

Intervention: Bilingual/ESL Instructional Strategies for ELL Students

Teaching Suggestions for ELL students (All Grades)

ELLs are faced with the challenge of learning English as well as school/after-school culture. **Three basic principles will assist ELLs to adjust and excel: 1) Increase comprehensibility, 2) Increase interaction and participation, and 3) Increase thinking skills.** The following teaching suggestions will help educators achieve these objectives:

Announce the lesson's goals and activities

Writing objectives on the board and reviewing them orally before class begins will help students know what to expect. At the end of the lesson, ask students to state whether the objectives have been met. It's also helpful to explain how the activity or project fits into the broader theme.

Develop and maintain routines

Students need to know what to do and when they are expected to do it (e.g. How to behave; where materials are; how to start and complete a project; what to do when they don't know what to do). Don't assume that all your students know what is expected and how to achieve; teach these explicitly.

List and review instructions step by step

Before students begin an activity, familiarize them with the entire list of instructions. Then, have students work on each step individually before moving on to the next step.

Activate Students' Prior Knowledge

Introduce a topic and find out what students already know about a subject before getting too involved. KWLH charts (see p.6) or other graphic-organizers such as webs and Venn diagrams are helpful to stimulate prior knowledge and organize students' thoughts.

Teach Essential Vocabulary

Post word banks in the room and place word labels on common objects. Whenever possible provide ELLs with a list of essential vocabulary a day or two before the introduction of a project so that the students can use an English or bilingual dictionary to learn the meanings and familiarize themselves with the words, which prepares them and activates thinking.

Write legibly

Students with low literacy or who are unaccustomed to the Roman alphabet may not be able to decipher hasty writing. Write clearly, legibly, and in print—many ELL students have difficulty reading cursive.

Present information in varied ways

By using multiple media (pictures, photos, charts, graphs, maps, graphic organizers, etc.) teachers place the information in a context that is more understandable to students. Make sure that reading, writing, listening and speaking are addressed in each class session.

Provide Summary and Review of Material

Teachers: (1) try to use visual reviews with graphic organizers, (2) summarize the main points, and (3) ask students to provide oral summaries.

Provide opportunities for hands-on exploration

Experiential activities are of great importance ELLs as well as native English speakers. Hands-on activities increase engagement and interest. Present information & instructions both verbally and visually. Include experimentation, measurement, construction, graphing, chart and mapmaking, etc.

Design interdisciplinary projects that stress depth, not breadth

Thematic units that cut across disciplines help ELLs make connections and achieve a deeper understanding of concepts. Spending more time on thoroughly learning fewer concepts enhances students' chances of success.

Speak Clearly

Enunciate clearly, but do not raise your voice. Add gestures, point directly to objects, or draw pictures when appropriate. Try to avoid idioms and slang words.

Check for Understanding

If a student does not understand, try rephrasing or paraphrasing in shorter sentences and simpler syntax. Check often for understanding, but do not ask "Do you understand?" Instead, have students demonstrate their learning in order to show comprehension.

Recognize Student Success & Participation

Recognize student success overtly and frequently. But, also be aware that in some cultures overt, individual praise is considered inappropriate and can therefore be embarrassing or confusing to the student.

Sources:

Kaufman, D. "Teaching English Language Learners: Strategies for Promoting Success in Grades K-12." *SUNY Stonybrook*. <www.celt.sunysb.edu/ell/tips.php#Strategy_2>

Levy, B. "The Help! Kit." *ESCORT at SUNY Oneonta*.
www.escort.org/products/secondaryhelpkit.html

From: *Working with English Language Learners: A Resource Document for After-School Providers*, Massachusetts Department of Education (2005)

From: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/21cclc/ta/ell.doc>