

Oral Language Teaching Strategies (continued)

11. EXTEND LANGUAGE

Although some students are able talkers, they still need to expand their language use and incorporate more specific, varied, and academic vocabulary into their repertoires. Take opportunities to stretch language use. You may make semantic webs of vocabulary to show alternatives for words. For example,

Teacher: “You say you are going to ‘look’ at the eggs every day until the chicks break the shells. You could say you are going to ‘observe’ to see what happens. Are there any other words you could use for ‘look’? Let’s jot them down. When might you use ‘peep’ or ‘stare’?”

Encourage students to use different transitional words to stretch their language. For example,

Teacher: “Kelvin just said, ‘After that the steam rises.’ There are lots of other words we could use instead of ‘after that.’ I can think of one. We could say ‘before long the steam rises.’ Let’s make a list of other words we could use.”

12. PURPOSEFULLY SEARCH DEEPER INTO IDEAS

Using open-ended questions enables you and your students to delve deeper into another person’s ideas. Questioning also enables listeners to clarify ideas when they do not understand what a speaker is trying to communicate. Questions can ensure that students make connections between prior knowledge and new learning. Model different types of questions and their purposes so students see how questioning propels a conversation forward. Questions might include:

- Why do you think that happened?
- Can you show me evidence of your line of thinking?
- What do you notice?
- So you think...?
- I think I understand, but can you tell me your idea again?
- What do you think might happen if...?
- What does this make you wonder about...?
- I wonder why...
- Can you explain that again for me?
- I see your point, but what about...?
- Did they look like something...?
- What does that remind you of?