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SETTING THE STANDARD FOR INTERVENORS

By Linda Ocasio

The 7th grade social studies class at PS/IS 270 in Rosedale, Queens, is a hive of activity as students open up their graphic organizers, following their teacher's instruction. Sandra is leading the lesson with aplomb. She occasionally pauses to make sure everyone is on task. And she makes it look easy.

"Give me a thumbs-up if the graphic organizer can help you," asks Sandra. Students fling thumbs in the air then quickly return to the graphic organizer to review illustrations depicting activities during the Revolutionary War period.

It wasn't always this way. After 12 years as a social studies teacher, Sandra was vaguely dissatisfied and not sure she was hitting the mark with her 7th- and 8th-grade students. Her enthusiastic discussions, although on topic, didn't always align with her goals for the class.

That's when Sandra reached out to the Peer Intervention Program, or PIP as it's called. The program paired her with Beth Richards, a veteran teacher who now works as a peer intervenor. Beth and Sandra worked together to come up with lesson plans. Beth also serves as a sounding board as Sandra measures student success, identifies the students who may require a little more help and comes up with the best strategies to reach them. Sometimes, with a nod from Sandra, Beth co-teaches the class.

"This year, I was clear on having a lesson plan and following through with the plan," said Sandra. "I'm not spoon-feeding everything to my students. I have to get them ready for high school and the Regents experience. I'm



Working with Beth Richards, at left, has helped Sandra, right, sharpen her teaching skills and master the art of the lesson plan to help students reach their goals.

getting them to focus."

For Sandra, it was about finding her focus, too. "Beth helped me on narrowing things down," she said. "Now I have a formalized template of a lesson plan. I internalized it, and I'm focused on the lesson plan."

Since the program began in 1988, 2,088 teachers have partnered with PIP to improve their teaching skills, said PIP coordinator Lynne Ann Kilroy.

PIP is voluntary, confidential and exclusively for tenured teachers who hope to improve their classroom practice. "It's an opportunity for them to rekindle the fire they had when they were a new or newer teacher," Kilroy said. Once a teacher signs up, he or she is paired with an intervenor – an experienced teacher who mentors oth-

ers and models best practices. "The best results are achieved the longer the teacher participates in the program," Kilroy said. "Seven months or more results in a 78 percent better outcome."

That better outcome is measured by a teacher's greater assurance in the classroom, nimble use of different teaching strategies and ability to change his or her approach to reach a student at risk of falling behind.

For Sandra, it's about renewed confidence and ease in the classroom. "It's a wonderful service they provide," she said. "And Beth has been wonderful to work with. She gets me."

Chayvonne Harper, in her fifth year as principal at Sandra's school, has seen teachers blossom through PIP. The results she saw in the classroom

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THE CHALLENGE OF DIFFERENTIATION

By Federico Anderson with Taryn Sanders and Danielle Skarulis
Peer Intervenors, PIP

Effective, standards-based instruction requires time, effort and planning. Regardless of grade, subject or setting, a variety of challenges may impede progress.

Perhaps the most common challenge is the vast range of student performance levels in one classroom. Even in homogeneous settings, such as self-contained, special education classrooms, the range can make uniform instruction impossible. For this reason, differentiation has become a staple of the modern classroom.

Differentiation is a system of instructional techniques and modifications teachers use to meet the specific needs of individual students. Teacher tools include student IEPs, structured planning, frequent assessments and intentional grouping to identify and address the range of instructional needs in a class. From the talented and gifted prekindergarten student to the non-English speaker in high school, differentiation allows teachers to help students of varying abilities meet the same learning objectives. It's complicated and time-consuming, but it is absolutely necessary.

We plan for our students by aligning our daily lesson objectives to grade-level standards. Then, we design our activities and assessments to align with those objectives. With good planning, we can meet instructional goals and prepare students for the next instructional level. It is a formula for organized and effective pedagogy. Here are some tips for differentiation strategies.

Structure Your Lesson Plans

Differentiation begins with strategic lesson planning. PIP Peer Intervenor Taryn Sanders offers the following advice:

"A good place to begin is in the structure of your lesson plan, particularly for cluster, ICT and push-in teachers, who have to address a wide range of student needs across a variety of subjects. I suggest they use 'tiered' activity planning."

Tiered planning is a format that ICT and cluster teachers have used for years. It is an effective way to build differentiation into lesson plans. Basically, students of similar performance levels are assigned to the

same group. These groups are called "tiers," and usually the teacher creates three: high, middle and low. When the teacher plans her lessons, she creates three activities that align to the same objective.

Consider the following example:

Objective: Students will learn to analyze the author's use of irony in "The Story of an Hour" by Kate Chopin.

Student Activities

Tier 3: Students independently identify three examples of irony in the story and write three paragraphs explaining how each demonstrates irony and how each example contributes to the story's theme.

Tier 2: The teacher provides five examples of irony in the story. Students may choose three to explain how each example demonstrates irony and how each contributes to the story's theme.

Tier 1: The teacher provides three examples of irony. Students work with the teacher to complete a short-response essay organizer explaining how each example demonstrates irony.

The activities are similar and align to the objective. More capable students work more independently. Those who require more support, work with the teacher, perform a modified task and are provided with an organizer.

Baseline Assessment Data to Identify Performance Levels

Children are assigned to tiers according to baseline or benchmark assessments. Standardized assessment is one form of baseline assessment and tells us where students are when they enter our classrooms. State exams provide us with initial information about reading and math levels and help us design groups before we get to know the students.

PIP Peer Intervenor Danielle Skarulis offers this scenario, using benchmark assessment data:

I was working with a 2nd-grade teacher in a self-contained, special education class. We were teaching basic addition and subtraction. Even in this setting, this class had a wide range of

abilities. Some students displayed skills close to grade level, others were at pre-kindergarten levels. The only way we could expect all these students to meet the same objective was to tailor the work to their specific abilities.

We grouped students by benchmark assessment data we'd previously collected and analyzed. We'd created benchmark assessments by taking the present levels of performance and the math goals from each student's IEP. We then identified skills from the grade levels at which the students were performing and used all the information to make individual assessments. These assessments measured skills including counting, number recognition, simple addition and simple subtraction. We then formed three groups.

The lesson objective: Students should learn how to add and subtract using writing, tens frames and other manipulatives.

Tier 3: We asked the top group to demonstrate skills by representing numbers in a variety of ways. They could write standard number problems, or they could use words, spelling out the numbers to represent the problems. They could also use the tens frames or any of other manipulatives. These students worked independently, but were also encouraged to use peer-to-peer support, sitting next to whom they chose.

Tier 2: The middle group used manipulatives only – tens frames with different colors and number values to represent numbers. We also gave them number lines and number grids with which they could identify numbers and represent the math problems. This group worked with a paraprofessional and was also provided with hand-held anchor charts.

Tier 1: The teacher worked with this group since, for the most part, these children could not write. The teacher asked them to cut out objects to represent numerals. For example, if the math

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WHAT'S NEW EARLY CHILDHOOD RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

By Amy Silverstein
Peer Intervenor, PIP

Learning begins the minute an infant is born. A baby will instinctively suckle on a nipple for nourishment and cry when it needs to. Other than that, it must learn everything else including turning, crawling, walking, running and talking.

Many people don't realize how much knowledge our 3- and 4-year-olds bring with them to the prekindergarten classroom. The same holds true when our 4- and 5-year-olds enter kindergarten. Our youngest students already have a small lifetime of learning under their belts. It is up to educators to keep this fire burning.

The list of resources I have compiled has been extremely helpful to my early childhood teachers in creating a rigorous, yet child-friendly learning environment.

Becker, B. (2014). *The Weekly Curriculum*. Lewisville, North Carolina: Gryphon House

This book contains 52 theme-based plans that include enough activities to fill an entire week. Themes include: the first week of school; the five senses; weekly vocabulary and learning center ideas.

Get Ready for Pre-K (2011). NYC Department of Education New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, Inc.

This book contains all the early-learning basics, from reading and writing the alphabet to recognizing the people and places in your neighborhood and the bigger world. Students can trace and draw lines then write letters and numbers as well as name the colors of the rainbow and a variety of other tasks.

Fetzer, N. & Rief, S. (2002). *Alphabet Learning Center Activities Kit*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

This book gives primary teachers a collection of stimulating, tested learning center activities to teach and reinforce alphabet letters and their sounds based on the unique "Holder & Fastie Alphabet" that enables young children to hear and feel the letter sounds, and modeled reading and writing strategies that help children iden-

tify and spell words with ease. The activities in this book give you research-supported practices, teaching techniques, and hands-on materials.

Fountas, Irene & Pinnell, Gay Sue (2011). *Literacy Beginnings, A Pre-K Handbook*. Portsmouth, New Hampshire: Heinemann

This book explores prekindergarten learning through play and language. Children will learn about their world and about themselves. Play and language are the most important tools for early literacy learning. You can create a play-based classroom community that prepares children for the literacy-rich world they live in.

Litlife, J. (2015). "Pre-K Success for Linguistically Diverse Learners: Best Practices for Fostering Happy, Confident, Independent Readers and Writers." sites.google.com/site/preksuccessldl/

Prekindergarten presentation from Jan. 29, 2015.

Ostroff, W. (2012). *Understanding How Young Children Learn*. Alexandria, Virginia: ASCD

This book provides an unprecedented

window into children's minds: how and when they begin to think, perceive, understand, and apply knowledge. Each chapter has suggested activities for how teachers can put theory into practice in the classroom.

Schiller, P. & Phipps, P. (2011). *The Complete Daily Curriculum*. Lewisville, North Carolina: Gryphon House, Inc.

This book is a curriculum for 3- to 6-year-olds. It offers a complete plan for every learning style including reflections for Morning Circle and End-of-the-Day. Activities for six learning centers are also included. The themes include assessment tools and related children's books. Home Connections are new to this edition.

Seitz, H. (2008). "The Power of Documentation in the Early Childhood Classroom." *Researchgate.net*

This online article explains what documentation actually is for the Early Childhood learner. "An effective piece of documentation tells the story of an event, experience, or development. The format that documentation takes can be as varied as the creator's mind permits." ■



Setting the Standard for Intervenor*s* continued from page 1

dispelled Harper's initial skepticism about the program.

"Everything I thought PIP was shifted because I saw its impact," she said. "The teachers who have participated in PIP take more initiative on their own professional development. They really utilize the feedback and they're all open to continuing the work."

Harper described another teacher who worked with a PIP intervenor. "If we prescribed it, that was it – she disconnected from it," she said. "Now, she feels more like a partner in it. She can talk directly to administrators and feel respected. Prior to PIP, the advice others gave her might not have landed."

Kilroy said 43 percent of the teachers seeking PIP assistance had a new grade to teach in their schools. Harper added that others sought help after they were placed in integrated co-teaching classes, in which general and special education teachers work side by side.

Richards explained that many teachers reach out to PIP if they've had a change in assignment, for example from 5th grade to 3rd grade. With PIP they have someone in their corner to help them learn the curriculum, or approach it differently if necessary. "Every relationship is different," Richards said. "We develop trust and rapport with each one."

Richards, who has been a peer intervenor for five years, was an elementary and middle school teacher for 20 years, teaching many different subjects. "Peer intervenors go through a rigorous interview process – you have to know pedagogy and content and have communication skills." That expertise is put to work on behalf of teachers who volunteer to work with Richards and other intervenors.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to hone your craft and work with a colleague," Richards continued. "It's voluntary, and it's the teacher who drives the intervention, through conversation about what he or she wants to work on. It can be a teacher who says, 'I really want to learn about lesson planning.' We can do that, and the teacher takes away lifelong skills."

And she emphasized the collegial nature of the partnership. "We're not going to evaluate or assess what you're doing,"



Beth and Sandra review class assignments to identify students who may need extra help. Beth has been a sounding board for Sandra to think through and fine-tune her lesson plans.

Richards said. "We'll reflect together on what you did in the classroom."

For Kathy, a 15-year teaching veteran, it was the disheartening classroom observations by administrators that spurred her to seek out PIP. "I was having a lot of difficulty with observation," she said. "I began asking myself, 'What am I doing wrong at this point in my career?'"

PIP gave her strategies to improve her practice in her second-grade classroom. After reviewing classwork, she could tell who was getting the lesson and who was not – but how to keep that data front and center, and fresh enough to inform her lesson plan?

"I created a data chart to track how everyone is learning in the classroom, from those who get the lesson to those who don't," Kathy said. The chart helped her tailor the lesson to make sure every student keeps up.

"I got a lot of positive feedback on that chart. It was even highlighted at a staff meeting," she said. Kathy also learned how to listen to criticism that comes with classroom observations. "I've learned how to listen to the critique, change things and move on," she said. "And not take it personally."

The integrity of the partnership is a recurring theme in the conversation of other peer intervenors who spoke about their

work. "I would use words like 'humane' and 'dignity,' to describe our work," said Jessica LeRouge, who worked closely with Kathy. "We try to meet them where they are and bring their pedagogy forward. We structure the partnership according to their individual needs. It's a privilege to be a part of PIP."

LeRouge said each professional development plan is designed for the teacher. "That's the road map we follow in the intervention," she said. "We design it together and collect data to see how it's progressing. It's teachers helping teachers."

Jasmine was a 1st-grade teacher at PS/IS 270 who reached out to PIP at the urging of a colleague. "I had 15 years of teaching experience, but I had 36 students in the class," she said. "I'd seen Jessica working with another teacher before, and I wanted to know more." After filling out an online form, she was paired with LeRouge. "She was very supportive, very honest, and gave lots of input and ideas," Jasmine said. "Jessica was patient and professional, and when she came into my classroom she respected my space."

"I'm good with management but having another person there while I was in the classroom meant a lot," said Jasmine. "She shared with me different ways of dealing with children who have behavior issues."

But the conversation between Jessica and Jasmine went beyond classroom issues. “She encouraged me to pursue other things,” Jasmine said. “I left teaching last June [2016] to become a literacy coach. I’m helping teachers improve their practice in literacy.” Her base is now in a school in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, where she gets to use many of the strategies that Jessica shared with her.

“She always talked about building relationships, and how important it is to build it from the beginning to have trust,” Jasmine recalled. “You need that in order to move forward.”

PIP has a way of helping teachers take stock of where they are – and where they need to go.

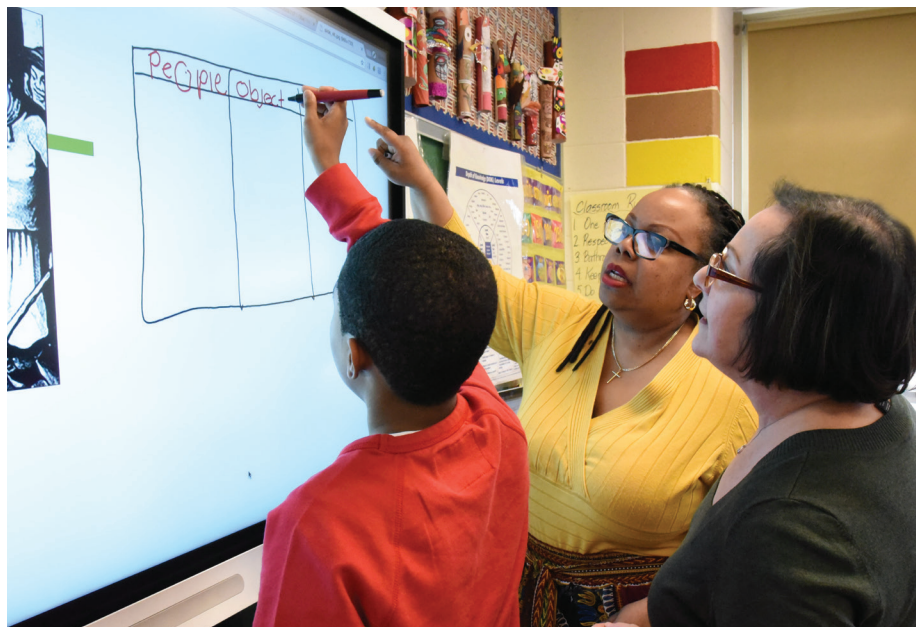
Yvonne, a special education teacher for 5th grade, had what she called “a little problem” with her rating about four years ago. She has been teaching for 16 years.

“I told them my teaching skills are not the problem,” Yvonne recalled. But when she was urged by a colleague to try PIP, she reluctantly agreed. That’s when she met Taryn Sanders, a PIP peer intervenor. “Taryn is a special education teacher, too,” Yvonne said. “She was so nice. She did not criticize me, but gave me advice. I took notes, and she gave me homework, too.”

In addition to learning how to write a lesson plan, Yvonne learned behavior management techniques. “I learned that praising students – not necessarily reprimanding them – brings them back on track,” she said.

It wasn’t long before Yvonne had a realization: “I was getting more comfortable in class. And I became very good at what I do.” Now she’s studying for an administrative certificate, and hopes to become an education administrator.

“I learned a lot, I really did benefit from



Mutual respect drives the collaboration. Sandra will often signal to Beth if she’d like her to step in and co-teach the class.

PIP,” she said.

Sanders has been an intervenor with PIP for 12 years. With many teachers now assigned to integrated co-teaching classes that blend special education and general education students, Sanders is often called upon to help teachers get their footing in the new environment.

“General education students can often make the connections themselves,” Sanders said. “With special education you need to fill in all these little things, break information down to the smallest pieces.”

But the first step is “building trusting relationships with the teachers we work with,” Sanders said. “They know we have their best interests at heart.”

Sanders said a common misperception is that PIP works with failing teachers. “Not true,” she said. “We work with people who want to change their practice. And it takes courage and fortitude to do that. A teacher will say, ‘I’m obviously not doing something right, and I want to do it right.’ These are people willing to take risks, and want to improve.”

Back in Sandra’s classroom, the work

continues even after the students left.

Sandra and Richards sat down to talk about how the class went. They review student work together, and Sandra pulls out the incomplete work of a student who may need extra help.

“I love the teaching of social studies,” said Sandra after they have reviewed class assignments. “Beth knew what I needed next.” A student returning to the class greets both teachers. “Beth is family,” Sandra said. Their comfort level is such that Sandra knows she can signal when she thinks it’s a good idea for Beth to share the reins in the classroom. “I’ll look at her and nod – and we’re co-teaching,” said Sandra.

Richards said showing a teacher how something is done can be a powerful moment. “Teachers are often told what to do but not shown what it looks like in practice,” Richards said. “They attend professional development workshops and maybe do it once or twice. With us, you practice it all the time. You get to practice it deeply, change something if it’s not working. You make it your own, and at the end of the day, the students benefit.”



The camaraderie between Beth and Sandra is evident in their easy banter. A trusting relationship gives teachers a chance to reflect on classroom practices and their long-term goals, in and out of the classroom.

Dear
Marilynn,



I have had chronic headaches for the past few months. I finally went to the doctor. After ruling out other possibilities, the doctor said that the headaches are stress-related. I'm a 1st-grade teacher, a mom of two, a wife, a daughter, and a friend. My life is wonderfully full and for that I am grateful. The problem is, I often feel pulled in so many directions, I end up overwhelmed and stressed out. I love being a teacher, but planning lessons properly takes time. I can't always plan during the workday so I often do it at home.

Once I'm home, however, I need to take care of my family and sometimes I don't get to finish my school work. I go to bed with a headache and a long list of things to do in my head. That sometimes makes it hard to fall asleep and to stay asleep. Sleep deprivation only adds to my stress.

How can I manage all these competing priorities, find time to take care of myself and manage my stress in a healthier way?

— Exceedingly Stressed!

Dear Exceedingly Stressed!

Thank you for writing. You are not alone. Managing a successful career, a family, a home and other important relationships is no easy feat. As expectations for education rise, so do stress levels for teachers. The teaching profession, like others, is challenging because you often bring work home. Stress can affect the body in many ways. In the short-term, headaches, as you know first-hand, are common. Others experience stiff necks, tight shoulders, back pains, increased heart rate and accelerated breathing. In the long-term, stress can affect your immune system, your heart, your muscles and your digestive system. Although you can't control all the competing priorities in your life, here are some tips to help you take better care of yourself.

1. Try working smarter, not harder. Pare down the "to do" list in your head. Break it up into three categories that emphasize the urgency of each task. For example, "Do tomorrow," "Do by Saturday" and "Someday." Stay focused on the immediate. It can be overwhelming to think of everything you'd like to accomplish all at once. Small, doable tasks are much more manageable.

As you slowly reduce the "to do" list, you may feel a sense of accomplishment and that can motivate you to continue chipping away at the list. If one task or concern is worrying you before bed, write it down. Imagine that writing it down removes it from your mind and puts it on the paper for "holding" until the morning when you can address it.

2. Keep a log of how you spend your time at work and at home. Are less important tasks taking up a lot of time? Can you be more efficient? Are you getting caught up or distracted during your prep periods at school?

If you notice any bad patterns, make changes where you can. Reflecting on how you spend your time and

energy can be an enormously helpful tool in finding more time to take care of yourself. Also, having realistic expectations about how long things will take to do can help you better manage your time.

Time yourself for the tasks that worry you the most. If you find that lesson planning takes two hours, schedule at least that much time into your day to get it done. Some teachers do the most challenging tasks at school and leave tasks that take less concentration at home. Create systems and routines for yourself that ease some of your burden. Have a lesson plan template, for example, that guides you through all of the necessary elements of a complete lesson plan. At home, make sure the other members of the family, including your children, are shouldering their fair share.

3. Breathe, breathe, breathe. When you find yourself feeling worried or tense (make note of the way your body feels and where you hold your tension) take a moment or two to breathe deeply.

Deep breathing has numerous physical and emotional benefits. It calms the sympathetic nervous system (the fight or flight response), lowers heart rate, and relaxes muscles. Deep breathing can give you some momentary distance from the source of stress or worry. This helps to gain perspective on the issue. When your mind and body are calmer, you have better access to the part of your brain that solves problems and thinks analytically.

Deep breathing works anywhere, at any time of the day, to help you lower stress. Learning to use deep breathing as a regular practice for stress management helps people to feel a stronger sense of control over themselves. Stress and anxiety can easily snowball into panic, so learn to stop, breathe, and think.

4. Exercise, eat right, laugh, and play. Even the most hard-working and focused professionals need time to disengage from work. Take a walk, relax in a warm bath or take part in any activity that helps calm your mind. Think of this time as a necessary part of your life. Spend time with those with whom you are most comfortable: people who make you laugh and those who know you best.
5. You should see your medical doctor for regular checkups to monitor any health issues that may be affected by stress and tell him how you are feeling.
6. It's helpful to talk to friends and family about the challenges you face. Sometimes talking not only helps you to gain some perspective but it also may help you feel less isolated.
7. If the stress still feels unmanageable after trying some of these strategies, you may want to speak to a counselor. A counselor can help you sort through your thoughts and feelings and help you better understand the root of the problem.

Marilynn Massa, L.C.S.W., NCPsyA

Marilynn Massa, a licensed clinical social worker and nationally certified psychoanalyst, is the counseling support services liaison for PIP.



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problem called for eight circles, the students cut out eight circles. They then used these cut-outs as manipulatives. Most of them could identify numbers even though they couldn't necessarily write them. So, they were required to cut out pictures of the numerals and use them to construct number problems.

In the above scenario, benchmark assessments composed of IEP goals and present levels of performance provided the teacher with information about which skills each student possessed before she planned the lesson. With this information, she was able to design several tasks aligned to the objective that are appropriate for each student's performance level.

Another way that teachers use assessments to create groups and/or differentiate tasks is by evaluating student comprehension during the lesson.

Informal assessments such as turn-and-talk, think-pair-share and student interviews, provide teachers with opportunities to listen and evaluate. If a teacher uses a rubric to check for specific information while listening to the students talk to each other, she can gather valuable data about what students actually understand. During five- to ten minutes of class discussion, a teacher can hear enough to decide who is ready to move on to independent practice, who will require an organizer, a modification, or some other form of scaffold to complete the activity, and who will require re-teaching, or remediation.

The teacher should have prepared activities in advance for each of these performance levels. At this point, students are directed to the varying groups where they receive appropriate work for the next phase of the lesson.

Differentiation Strategies for ENLs Reading and Literacy Instruction Strategies

Effective planning and differentiating becomes even more important for a student designated as an English-as-a-new-language learner. Here are a few strategies for ENLs during English Language Instruction, i.e. literacy instruction.

As always, use intentional groupings: When differentiating for ENLs, teachers must provide multiple opportunities for students to read and interpret compli-

cated texts. ENLs of varying abilities can be grouped together during reading activities. This group can represent one of the "tiers" during lesson planning. Passages of leveled texts should be carefully chosen for this purpose. As the non-ENL students read silently and independently, ENLs can also read silently. The ENLs, however, should be encouraged to ask one another questions if they do not understand something. This gives language learners at different levels a chance to collaborate. More advanced learners often enjoy helping classmates.

Plan language objectives along with content objectives: Give ENLs pre-determined passages to read and reread. When creating a set of questions to accompany a reading passage, the teacher has a good opportunity to differentiate. Ask all students to read the same text. Ask non-ENL students questions about the content and ask English language learners questions that address language objectives.

For example, while non-ENL students are answering questions about the main idea of a passage (content objective), language learners can answer questions about whether events in the passage occurred in the present or the past (language objective). ENLs can also be asked about plural versus singular, or identify examples of subject/verb agreement. They can be asked to provide evidence to support their answers to these questions, reinforcing their knowledge of grammar and sentence structure.

Vocabulary Acquisition Strategies for ENLs

Make use of context and context clues: Teachers must maintain strict and intentional control over the reading materials and where language learners encounter new words. If a text is carefully chosen, students can achieve a good deal of academic language acquisition through use of context clues. Word meanings are acquired through multiple encounters with the words in relevant contexts.

For example, if a reading passage describes someone at a clinic getting a flu shot, the students can use context clues to figure out what "syringe" or "hypodermic needle" means. Reading these words in a passage about polluted beaches may be more difficult to interpret.

Here also, the teacher can use language

objectives to differentiate. In this case, the teacher can address language objectives by asking about specific vocabulary words. ENLs can be asked to guess the meaning of words and to explain their reasoning, which promotes metacognition. It can be valuable to let them complete a task independently before having them work in pairs to reach consensus on the definitions.

When the task requires that every student address content-based objectives, a teacher might best address ENL vocabulary differentiation by giving explicit explanations of unknown words. The teacher should use contextual support such as real objects or pictures that accompany the verbal explanations. For shorter passages, a teacher might include visuals about the text itself. If that isn't possible, underline difficult words and provide a list of student-friendly definitions, thus creating a glossary cheat-sheet students can refer to.

Strategies for Writing Tasks

Make further use of text dependent questions: Teachers of ENLs should make effective use of outlines and charts to provide structural direction for essay instruction. Outlines and charts act as maps in the construction of essays and often in the construction of paragraphs themselves. For ENLs, teachers should develop a system that guides students through the writing process, from gathering text evidence to producing complete essays.

A teacher might find it valuable to encourage beginning writers to paraphrase sections of text to answer specific questions. For example, give the whole class a reading selection and four questions to answer but provide ENLs with a copy of the text with important information highlighted. The teacher can then ask the ENLs to interpret the highlighted passages and rewrite them in their own words to answer specific, text-dependent questions. This activity can be valuable as an independent or a group activity.

When highlighting passages for ENLs to paraphrase, teachers should not shy away from using dense, complicated text. Difficult or complicated sentences present an opportunity to enhance both reading and writing skills.

Use question responses to produce paragraphs: With proper planning, teachers can extend the process students

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What's New?

A look at the latest from the Peer Intervention Program

Peer Intervention adds new staff: PIP welcomes new intervenors, Federico Anderson and Christina Luzzi. Federico, a veteran English, special education and bilingual instruction teacher comes to PIP from Brooklyn high schools. Christina is a former science curriculum common core fellow and UFT chapter leader. She comes to PIP from District 1.

PIP posting: Seeking qualified candidates for intervenor positions in all areas. Applicants must be tenured, full-time pedagogues in the New York City Department of Education. Vacancy circulars may be found on the DOE and UFT websites.

PIP staff member receives accolades: Congratulations to Marilynn Massa, counseling support services liaison, on her recent presentation, "The Impact of Internal and External Factors in Patient Progress: An Intersubjective Perspective," at the American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work Conference held in Baltimore, Maryland. Marilynn was also honored at the conference.

PIP presents: As the need for support to teachers in classrooms has grown increasingly important, demand for information about PIP services has also risen. Coordinator Lynne Ann Kilroy recently addressed UFT chapter leaders about program services at several meetings in districts around the city.

Thank you to the following UFT district representatives for their support in organizing these meetings: Jessica Harvey (D-2), Elizabeth Espert (D-3), Alice O'Neil (Manhattan High Schools), Bill Woodruff (D-7), Carol Harrison (D-9), Marcus Escobar (D-10), Patricia Atia (D-15), Kate O'Hagan (D-21), William Kalogeras (BASIS), James Duncan (Brooklyn High Schools), Joe Kessler (D-25), Mary Vaccaro (D-26), and Angela Artis (D-28).

PIP at a Glance

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use for answering text-dependent questions to ask ENLs to produce answers in paragraph form.

Plan your lessons so answers to text-dependent questions are related and sequential. If answers to questions present a logical sequence of events, you can ask students to combine their paraphrased responses to form paragraphs that address specific prompts. This allows students to practice use of transitions and appropriate punctuation.

While the rest of the class is engaged in literary analysis or some other aspect of the writing process, ENLs can reinforce their understanding of sentence construction and paragraph development. Over the course of a unit, sentences are combined to form paragraphs, and paragraphs to form essays.

Use paragraphs to produce essays:

The teacher must apply this same step-by-

step approach to long writing assignments. Once again, unit planning has to be intentional. Text-dependent questions students answer and use as a basis for writing paragraphs can be used as components in writing an essay.

Example: Ms. Johnson is teaching a unit on argument essays; students must take a position on a topic. She assigns students two articles, each of which explores one side of the issue. They then choose a side and write an essay that argues for that side. When preparing questions for ENLs to answer while reading the articles, Ms. Johnson must make sure that when combined, the answers make the author's position clear. The answer to each question should also provide information that helps clarify the author's argument.

These paragraphs will eventually form an essay. By the time the class is done reviewing and discussing the two articles, ENLs will have done the heavy lifting and have written the most important paragraphs. In these

cases, students must rely heavily on text evidence, using the text to help convey meaning. Teachers should require students to revise their paragraphs after class discussion. This gives students a chance to reconsider what they thought and what they wrote.

Differentiating literacy instruction for ENLs is time consuming and complicated. Teachers should take advantage of the many available resources to address the specific needs of ENL students. Many of these strategies discussed above were adapted from Engage NY modules for ESL.

In public education, differentiation is no longer a choice. Differentiation forms the foundation for the inclusive classroom of the 21st Century. Students with special needs and those learning English are not the only students who benefit from differentiation. Making information accessible to all students and finding a way to measure their progress benefits everyone. Teachers must find ways to make the work accessible to all, so that none are left behind. ■