

Tips For Working With K-12 ELL Students

- **Develop a student-centered approach to teaching and learning.** Students can better acquire the language when activities are planned that actively involve students.
- **Ask inferential and higher order thinking questions.** Encourage students' reasoning abilities, such as hypothesizing, inferring, analyzing, justifying, predicting and allow them to demonstrate these abilities in nonverbal ways using charts, diagrams, drawings, etc.
- **Recognize that students will make language mistakes.** Model correct grammatical form in a supportive, friendly, respectful environment.
- **Do not force reticent students to speak.** Give students opportunities, increase wait time, respond positively to students' attempts, and model correct grammar.
- **Bring the student's home language and culture into the classroom.**
- **Create listening stations so they may listen and read at the same time.**
- **Fluent conversation skills do not necessarily indicate academic proficiency.** Continue to use all of these strategies for teaching academic content.
- **Cooperative groups are effective!** "Buddies" are great for academics, playground, lunchroom, etc.
- **Simplify your language, not the content.**
- **Speak directly to the student, emphasizing important nouns and verbs.** Avoid slang and idiomatic expressions. New vocabulary should be presented, discussed and used prior to teaching content.
- **Prepare and provide focus questions before you start to teach the lesson.**
- **For beginners, adjust the amount of work or the performance standard to be reasonable.** Increase requirements as proficiency and comfort increase.
- **Announce the lesson's objectives and activities prior to the lesson.**
- **Write the objectives.** Use pictures, drawings, diagrams, charts, labels, etc. to illustrate what will be taught. Consider using a slower rate of speech (when appropriate), enunciate clearly, use less difficult words and/or explain vocabulary that may make the content difficult to understand.
- **Don't give inflated grades.**
- **Learn how to pronounce the student's name.**
- **Don't assume he/she does not speak or understand English...** take the time to find out.
- **Students who are recent arrivals need time to adjust.**
- **Increase your knowledge.** Learn as much as you can about the language and culture of your students. Encourage students to express their points of view and opinions on different issues and share information about their culture.
- **Families generally speak their 1st language at home.** Encourage your students to continue to speak their 1st language.
- **Encourage students to read in their 1st language.**
- **Focus on vocabulary.** Pre-teach vocabulary and concepts; use realia, demonstrations, visuals, and multiple modalities when teaching. Illustrate, label, explain multiple meaning words.
- **Read aloud!**
- **Demonstrate; use manipulatives.** Whenever possible, accompany your message with gestures, pictures and objects that help get the meaning across. Use a variety of different pictures or objects for the same idea. MODEL, MODEL, MODEL.
- **Make use of all senses.**
- **Make use of visual clues and graphic organizers.** Create semantic webs, cluster vocabulary, use graphs, charts, maps, timelines, diagrams to help convey meaning and check for understanding.
- **Access prior knowledge.** Assess students prior knowledge and tap into their past experiences to make learning interesting and meaningful.
- **Write legibly.** Some students may have low levels of literacy or are unaccustomed to the Roman alphabet.
- **Teach note-taking.** For beginners, copying IS writing. Language experience is very appropriate.
- **Provide frequent opportunities for ELL students to speak.** Use small groups, pairs, cooperative groups and native language groups (when possible).

