

Multi-Level Magic: Hands-on Strategies for the Mixed-Level ESOL Classroom

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MORE INFORMATION

Student Groupings

- **Pair/partners**
Can be determined by ability (like-ability or cross-ability, depending on activity) or by interest.
- **Small Group**
Like pairs, small groups (3-5 people) can be determined by ability or interest.
- **Individual**
Gives an opportunity for students of all levels to work at their own pace.
Individual tasks can be modified depending on level.
- **Whole Class**
Important for establishing and maintaining class unity. Can be used to introduce a theme, or for an activity such as pronunciation or introducing theme/topic vocabulary that is needed on any level.

7 Intelligences

Logical, Verbal, Visual, Musical, Physical, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal

3 Learning Styles

Visual, Aural, Kinetic

Demographics to consider

- Culture/Race/Ethnicity/Country of Origin
- Age, Gender/Perception of Gender Roles
- Formal Education: Amount, Personal Experiences
- Family Situation: Married or Single/Children/Family here in US?
- Economic Situation: Employment situation/Income Level/Comparison to past in home country
- How Long in US
- Immigration Status
- Urgent Life Issues: family member ill, emotional/mental issues

Resources (where sample activities selected from)

Fun With Grammar, Azar

Ventures, Cambridge—esp. Collaborative Activities (CD-rom), Add Ventures Multilevel Worksheets

Word by Word Picture Dictionary, Longman

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Initial Assessment Suggestions

➤ **Textbook Placement Tests**

Vary in content from standardized tests such as CASAS, and often test in other areas, such as grammar and writing. Helps in determining which textbook level a student needs, which may be different from CASAS and other standardized test levels.

➤ **Basic Information Review**

It is a good idea to assess new students at all levels for knowledge of basic information in English in all 4 skill areas, to be sure they can identify and produce it correctly. This includes: numbers, letters, personal information, calendar information, greetings.

➤ **Recorded Speaking Activity**

Record and assess a speaking task for diction and pronunciation skills following a rubric, with points to include ability to communicate target information, clarity of content, pronunciation, intonation, ability to produce grammatical structures. (Note: even if you don't have access to recording technology, this can be done while listening to the students speak.)

➤ **Free-writing Activity**

Assign a writing task to evaluate students' abilities to write, not associated with a handout or textbook activity. This should also be assessed following a rubric, with points to include ability to communicate meaning, clarity of content, accuracy of vocabulary, spelling, and ability to produce grammatical structures.

➤ **Computer/technology Skills**

Assign tasks to evaluate students' abilities to use technology, especially computer skills.

➤ **Self-Assessment/Goal-setting**

All students at all levels should at least begin to assess their own needs and set purpose for taking the class, along with setting some specific goals. Some will need more assistance than others in this. Lower levels may especially need the instructor or a volunteer assistant to guide them in this.

➤ **Group and solo work**

It is a good idea to include individual, partner, small group and whole class activities to assess which of a student's abilities may be higher or lower than assigned level, as well as to assess their learning preferences and abilities to work with others.