

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) TEACHING STRATEGIES

1. Teacher Talk

- Keep talk to a minimum
- Face the class when you are speaking
- Speak at a normal pace and volume
- Begin with the simple and move to the complex, assessing student learning as you progress.
- Use clear, common and consistent instructions and repeat and rephrase.
- Recycle language to ensure it is learnt.
- Use a range of closed and open ended questions. Ask questions that demand 'real' responses rather than monosyllabic answers.
- Use visual clues to support what you are saying and to reinforce concepts.
- Don't use jargon unless it is explicitly taught first.



2. Teaching Oral Language

- To develop students' oral skills it is extremely important that you create a learning environment where students feel secure and supported. Using pair and small group structures will maximize language interaction and support their oral language development.
- When listening to the student concentrate on the message rather than the way it is expressed. Correct only when it makes the speaker more effective, not just for the sake of grammar.
- Don't rush the student. Sometimes it takes longer for an ESL student to frame their response and express their opinion.
- Read aloud to the students so they can see and hear the language and become more familiar with pronunciation and intonation. Ask them to repeat key words or phrases.

➤ Specific Teaching Strategies

- Pair and group activities which require student interaction. This may include peer assessment activities such as PMI (Pluses, minuses and interesting feedback on a piece of work)
- Barrier games - Information gap activities where learners have to exchange information to complete a task; opinion gap activities where students share and discuss their personal feelings, attitudes or preferences about a topic.
- Mime and role play activities
- Playing games
- Using rhymes, songs, chants to practice intonation.
- Listening cloze passage
- Reciprocal teaching
- Surveys or interviews where the student must ask a series of questions of another student
- Create audio files which can be added to the school intranet.

3. Teaching Reading

- Choose material that has good visual cues and also reflects the knowledge and interests of the student.
- Use language in context, e.g. signs, charts, labels
- Use pre-reading activities to prepare students for the reading of texts such as novels and plays.
- After reading reinforce new information. Give students the opportunity to apply this new knowledge, e.g. write a letter, create a sequence of key steps, create a picture summary or concept map.
- Have students create and share their own class books/stories
- Use wordless books or picture/photo sequences to build a story
- Taped reading
- Use cloze passages to focus on comprehension or on a specific aspect of language
- Reciprocal teaching either in small groups or as a class. Teach students how to use cue to predict what a text will be about.
- Create a visual representation of what is being read.
- Modelled deconstruction of a range of text types to develop understandings of the organisation and language features of the text.



4. Teaching Writing

ESL students can find writing in a new language the most difficult aspect of their learning and language development. They may have had limited education in their own language and a lack of understanding of the language conventions of both their first language and of English. It is therefore extremely important that you scaffold written responses.

- Model all aspects of the writing process
- Deconstruct and construct texts with students
- Explicitly teach the structure and language of various text types, e.g. a recount (past tense) or process (time words)
- Develop activities to teach students about marking criteria and the language that is used. You could show them a number of responses and ask them to use the criteria to assess.
- Use pair work to peer assess and edit student writing
- Use group work to create student texts, e.g. a magazine or story board
- Use photos or images as a basis for developing writing, e.g. as a sequence of events in a recount.
- Give students a real audience for their writing, e.g. school newsletter or class notice board.
- Use a variety of activities to teach and reinforce language acquisition and spelling. E.g. word puzzles, interactive games (use Smart notebook software to create activities), flashcards.

