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Mid Prairie Community Schools ELL Newsletter

Quote of the Month

“It is never too late to give up your prejudices.

Henry David Thoreau

ELL Concept:

Peer-Assisted Learning

What is it? Just as it says peer assisted learning partners language learners up with linguistically stronger students to support their language development.

Why it works. *Peer-Assisted Learning* is an often-used technique that can pay huge dividends for both partners. It serves to strengthen the student's language skills while at the same time developing the empathy skills of the other partner. Some may worry about time constraints or equity of work, but with proper planning and modeling this strategy has been shown to be extremely beneficial for both members of the partnership.

Ell Strategy: Circumlocution

How many times have you struggled to remember a specific word so you talked around it trying to describe the idea in hopes the person you were talking to would understand? Congratulations! You are actually using a practice we call circumlocution and it has a valid use in language education.



How do I use it in class?

To teach this strategy explicitly in class focus on these key points.

1. Instead of the more difficult idea or vocabulary you can replace it or use it in conjunction with something easier or already understood.
2. Describe the idea or concept, with who uses it, why it's used and where it would be used.
3. Use a synonym or more general category.
4. Describe what it is not.
5. Use gestures, actions, sounds.
6. Get out some paper and draw it.

Circumlocution can be different for different languages and cultures but it is a very important strategy that most of us use unconsciously. It can be difficult for language learners to feel comfortable enough to try this so it does help to explicitly teach and practice if you are working with students who struggle with language.

If you have any questions please feel free to email Nicholas O'Brien at:
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