar and vocabulary when participating in academic discourse
What English Learners Can Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can use their first language to communicate their thinking and ask questions • Can use visuals to contribute to the conversation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can ask questions using simple sentences • Can explain by using gestures and pointing at images on their paper • Can use sentence frames to explain their solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can ask questions and seek clarification using simple sentences • Can describe their process of solving a mathematics problem using simple sentences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can ask questions and seek clarification from both the teacher and other students about the content • Can participate in academic discourse and explain their thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can sustain a conversation during math discourse • Can also ask questions and seek clarification as needed • Can include both precise mathematics and academic vocabulary
Teacher Support	Create a growth mindset classroom by encouraging students to learn from mistakes both in mathematics and language.				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a non-verbal way for students to ask for clarification (e.g., red/green cards). • Provide simple sentence starters to encourage participation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – I agree with _____. – I disagree with _____. • Partner students with each other to coexplain their solution. • Have students write their solutions in their first language. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students work with a partner to seek clarification. • Provide sentence starters to help communicate the mathematics using some key math and academic words. • Have students explain how they solved their problem to another student and have them write out the solution for them. • Have students practice saying the steps they used to solve before calling on them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide students with sentence frames to ask questions and seek clarification. • Provide guidance to ensure students are using correct language. • Have students practice saying the steps they used to solve a problem before calling on them. • Have students work with a partner and practice explaining one portion of the solution before explaining it to the whole class. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students orally explain how they solved their problem. • Restate or recast questions or phrases to model correct English usage during discourse when students ask for clarification or participate in mathematical discourse. • Provide more complex sentence frames that include clauses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage students to ask for clarification. • Restate or recast student questions or comments to model correct English usage during discourse.



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