

Fluency Routines for Systematic ELD

Use these routines to help students gain fluency as they learn English. Adapted from ideas by *Spencer Kagan*.

Use	Structure	Number of students	Instructions	Grade Level considerations	Ideas/ Comments
Regulating Communication	Gambits	Pairs or groups of 4	Similar to Talking Chips. A gambit is really just a sentence frame printed on to paper. Students would need to be talking about a topic in which the gambits were appropriate.	Better for intermediate students who can read.	This structure is particularly helpful with social and communication skills like paraphrasing or disagreeing, since the wording is printed on the slip of paper.
Regulating Communication	Talking Chips	Pairs or groups of 4	Each student in the group is given game chips or any other small object. Each time they wish to speak they must turn in a chip to the center (a cup or other container can hold the chips). Students cannot share again until everyone else in the group has shared. When all chips have been used, they can be returned and students can talk again.	Good for all ages	Very helpful to ensure equal participation. You can assign a different color to each child in the group. Then you can monitor participation and invite feedback. (If there are 2 yellows, 5 reds, greens, and 5 blues in the center you can see which child is not participating as much.)
Vocabulary and Language structure practice	Blind Sequencing	Groups of 3-5	Teacher creates sequencing cards, either pictures or words. Each person in the group should get one card that is unique to the group. When students get their card they are to look at it carefully and not allow others to see it. Students should mark the back of their card with their initials or a symbol so they know whose card is whose. In turn, each student describes his or her card as well as possible in order to put the cards in order. The group works together to put the cards in proper order face down. No card should be set down unless everyone agrees. If the group gets stuck, only the original owner can look and describe the card again. When the group thinks they have sequenced the cards properly, they flip over the cards and check to see how they did. If it is incorrect, they fix it and discuss what they can do differently next time.	Good for all ages, if picture cards are used.	This is a great way to have students practice sequencing and language structures using order words.
Vocabulary and Language structure practice	Carousel	Groups of 3-5	Students sit with their groups and discuss a topic. Teacher chooses 1 student to stay, and then the rest of the group moves to another group. The group shares again, either a new topic or the same. Teacher chooses a student to stay behind. It could be the same or not.	Good for all ages.	Very lively! Be clear with your directions so students are not wondering where they should rotate to.
Vocabulary and Language structure practice	Corners	Whole class	Teacher has corners of the classroom labeled with numbers, letters, or emotion faces. Students are given a question with 2-4 possible choices. These could be multiple choice or more subjective questions, such as "How are you feeling about_____?" Students chose which corner answers the question. Teachers may want students to write down their choice on a scrap of paper to prevent choosing based on friendships. Students move to the corner and share why they chose the corner.	Would work for most ages with picture prompts	

Adapted from A Carousel of IDEAS and the Systematic ELD model (Dutro) by teachers at Ord Terrace Elementary School, MPUSD

Vocabulary and Language structure practice	Draw-what-I-draw	Pairs or groups of 4	See Match mine for details	Good for all ages.	
Vocabulary and Language structure practice	Find Someone Who	Whole class	Teacher creates/finds a worksheet with just 4-16 questions on it. This can be a sheet with picture prompts or vocabulary terms. Students mix and pair. One student in the pair questions the other. Example: "Do you know what the word 'transportation' means?" Second student answers. "Yes, I know that transportation means..." Student 1 records the answer. Student 2 checks to make sure student 1 wrote it down. The pair switches roles.		
Vocabulary and Language structure practice	Find the Fib/ Two truths and a Lie	Whole class	Students write three statements. One must be a believable lie or made-up fact. Two should be unbelievable facts. One student reads statements. Pairs or small groups discuss statements. The reader can ask how many believed statement 1, or 2, or 3.	This is appropriate for grades 3 and up with modeling. For the lower grades try "Fact or Fiction" with one made-up statement and one factual statement.	Use to review content. Students can construct their statements using a Target structure. One idea for language functions would be for cause and effect.
Vocabulary and Language structure practice	Gallery Walk	Whole class	Posters or charts are hung around the room. Small groups of students are placed in front of the charts. Students discuss the content. Then they are given post-its or other form to complete regarding the poster. Students will rotate through the posters, discussing and offering comments.		
Vocabulary and Language structure practice	Inside/Outside circle	Whole class	Students stand in two concentric circles. The inside circle faces out, the outside circle faces in. The teacher directs the students to move the inside and outside circles moving in opposite directions. For example, the inside circle moves the left 2 spaces, and the outside circle moves to the right 2 spaces. Students will face a new partner. Students can practice a language function, vocabulary, or answer a question. Teacher can continue to have them rotate as often as desired.	Good for all ages.	Watch for students who won't/don't move correctly.
Vocabulary and Language structure practice	Line-ups	Whole class	Students are told where the ends of the lines are, and are asked to arrange themselves along the line. Pairs can be formed based on who is next to whom. Pairs can discuss the answer to a question or practice language patterns. Example line ups: Birthdays, ABC order (try different ways: by first, last, then middle), height (but avoid weight), buttons on their clothes, siblings... you get the idea.		

Vocabulary and Language structure practice	Match mine	Pairs or groups of 4	Either a pair plays with another pair or one partner plays with another. Students can sit back to back or they can erect a small barrier using two file folders paper clipped together at the top with the base spread out. The sender (s) creates a design with game pieces (tangrams, pattern blocks, picture cards, etc.) After creating the design, the sender must describe it accurately so that the receiver can build his or her own version. Neither should peek at each other's design! Senders need to be very clear with their description. When the group or partners think they have the design correct, they can compare. If it is not correct, they discuss how they could have communicated better so that it would match. An even easier variation of Match mine is Draw-what-I-say. Senders make a drawing and describe it to the receivers. The receivers attempt to match the drawing. Very humorous!	Good for all ages.	This is a great way to have students practice prepositions and other directionality words. Works well for the imperative case. Groups may finish at different rates, have partners switch roles if they finished early. Would work well for vocabulary practice with the correct manipulatives. For example: placing clothing on a paper doll. This can get silly, but as long as they are practicing the language, what's the harm?
Vocabulary and Language structure practice	Mix-n-match	Whole class	Teacher creates/finds pairs of cards. Each card has a matching card. Examples: picture and word, word and definition, math fact and answer. Each child is given one card. Students "mix" through the classroom. Students will exchange their card for another. Make sure students continue to give 1 card and get 1 card. You can play music and stop it to have students freeze or use a signal to get students to freeze. Students freeze at the signal. Once they are frozen they can't exchange cards. Students move about the classroom to match their card. When they find each other they move to the outside edge of the class. Students should share their answers, either just with each other or with the whole class.		Very effective for vocabulary review, either with pictures or definitions. For more advanced groups you can use antonyms, synonyms, word forms, etc.
Vocabulary and Language structure practice	Same-different	Pairs or groups of 4	Similar set up to Match mine, using a barrier to prevent the other side from seeing. Each pair or partner is given a sheet with similar and different objects on it. Students discuss what they see on their paper and compare it to what the other side says is on theirs. All students help record on paper the similarities and differences. Once they have found all the similarities and differences that they can think of, they may remove the barrier and check to see if they were correct. If not, they discuss them now. You can use many objects for this structure: advertisements, articles, food packaging, many types of realia. If you want to make your own picture cards, take an image and make two copies of it. Use white out and a black marker to remove and add details. You might want to copy the two versions of the pictures on different colored paper.	Most appropriate for intermediate, since students need to write down the differences. But primary teachers can adapt this so that students just need to say the differences.	This is useful for language structures using comparing and contrasting. It can be helpful for vocabulary practice as well.

Vocabulary and Language structure practice	Similarity Groups	Whole class	Teacher announces the topic and the students think about it. Students then form groups with similar characteristics. You may wish to have students record their ideas on paper so they do not choose to be a group based on friendships. Given a signal, students meet in their similarity groups. They can then discuss in pairs or small groups the topic or practice the language structure or vocabulary. You can give additional prompts after the groups form. Remember, groups are similar, not exactly the same.	Good for all ages.	Helpful tips; have students announce their groups before the discussion part occurs so that you don't have two groups with the same idea. Don't allow for loners, if someone doesn't fit in acknowledge their choice ask them to join a group. Favorites are a good topic for this structure. Example: What's your favorite form of transportation?
Vocabulary and Language structure practice	Think-Pair-Share	2-4*	Students are given time to think about the answer to the question, then discusses the answers with their partner. * Pairs can also share their answers with another pair for more practice.	Good for all ages.	
Vocabulary and Language structure practice	Value Line-ups	Whole class	Students are given a statement that they will either agree or disagree with (ex. People should use alternative transportation instead of driving.) Students decide where they would fall on a values line. (Either ends are strongly agree or strongly disagree, the middle is for less extreme views.) Teachers may wish to have students mark their place on paper before they go up to form a real line. Students form a line and then discuss with a partner next to them in line why they took the stand that they did. Teachers may wish to "fold the line" so that students with opposite opinions match up and the middle matches with someone on the other side of the middle. These partners would also discuss. The line can also be "split". One half of the line slides up so that the more moderate opinions match with the extreme opinions of the other side. These partners would discuss why they chose their position. You could have students continue to rotate down a position so that they would practice again.	Works with intermediate grade students, could work with primary students with modeling.	
Vocabulary and Language structure practice	Who am I?	Whole class	Teacher creates/finds pictures or word cards to place on all students' backs. Use tape or if the cards are laminated, use a hole punch and yarn to create necklaces. Be sure they don't see their own picture. Two suggestions on how to do this: you might want to have them stand in a circle, with their backs outward, doing something else (listening to a story, singing a song, etc) while you craftily stick the pictures on their backs, or you can give the whole class temporary partners. All the 1's face forward while the 2's tape the picture to their backs then the 2 face forward while the 1's tape. Students mix around the room finding a partner. To practice social skills, you can have them say hello or good morning and then shake hands. Then they should check each other's backs. Students take turns asking yes or no questions. After each student in the pair has asked 3 questions, the pair breaks up and new partners are found until each child has figured out what is on his or her back. Once students have figured out their picture or word, they can be helpers giving hints to the others. This is a good structure for practicing question language functions, but the answers should only be yes or no.	Good for all ages. Especially great for the primary grades.	Model good questions that could help them guess the identity quickly. Model good hints so that the helper does not give the answer away. The fun of this structure is its game-like quality. Excellent for vocabulary practice. Useful for concept development, too.