

High Leverage Pedagogical Practices

Practice #1 (PreK)

Complex, Expressive, Precise Vocabulary and Discourse Development in the Socio-emotional and academic realms

Children need the language to express themselves, their ideas and their voice. They need to develop the vocabulary that allows them to name and understand the world. And, they need to be exposed to and learn the vocabulary and ways of using language that are specific to reading, writing, and academic discourse. (This differs from the social language they develop in more informal settings.) To develop students' high-level language and literacy skills, deliberate and precise vocabulary instruction must begin in preschool and continue throughout K–12. At the preschool level, SEAL teachers identify key vocabulary as they plan thematic units. Kindergarten through third grade SEAL teachers examine grade-level standards and district curriculum to identify high-level academic vocabulary words. They utilize a variety of materials and strategies to teach these words (e.g., photographs, visuals, realia, drawings, demonstrations, experiential activities). Students have multiple opportunities throughout the day to practice and use new vocabulary. Learning language extends beyond vocabulary to include language functions, structures and discourse patterns. Every thematic unit focuses on a specific language function (e.g., description, compare and contrast, cause and effect) immersing children in the grammatical structures and ways of putting language together to talk about ideas. SEAL teachers are thoughtful about modeling and supporting children in using expressive and precise vocabulary to talk about their feelings, their needs, their ideas, and to problem solve – providing opportunities for dialogue and discussion about social issues and conflicts, and guidance in developing skills of problem solving.

Practice #1 (K-3)

Complex, Academic Vocabulary Development

Children need to be exposed to and learn the vocabulary and ways of using languages that are specific to reading, writing, and academic discourse. (This differs from the social language they develop in more informal settings.) To develop students' high-level language and literacy skills, deliberate and precise vocabulary instruction must begin in preschool and continue throughout K-12. At the preschool level, SEAL teachers identify key vocabulary as they plan thematic units. Kindergarten through third grade SEAL teachers examine grade-level standards and district curriculum to identify high-level academic vocabulary words. They utilize a variety of materials and strategies to teach these words (e.g., photographs, visuals, realia, drawings, demonstrations, experiential activities.) Students have multiple opportunities throughout the day to practice and use new vocabulary. Learning languages extends beyond vocabulary to include language functions, structures and discourse patterns. Every thematic unit focuses on a specific language function (e.g., description, compare and contrast, cause and effect) immersing children in the grammatical structures and ways of putting language together to talk about ideas.

Practice #1 (4-5)

Complex, Academic Vocabulary and Language Structures

Children need to be exposed to and learn the vocabulary and ways of using language that are specific to reading, writing, and academic discourse. (This differs from the social language they develop in more informal settings.) To develop students' high-level language and literacy skills, deliberate and precise vocabulary instruction must begin in preschool and continue throughout K–12. Kindergarten through fifth grade SEAL teachers examine grade-level standards and district curriculum to identify high-level academic vocabulary words. Beginning in fourth grade, students have multiple opportunities throughout the day to identify new vocabulary and employ comprehension strategies. Deep understanding is fostered through the use of context clues, Greek and Latin root words, photographs, visuals, drawings, demonstrations, content links, and experiential activities. Learning language extends beyond vocabulary to include academic language structures and discourse patterns. Each thematic unit focuses on a specific language function (e.g., analysis, persuasion, synthesis, evaluation, etc.) immersing children in the grammatical structures and ways of putting language together to express ideas and understandings through spoken and written word.

High Leverage Pedagogical Practices

Practice #2 (PreK)

Support for Student Talk, and Structured Oral Interaction

In a SEAL classroom, the goal is to have more student talk than teacher talk. Students utilize a variety of language structures and are encouraged to ask questions. Strategies such as “Think- Pair-Share,” “Heads Together,” and “10/2” provide students time and support to practice new vocabulary and concepts through structured, purposeful interactions with peers. Teachers carefully craft discussion prompts and high-level questions to engage children in generating and using academic language. Songs and chants are used to teach the content, incorporate the vocabulary students are studying, and offer an opportunity to practice using new vocabulary in a low-risk environment, which increases children’s ease with and ownership of academic vocabulary while building fluency and rhythm in producing language. Additionally, well-planned learning centers enable children to independently engage in academic discourse with their peers. Supporting oral language development also includes active engagement in conversation, developing skills of active listening and response, of building on each others’ ideas, of asking and answering questions and continuing exchanges. In a SEAL classroom, these occur through both informal and more structured/explicitly planned opportunities.

Practice #2 (K-3)

Structured Oral Interaction and Academic Discourse

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Practice #2 (4-5)

Structured Oral Interaction and Academic Discourse

In a SEAL classroom, the goal is to have more student talk than teacher talk. In 4th & 5th grades, each thematic unit is framed by a guiding question providing the class with an anchor for inquiry. Strategies such as Think-Pair-Share, collaborative conversations, debate, and tableau provide students time and support to deepen their understanding of the guiding question while they grapple with new vocabulary, language patterns, and concepts through structured, purposeful interactions with peers. Teachers carefully craft discussion prompts and high-level questions to engage children in generating and using academic language. Supporting oral language and academic discourse development includes explicit teaching of the skills necessary for discussion: active listening and response, building on ideas, asking and answering questions, referring to shared text, providing reasons and evidence, continuing exchanges, and respectful critique. In a SEAL classroom, these discussions occur through both informal and more structured and explicitly planned opportunities. Poems and chants are also used to teach the content, incorporate the vocabulary students are studying, and offer an opportunity to explore new language in a low-risk environment, increasing children’s ease with and ownership of academic vocabulary while building fluency and expression in language production.

High Leverage Pedagogical Practices

Practice #3 (PreK)

Exposure to and Engagement with Rich Literature and High-Level Informational Text

Reading instruction helps children learn the mechanics of reading. But they become readers and learn to love reading as they engage with books that interest them. Students in a SEAL classroom are provided multiple opportunities to engage with text in a variety of genres and to make choices about the topics of the texts. Classroom libraries include rich literature in students' home languages. These multilingual books include high-interest graphics, rich vocabulary, student-written books, and leveled text. Teachers use a variety of story telling strategies and story retell activities to develop student comprehension and to teach story structure and elements (e.g., setting, characters, and plot). Materials such as puppets, flannel boards and graphic organizers support story retell and paraphrasing. Students learn to relate prior knowledge to a story, confirm predictions, and generate and respond to questions. In the youngest grades, dramatic play centers provide ongoing, independent opportunities for children to dramatize stories. Children's drawings and writing retell narrative stories. During independent or free-choice time, children look at and read books they select. In SEAL classrooms, a print- rich environment also provides students with multiple opportunities to "read the room" and be immersed in language.

Practice #3 (K-3)

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Practice #3 (4-5)

Immersion in Rich Literature and High-Level Informational Text

Students in a SEAL classroom are provided multiple opportunities to engage with multiple texts across a variety of genres and to make choices about the topics of texts. Classroom libraries are stocked with literature in students' home languages. These multilingual books include high-interest graphics, rich vocabulary, student-written books, and leveled text. Access to engaging and varied text encourages students to direct their own reading—whether for pleasure, exploration, amazement or information. Teachers use a variety of structured activities to develop student comprehension and teach the elements of genre (e.g., setting, characters, plot, etc. or headings, topic sentences, labels, subtitles, graphics, etc.). Materials such as graphic organizers support students as they learn to deconstruct and construct texts of their own. Students learn to relate prior knowledge to a text, use evidence, confirm predictions, analyze, and generate and respond to questions. Strategies such as Narrative Input, Literature Circles, and multimedia research encourage students to return to texts, mining them for deeper understanding. Tableau and Readers' Theater provide ongoing, independent opportunities for students to occupy a variety of perspectives.

High Leverage Pedagogical Practices

Practice #4 (PreK)

Purposeful, Interactive Read-Alouds and Meaningful Text Engagement:

Teachers in SEAL classrooms read aloud a variety of text related to classroom themes. Read-alouds are carefully selected to build vocabulary and model rich and expressive language. These read-alouds are prefaced with anticipatory activities that allow students to make predictions, draw connections between their own background experience and the text, and practice comprehension skills related to using visual cues, questioning, and monitoring. Reading is thoughtfully accompanied by high-quality discussions. Teachers and students talk about books and engage in summarizing, predicting, and synthesizing what students have read; Students model and use language to respond to and think about books they hear. Books are regularly read multiple times, allowing students to check their comprehension and make connections. Multiple readings also deepen children's familiarity with the text-structure, promote awareness of the author's craft and use of language, and facilitate vocabulary development to deepen writing.

Practice #4 (K-3)

Purposeful, Interactive Read-Alouds and Meaningful Text Engagement

Teachers in SEAL classrooms read aloud a variety of text related to classroom themes. Read-alouds are carefully selected to build vocabulary and model rich and expressive language. These read-alouds are prefaced with anticipatory activities that allow students to make predictions, draw connections between their own background experience and the text, and practice comprehension skills related to using visual cues, questioning, and monitoring. Reading is thoughtfully accompanied by high-quality discussions. Teachers and students talk about books and engage in summarizing, predicting, and synthesizing what students have read; Students model and use language to respond to and think about books they hear. Books are read multiple times, allowing students to check their comprehension and make connections. Multiple readings also deepen children's familiarity with the text-structure, promote awareness of the author's craft and use of language, and facilitate vocabulary development to deepen writing.

Practice #4 (4-5)

Meaningful Engagement with Text

In the upper elementary grades, teachers in SEAL classrooms continue to read aloud a variety of text related to classroom themes. Through the careful selection of picture books, as well as longer literary works, teachers help students build vocabulary, learn close reading and note-taking skills, while focusing on rich and expressive language. As upper grade students transition into independent work, teachers strategically employ read-alouds by prefacing them with activities that allow students to make predictions, draw connections between their own background experience and the text, and deepen comprehension skills related to use of visual cues, questioning, and monitoring. Reading is thoughtfully accompanied by high-quality discussions to engage in summarizing, analyzing, and synthesizing what students have read. Teachers model and students use sophisticated language to respond to and think about what has been read. Multiple readings also increase students' familiarity with text-structure, promote awareness of the author's craft and use of language, and facilitate vocabulary development as a mechanism to deepen writing.

High Leverage Pedagogical Practices

Practice #5 (PreK) ***Authentic Writing for Purpose***

Reading and writing are closely related. From the beginning of their school experiences, children are being engaged in actively producing text. “Children as authors” enables students to see the connection between their own words and text. What they say can be written down, and what they write can be read. Beginning in SEAL preschools, children draw pictures and dictate to adults, who record their words. SEAL classrooms have writing centers (with paper, pencils, notebooks, envelopes, mailboxes, etc.) to encourage children to write. Students in SEAL classroom learn the power of the written word and use writing for a variety of authentic purposes. Academic notebooks, daily journals, and collaborative writing are opportunities to use writing for authentic purposes. Student writing is laminated and bound, and placed in the classroom library, often times accompanied by photos from the classroom so children literally “see” themselves in books and as writers. For young children, drawing is their writing – it is putting their thoughts and ideas onto paper.

Practice #5 (K-3) ***Authentic Writing for Purpose***

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Practice #5 (4-5) ***Authentic Writing for Purpose***

Reading and writing are closely related. From the beginning of their school experiences, SEAL students have been engaged in actively producing text for authentic reasons. In the upper elementary grades, students are motivated to write for specific audiences for real-world purposes. Academic journals and writing notebooks provide opportunities to process new concepts and explore ideas. Through collaborative writing projects, students become passionate about issues; they experience the power of the written word to inform, persuade, advocate, entertain and delight. Larger, multi-faceted learning projects develop notetaking, research, organization, revision, and editing skills. Students see themselves as published authors when their opinion pieces, essays, stories, and articles are bound, placed in the classroom library, and shared with other classes, families, and even the community at large. SEAL classrooms also have writing centers (with paper, pencils, notebooks, tablets, etc.) to encourage students to try their hand at journalism, blogging, letter writing—or whichever genre strikes their fancy in the name of self-expression.

High Leverage Pedagogical Practices

Practice #6 (PreK)

Dramatic Play and Hands-On, Inquiry Based Learning

Young children learn through play and the opportunity to act out concepts, roles and stories related to themes and literature. Dramatic play offers a unique opportunity for students to practice and own academic vocabulary in a low affective environment. SEAL preschool through first grade classrooms include areas where props, equipment, puppets, and realia related to thematic units encourage dramatization, dialogue and play. As children move up through the grades, dramatic play areas give way to research and inquiry centers stocked with realia, photos, equipment and tools for research to encourage them to work with others to discover and deepen learning. SEAL classrooms also promote the use of language through role-playing, dramatization and Readers Theater.

Practice #6 (K-3)

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Practice #6 (4-5)

Hands-On, Inquiry Based Learning

Recognizing that children learn through authentic opportunities to explore, the Next Generation Science Standards and the History-Social Science framework require that students plan and carry out investigations and use disciplinary tools to investigate significant questions. SEAL upper elementary units are shaped by engaging and complex guiding questions that provide students with multiple opportunities for sustained investigation. Students begin to take ownership of their inquiry as, in Research Centers and Research Rotations, they seek multifaceted answers to guiding questions, as well as formulate their own questions and avenues for inquiry. Hands-on inquiry offers a unique opportunity for students to practice and own academic vocabulary and content in an engaging and low affective environment. In a SEAL classroom, the flames of inquiry and exploration are fanned as students are taught to ask interesting questions, to wonder and ponder and marvel, and seek the information they desire as a means to promote action and resolution.

High Leverage Pedagogical Practices

Practice #7 (PreK)

Graphic Organizers and Visuals

The SEAL classroom uses graphic organizers, color-coding, and visuals throughout the day. Visual constructs, such as tables, timelines, web diagrams, flow charts, and Venn Diagrams (to name a few) teach children to organize information, clarify concepts, compare and contrast information, conceptualize sequence, and categorize and classify. For English Learners, these are essential scaffolds to display the relationships between ideas in visual formats. Graphic organizers are used by students as a tool to organize oral presentations and writing. Authentic graphics, images and realia help more academic content understandable and relevant.

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Practice #7 (4-5)

Graphic Organizers and Visuals and Note-Taking Strategies

The SEAL classroom uses graphic organizers, color-coding, and visuals throughout the day. Visual constructs, such as tables, timelines, diagrams, flow charts, and Venn Diagrams (to name a few) teach children to organize information, clarify concepts, compare and contrast information, conceptualize sequence, and categorize and classify. For English Learners, these are essential scaffolds to display the relationships between ideas in visual formats. Graphic organizers are used by students as a tool to synthesize learning and organize oral presentations and writing. In the upper elementary grades, explicit focus on noting-taking skills develops students' ability to categorize, rank, summarize, compare and contrast, analyze, question, speculate and reflect. Note-taking and graphic organizers scaffold students into the life-long skill of using writing to think and process information.

High Leverage Pedagogical Practices

Practice #8 (PreK)

Collaborative Practice and Skills of Teamwork

Students engage regularly in small group inquiry, cooperative learning, discussion and activities designed to promote building upon each other's ideas, share and integrate information, and develop skills of working together to achieve an academic purpose. Small groups activities are important contexts for language practice and use. SEAL classrooms are organized to maximize collaborative work, enabling teachers to pull small groups for differentiation and targeted instruction. In preschools, free choice, play-time and centers are all opportunities for children to develop skills in interacting, sharing, working together.

Practice #8 (K-3)

Continuous Checks for Comprehension and Performance Tasks

Teachers in SEAL classrooms continually check whether and how well students understand concepts and skills. Teachers utilize multiple question formats, signal responses, and visuals to allow students to demonstrate comprehension and application. These checks for comprehension occur throughout a lesson, not just at the end – facilitating adjustment of the lesson to clarify concepts and meet student need. Students are provided multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning more formally through performance-based tasks and culminating activities designed to allow students the choice to capitalize upon their individual learning modalities. End of unit performance tasks are designed to engage students in demonstrating knowledge of content, acquisition of skills, and mastery of the language. Celebrations of learning and reflection on growth are central to these opportunities.

Practice #8 (4-5)

Continuous Checks for Comprehension and Performance Tasks

Through formative assessments, teachers in SEAL classrooms continually monitor whether and how well students understand concepts and skills. Teachers utilize multiple question formats, signal responses, and visuals to allow students to demonstrate comprehension and application. These checks for comprehension occur throughout a lesson, not just at the end – facilitating adjustment of the lesson to clarify concepts and meet student need, and to guide further instruction to deepen understanding. Students are provided multiple opportunities to demonstrate learning through performance-based tasks. With culminating activities that allow students the choice to capitalize upon their individual learning modalities, teachers gather authentic data that that informs summative assessments of student growth. These written, oral, artistic and kinesthetic end-of-unit performance tasks encourage students to demonstrate their engagement with the unit's big ideas. Through these tasks, students demonstrate knowledge of content, acquisition of skills, and mastery of the language. Celebrations of learning and reflection on growth are central to these opportunities.

High Leverage Pedagogical Practices

Practice #9 (K-3)

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Practice #9 (4-5)

Collaborative Practice and Skills of Teamwork

Students engage regularly in small group inquiry, cooperative learning, discussion and activities designed to promote building upon each other's ideas, sharing and integrating information, and developing skills of working together to achieve an academic purpose. Small group activities are important contexts for language practice and use. In the upper grades, SEAL students participate in "Research Rotations" that provide them with hands-on collaborative opportunities to engage with a variety of authentic materials including primary and secondary sources, videos, images, and works of art. SEAL classrooms are organized to maximize collaborative work, enabling teachers to pull small groups for differentiation and targeted instruction.

High Leverage Pedagogical Practices

Practice #9 (PreK)

Language Development Through Arts Infusion

In SEAL classrooms, students are exposed to the arts – both for the enrichment the arts provide, and as an opportunity to develop language. Students learn the precise language of talking about and engaging in the arts, and develop expanding realms of expression that are available only through the arts. Arts integration enriches the thematic units.

Practice #10 (K-3)

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Practice #10 (4-5)

Language Development Through Arts Infusion

In SEAL classrooms, students are exposed to the arts – both for the enrichment the arts provide, and as an opportunity to develop language. Students learn the precise language of talking about and engaging in the arts, and develop expanding realms of expression that are available only through the arts. Arts integration enriches the thematic units by offering students another modality through which to explore history and culture, generate and express ideas, communicate, problem solve, and realize a vision. Arts standards require that students master the skills and language of response, appreciation, reflection and critique. Additionally, arts are an avenue to emotional well-being, self-expression and community engagement.

High Leverage Pedagogical Practices

Practice #10 (PreK)

The World in the Classroom

Education in a SEAL classroom is relevant. Teachers use multiple strategies to invite children to talk about their lives and to bring their experiences into the classroom as part of developing understanding about the world. Children's cultures and identities have a place in the curriculum and in the physical environment of the classroom. Teachers support strong identity development and promote the skills and capacities for children to live respectfully in a diverse world. Teachers plan units to include real world connections so students see the value in their new knowledge. Teachers seize upon events in the community and the world as resources for the curriculum, utilizing technology as well as human resources to connect children to a broader global, diverse world. As children learn about a subject, they also learn about its relevance in the world and the future roles they may play that relate to that subject.

Practice #11 (K-3)

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Practice #11 (4-5)

The World in the Classroom

Education in a SEAL classroom is relevant in the lives of students. Starting in the early grades, teachers use multiple strategies to invite children to talk about their lives and to bring their experiences into the classroom as part of developing understanding about the world. Children's cultures and identities have a place in the curriculum and in the physical environment of the classroom. Teachers support strong identity development and promote the skills and capacities for children to live respectfully in a diverse world. These early-grade strategies provide children with the foundation for 21st century citizenship by promoting self-love and knowledge, along with respect for others. As students move into upper elementary school, teachers thoughtfully introduce issues of social and community justice by embedding them into the questions that guide both science and social studies units. Students learn to respectfully debate pressing ethical questions, explore relevant current and historical movements for social change, and contemplate their own role as citizen. Ultimately, students come to see themselves as passionate and interested social actors with the power to make a positive impact in their community.