

# CHEAT SHEET: AMPLIFY YOUR ELLs' VOICES

## Want to learn more?

Check out our Teaching Strategies pages:

[http://bit.ly/teaching\\_strategies](http://bit.ly/teaching_strategies)



## What Is It?

English-language learners (ELLs) come to us with a host of diverse learning needs, including the necessity for ample opportunities to practice using English in a variety of settings. Whether we teach a sheltered ELL class or we have ELLs mainstreamed in our content area classes, the concept of *increased language output* is an important tenet of ELL instruction. To put it another way, the more we can get our ELLs speaking, writing, and communicating, the better.

One way we can boost our ELLs' language output is by doing activities that involve digital creation and storytelling. These "stories" can be autobiographical, but they don't have to be -- they can also relate to any topic we teach. What's more, many of these digital tools empower students to connect with a wider audience, offering a much more

authentic context for language acquisition.

## Three Essential Strategies:

### 1. Focus on what your ELLs' *have*, not what they *lack*.

Use digital tools as one way to help your ELLs show what they know. Think beyond translation, and look for multimedia-rich digital tools that help students create *their own* content as a way to communicate.

### 2. Use technology as a scaffold toward more *in-person* communication.

It's great when ELLs have a chance to record communication in advance. Give your ELLs space to record themselves, listen back, and re-record; there are *lots* of different digital tools that enable this. Kids can create this kind of content solo, but it's also a great partner or small-group activity.

### 3. Give your ELLs an *authentic audience* for their work.

As teachers, we shouldn't be the *only* audience for our students' work. Having an audience of classmates, peers, friends, family, and beyond can be a great way to give ELLs experience with authentic, meaningful communication in

## Suggested Tools:

### - Tell About This

Photo and word prompts inspire storytelling; app records the results

<https://www.common sense.org/education/app/tell-about-this>



### - Shadow Puppet Edu

Resource-rich video slide-show creator a gem for a variety of classrooms

<https://www.common sense.org/education/app/shadow-puppet-edu>



### - Explain Everything Classic

Powerhouse tool for creating stellar multimedia presentations

<https://www.common sense.org/education/app/explain-everything-classic>



**Did you try these tips? Let us know how it went. We may even incorporate your ideas into future resources. Email us at: [edurequests@commonsense.org](mailto:edurequests@commonsense.org)**