DICTIONARY

of classroom strategies

K–6
Introduction

This invaluable resource introduces teaching, learning and assessment strategies for the classroom. It is intended both as a reference tool for teachers and as a professional development guide for schools. Entries have been organised alphabetically to make it easy to find the information you need.

Schools have trialled the dictionary at staff meetings, and after discussing the range of strategies, they have selected certain ones to try in the classroom. These schools reported an increase in the range of strategies teachers were using in their day-to-day teaching.

These strategies can be applied across the curriculum.
Adjustments

Adjustments are measures or actions taken in relation to teaching, learning and assessment that assist a student with special education needs to access syllabus outcomes and content, and associated learning experiences. These adjustments will vary according to the needs of the individual student, and may be determined in the context of collaborative curriculum planning.

Adjustments could include:

- **additional presentation or modelling of knowledge, skills and strategies, for example:**
  - providing simpler explanations
  - modelling additional examples
  - breaking the task into smaller steps and providing students with additional time at each step
  - providing additional instruction in a smaller homogeneous group enabling opportunities for more intense, targeted instruction and instructional scaffolding

- **clarifying or shortening instructions, for example:**
  - providing instructions in simpler language
  - giving one instruction at a time
  - ensuring that students can read and understand written instructions
  - providing instructions in alternate formats, for example providing written instructions in addition to oral instructions
  - asking students to repeat instructions
  - giving students the opportunity to ask questions about the learning experience

- **changes to classroom organisation, for example:**
  - changes to lighting
  - reduction of background noise
  - appropriate placement of objects and equipment in the classroom

- **providing opportunities for additional practice through group work, peer or volunteer tutoring and/or other individual assistance**

- **providing additional guided practice and independent practice**

- **providing additional monitoring and/or feedback or alternative feedback, for example:**
  - maintaining closer proximity and providing more regular monitoring
  - asking questions at different levels of complexity

- **slowing the pace of instruction, for example:**
  - keep a task the same for a longer period of time
  - present a reduced amount of new material
  - pace presentation to enable students time to process the information

- **instructional scaffolding**

Instructional scaffolding is a means by which support and guidance is provided to assist the development of students’ knowledge, understanding and skills.
Scaffolding may involve modelling, cues, hints, prompts, steps, teacher questioning, direct guidance, selection and sequencing of examples, or support from a teacher, teacher’s aide or peer.

Scaffolding is temporary and is adjusted as a student becomes more successful or independent in undertaking a task. Scaffolding is reduced in a gradual and planned way by providing more varied, more difficult and less familiar examples or by changing the level of support provided to the student.

Scaffolds may be presented in verbal or visual (written and/or pictorial) or physical form.

Examples of scaffolding presented in an oral form include:
- prompting a student having difficulty reading a word with ‘What do you do when you come to a word you don’t know?’
- highlighting new or key information, for example ‘Listen carefully, we are going to learn something new!’

Examples of scaffolding presented in a visual form include:
- visual cues to highlight key information in a written text, for example underlining, bold or coloured font
- providing picture prompts
- displaying the steps involved in a particular task
- providing data banks or word-walls of words families, topic/theme words, high-frequency words.

Examples of scaffolding presented in a physical form include:
- adding raised materials/tactile cues to text
- placing new or difficult tasks in the same position on a worksheet
- adjustments to enable access to particular learning experiences, for example:
  - alternative formats such as:
    - Braille or large print
    - oral/sign interpreters
    - subtitled videos
  - concrete materials
  - modified text
  - use of assistive technology, such as:
    - closed-circuit television (CCTV)
    - jellybean switch
    - voice output communication aid (VOCA)
    - text reader software
    - word prediction software
    - digital version of a text.

For more information on determining and implementing adjustments, teachers should refer to the support materials published by the Board of Studies for students with special education needs http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/special_ed/faq_k6.html
Anecdotal records

Anecdotal records are brief notes about an individual student's behaviour and performance in relation to language learning activities in the classroom. Teachers record the information they gather when they observe students in different learning situations. A sample anecdotal comment a teacher might record could be:

Alex
10.10.03 Participated for the first time in a Readers Theatre activity. Read the part of Phoenix. Spontaneous applause from the class.
13.10.03 Asked for book to take home to read.

Anthology drama

Anthology drama is a form of presentation or performance. It consists of a series of linked excerpts from poetry, story or other scripted drama. It may include scenes developed from improvisation.

It is usually in a collage format. The short scenes may be linked through narration, music or some other dramatic form.

Barrier games

Barrier games are games which encourage students to use spoken language to communicate with each other. A physical barrier is placed between pairs of students. Student A is the information possessor and Student B is the information seeker. The information may be given in the form of description, instruction, procedure or question. Some examples are:

Describe and draw
Student A describes and Student B draws.

Instruct and arrange
Student A instructs Student B as to how to arrange some concrete objects.

Direction
The two students have an identical map and Student A directs Student B from an agreed starting point to a destination.

Question
Both students have identical pictures except for some minor variations. Students question each other in order to find the difference in the pictures.

Biographies

A biography is the story of a person's or a character's life told by someone else. When a writer is constructing a biographical account of a person or character, the writer researches available material and then interprets the information to reconstruct the life.

Students can construct biographies of real or fictional characters either as a written account or by using a multimedia approach. Biographies lend themselves to small group work, encouraging discussion and negotiation. A multimedia approach could involve either a dramatic performance or a TV simulation. A