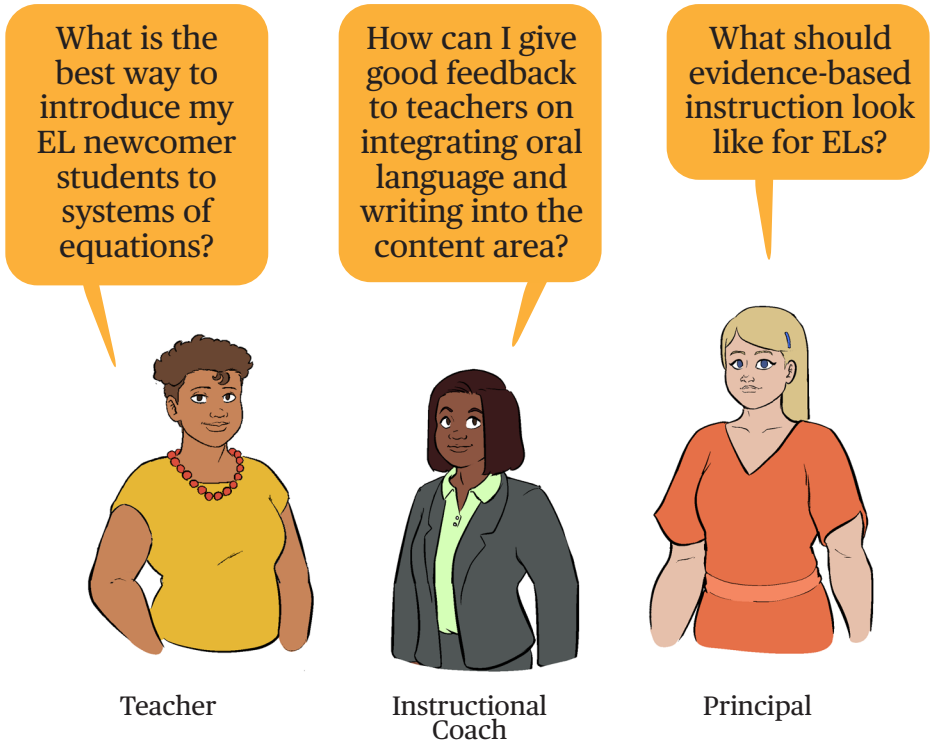
IES Institute of Education Sciences

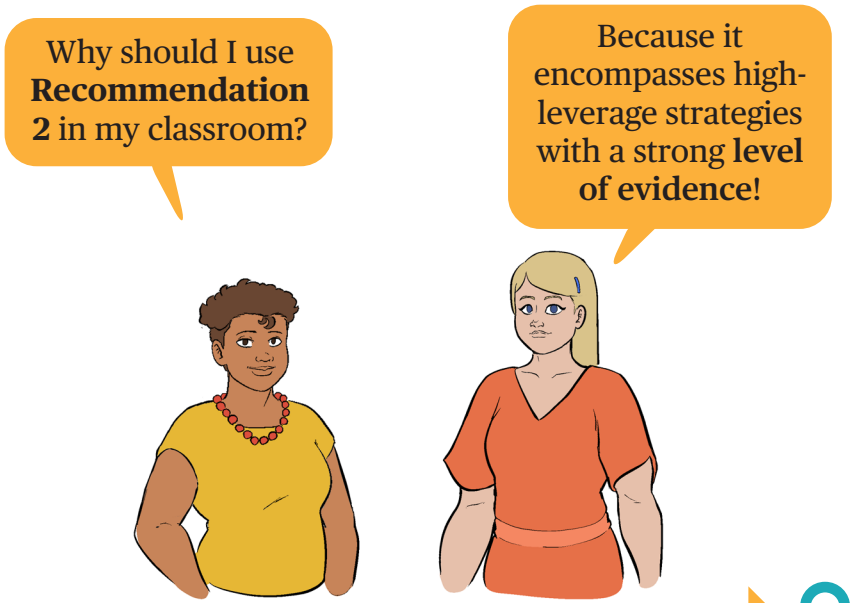
Supporting Classroom Teachers with Implementing the IES Practice Guide *Teaching Academic Content and Literacy to English Learners in Elementary and Middle Schools* (Baker et al., 2014): Part 2 of 4



No matter your role, all educators who serve English learner students can be successful in developing their students' literacy and content through the implementation of the four Recommendations described in the IES practice guide. Observing classroom instruction and providing evidence-based coaching feedback are key practices to bolster teacher and student growth. This four-part infographic series provides a glimpse into how you can achieve these practices in any school setting. This infographic focuses on **Recommendation 2.** To access the infographic that focuses on Recommendation 1, click here.

Recommendation 2: Integrate oral and written English language instruction into content-area teaching.

Recommendation 2 and the four How-To's provide clear guidance, focusing on the language and literacy skills needed to be successful in listening, reading, writing, and speaking and are relevant for elementary and middle school EL students. It is intended to help build students' English language proficiency while simultaneously providing targeted support and guidance on how to effectively integrate evidence-based strategies into classrooms.



To learn more about **levels of evidence**, see page 7.

STRONG EVIDENCE

The EL students in Ms. Slater's 8th grade algebra class are developing academic content and literacy during a daily lesson addressing Recommendation 2: **Integrate oral and written English language instruction into content-area teaching.** The EL students in Ms. Slater's algebra class have different language backgrounds and their English proficiency levels range from beginners to early intermediate.

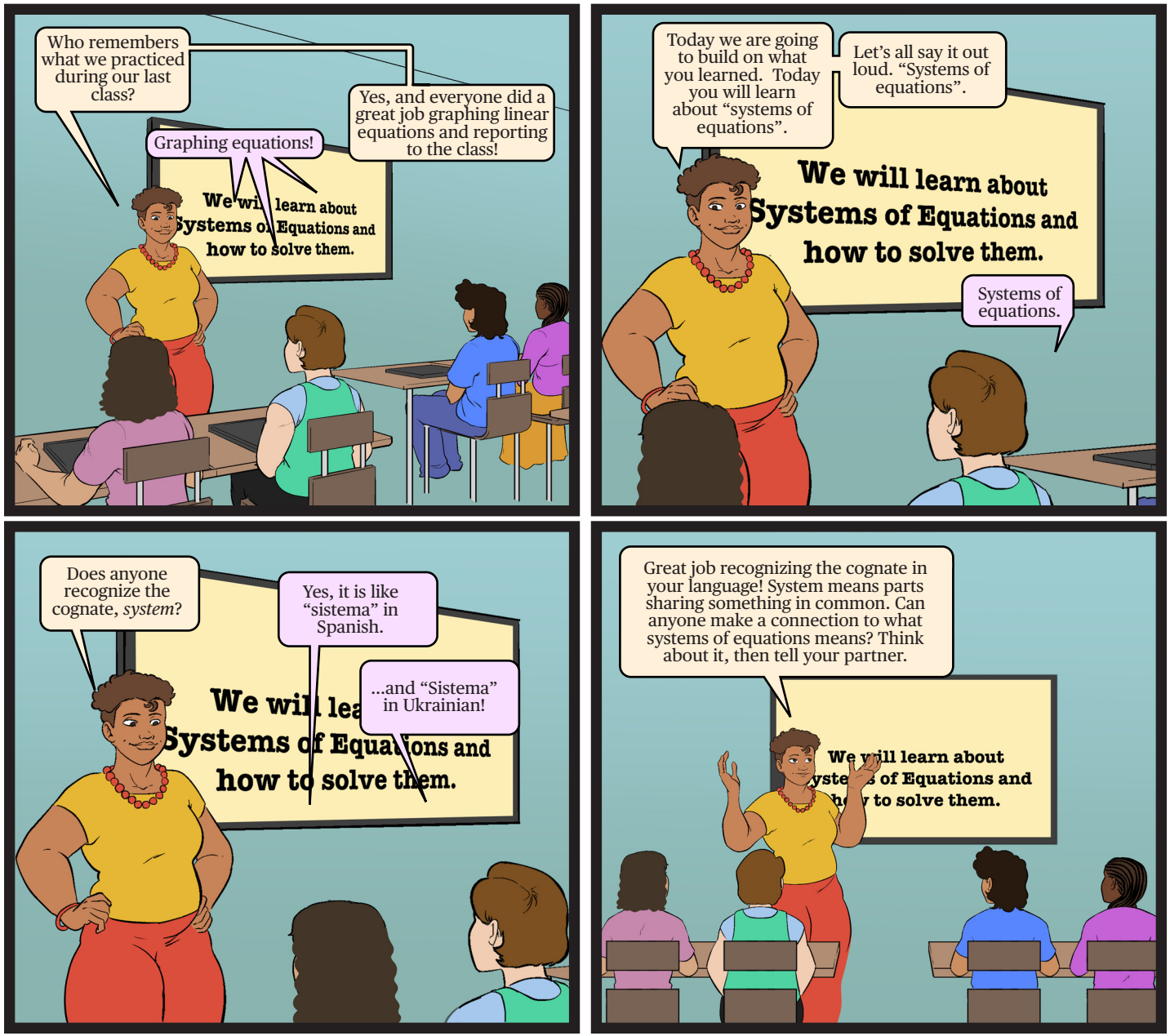
In this lesson, Ms. Slater touches on each of the How To's:

1. Strategically use instructional tools—such as short videos, visuals, and graphic organizers—to anchor instruction and help students makes sense of the content.

2. Explicitly teach the content-specific academic vocabulary, as well as the general academic vocabulary that supports it, during content-area instruction.

3. Provide daily opportunities for students to talk about content in pairs or small groups.

4. Provide writing opportunities to extend student learning and understanding of the content material.



As you read through the vignette, can you identify any of the four How-To steps that Ms. Slater addresses in her lesson? What are they?

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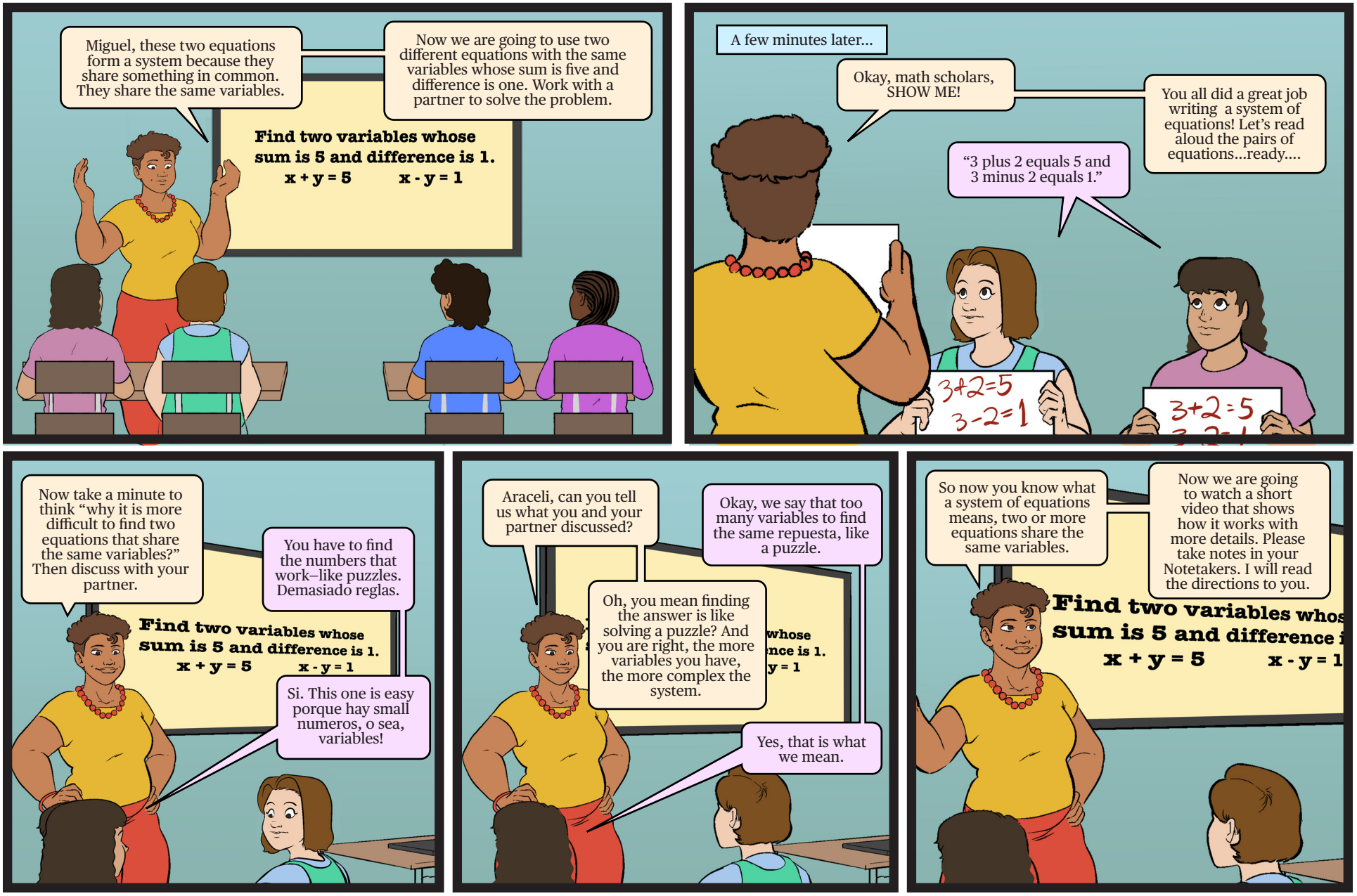

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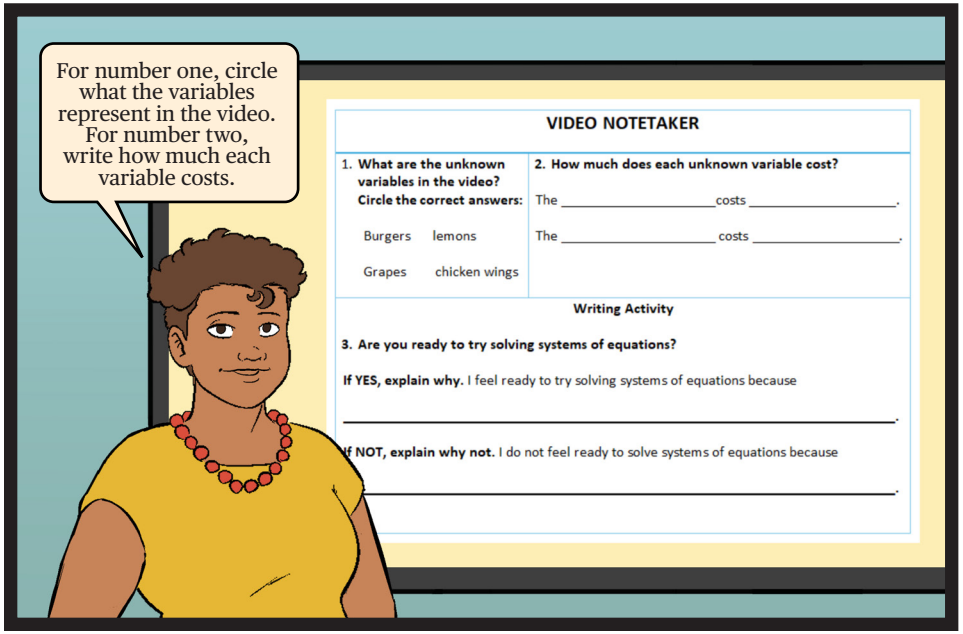
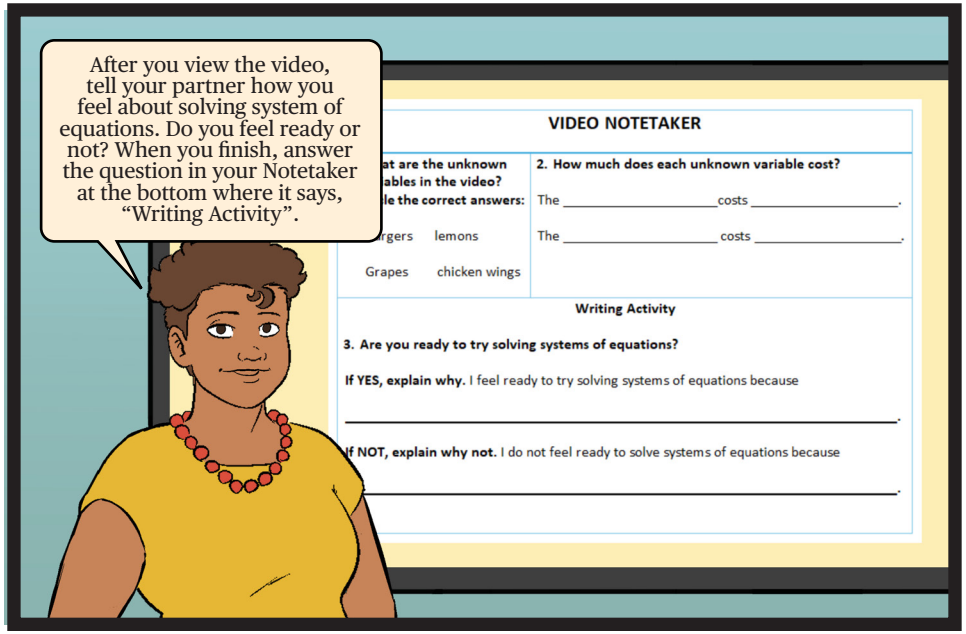
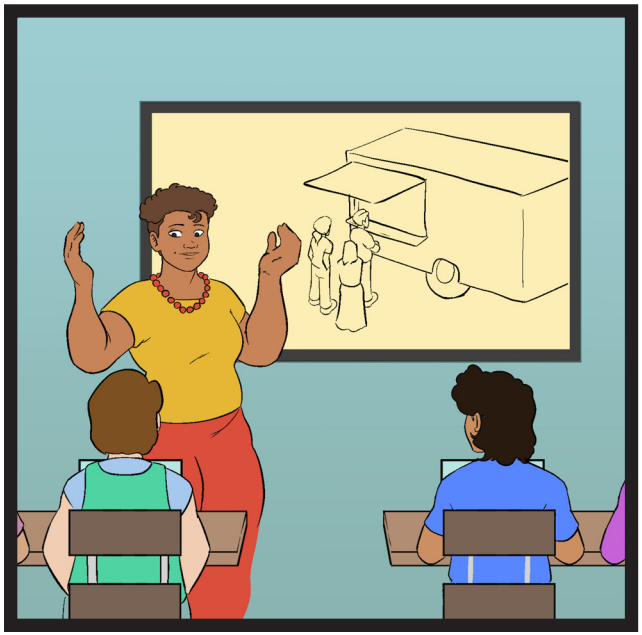
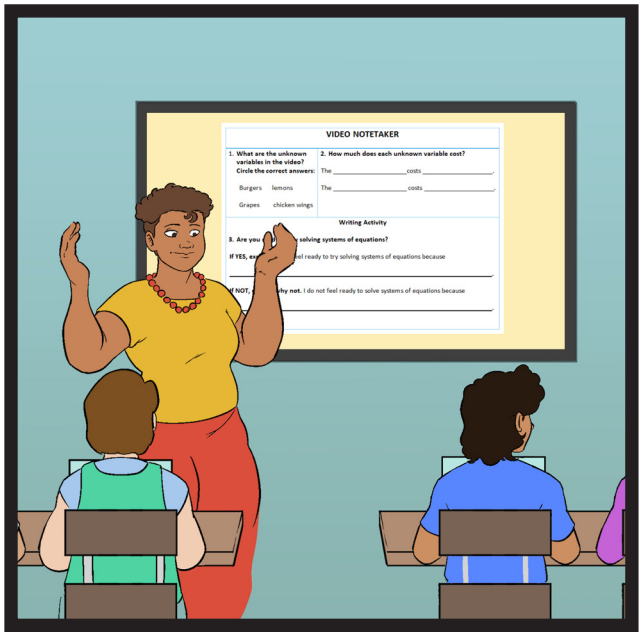
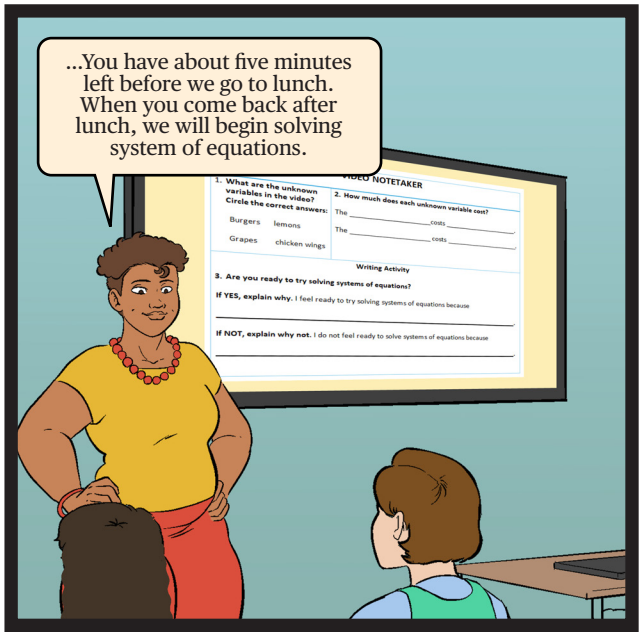




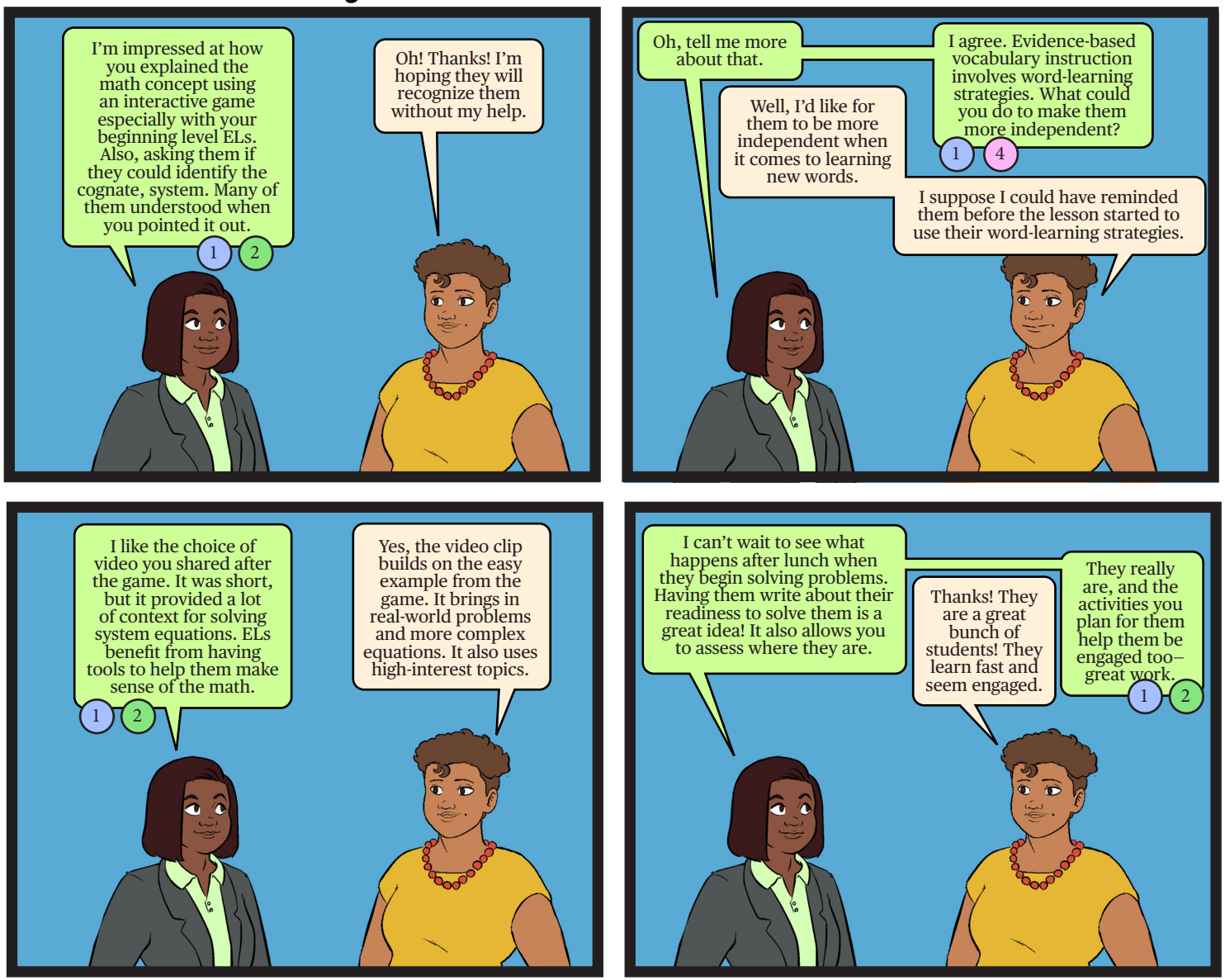






Teachers will understand what went well and how they can adjust instruction to maximize student learning when they receive appropriate feedback. Below is a post-observation dialogue between Ms. Slater and her instructional coach.

Later that day...3



Effective coaching feedback is provided by someone with strong content expertise who uses collaborative and interpersonal alliance strategies for building trust. To increase impact, a coach provides positive, specific, timely, and corrective feedback while constantly using alliance strategies (Pierce & Buysee, 2025).

Note in the dialogue between the teacher and instructional coach evidence-based feedback is highlighted using the following key:

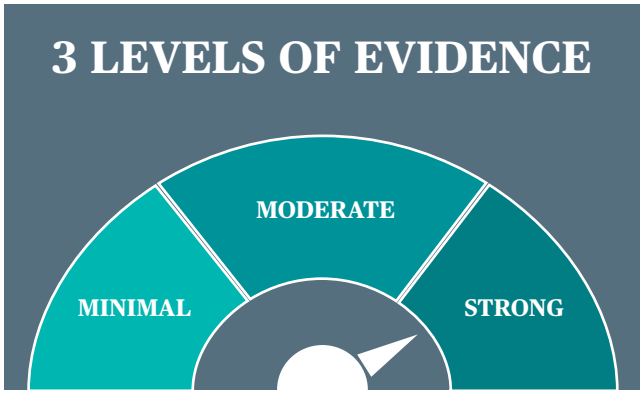
- 1 **Positive**
- 2 **Specific**
- 3 **Timely**
- 4 **Corrective**

Levels of Evidence in What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guides

Practice guides contain several recommendations on a topic, each of which is assigned a **level of evidence** that indicates the strength of the evidence for the effect of the recommended practices on student achievement. All recommendations in a guide are supported by at least one **rigorous research study**, and all of the guide's recommendations are **endorsed by the expert panel**. The rationale for each level of evidence rating is described in detail in the practice guide's appendix.

The level of evidence is based on:

- The number of studies supporting the recommended practices
- Whether the recommended practices were directly tested in the studies or tested in combination with other practices
- Whether the recommended practices consistently led to improved outcomes within and across studies
- Whether the studies capture a diverse range of students and contexts



MINIMAL level of evidence	MODERATE level of evidence	STRONG level of evidence
• At least one study that meets WWC design standards and demonstrates that the practices improve student outcomes • No consistent evidence that demonstrates the practices' positive effects, because it has not been studied or there is weak or conflicting evidence of effectiveness	• Some evidence that the practices improve student outcomes • Ambiguous evidence that the improvement in student outcomes is the direct result of the practices or whether the findings can be replicated with a diverse population of students	• Multiple studies meet WWC design standards and demonstrate that the practices improve student outcomes • Consistent evidence that the practices improve student outcomes for a diverse population of students

Watch this video about practice guide's level of evidence.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4DxtKyj9XKs

List of Resources

Baker, S., Lesaux, N., Jayanthi, M., Dimino, J., Proctor, C.P., Morris, J., Gersten, R., Haymond, K., Kieffer, M. J., Linan-Thompson, S., & Newman-Gonchar, R. (2014). *Teaching academic content and literacy to English learners in elementary and middle school* (NCEE 2014-4012). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assitance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications_reviews.aspx

Dimino, J. A., Taylor, M., & Morris, J. (2015). *Professional learning communities facilitator's guide for the What Works Clearinghouse practice guide: Teaching academic content and literacy to English learners in elementary and middle school* (REL 2015-105). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evlauation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Southwest. Retrieved from http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs

Pierce, J., Davis, B., Berry Kuchle, L., Peterson, A. & Nagle, K. (2025). *Defining effective coaching practices to support teachers and improve student outcomes.* WestEd.

Clearinghouse, W. W. (2017). Levels of evidence in What Works Clearinghouse Practice Guides.