TEACHING THE ESL LEARNER

Useful Strategies

The ESL student will come from a variety of cultural backgrounds.

Their language proficiency and prior education will vary enormously.

The ESL Student

ESL students vary in their knowledge of English and are generally divided into three phases depending on their English language skills. Most students you will teach will be phase 2 and 3 ESL learners. They will have had some exposure to English although their level of competency will vary.

The three phases:

Phase 1 – students have been in Australia for less than one year. They may have attended an Intensive English Centre prior to enrolling in a mainstream high school.

Phase 2 – students have been in Australia for up to 6 – 7 years and may have attended primary school in Australia. Phase 2 also includes International students.

Phase 3 – students have been in Australia for more than 7 years.

Students from Non English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB) are not necessarily classified as ESL students. However, they may experience similar learning difficulties as ESL students.
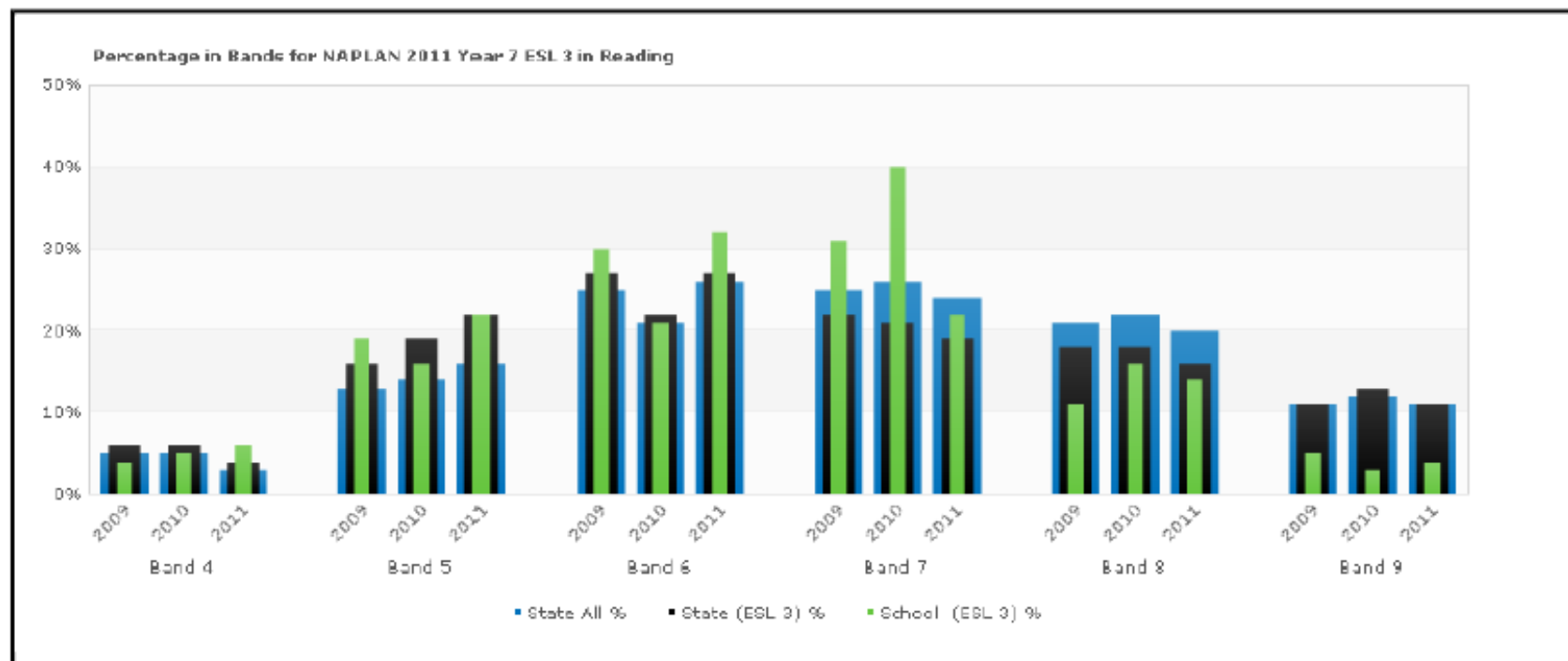
The Roles of the ESL Teacher at BHGHS

If you believe you have ESL students in your class you should seek advice and support from an ESL teacher. They can offer advice on teaching strategies and provide resources to support your teaching practices and programming.
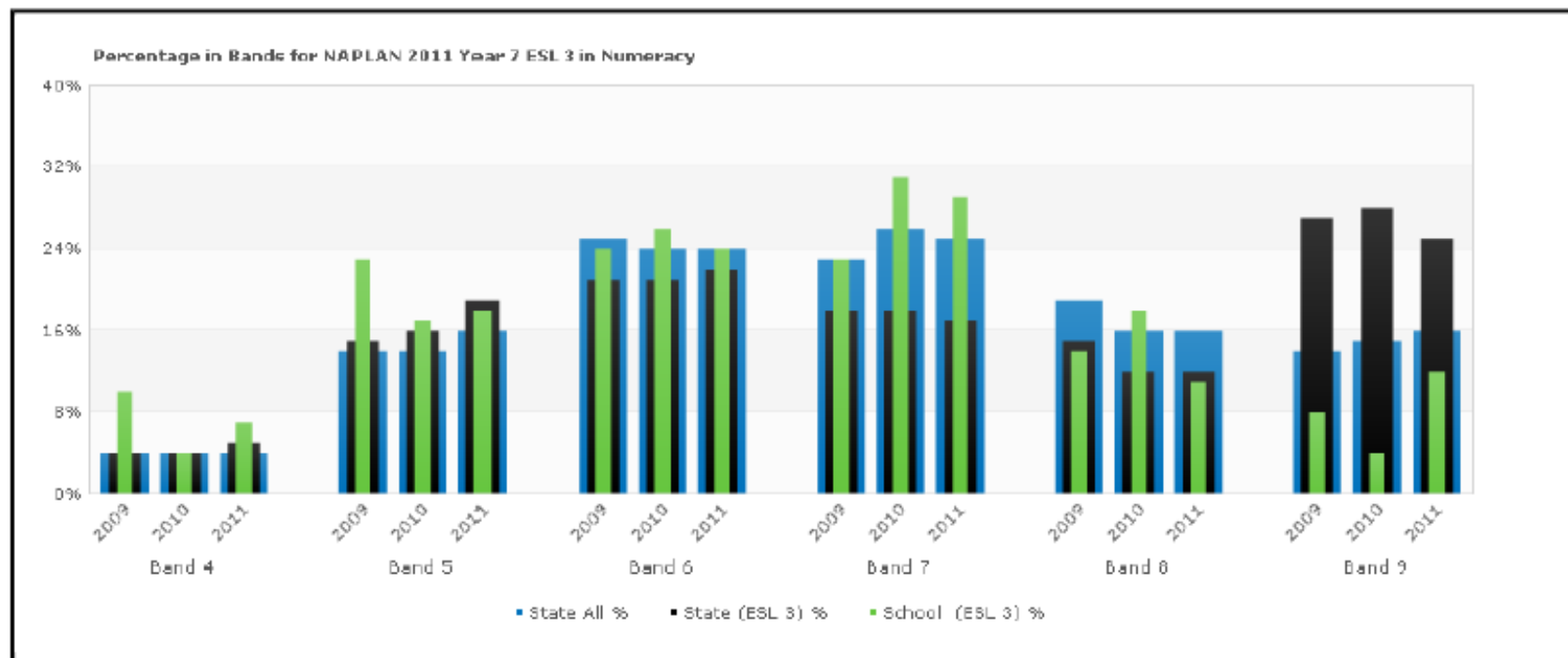
•Team Teaching – Individual support is provided for students within your class.

•Teaching senior 2 Unit ESL English. This course is available to students who have been in Australia for less than seven years.

•Teaching parallel junior units such as English, History and Geography.

•Teaching ESL interest units – students may be targeted for these classes.

•Team Teaching on senior English classes – these is a collaborative arrangement in which lesson preparation; assessing and reporting are shared between the ESL and class teacher.
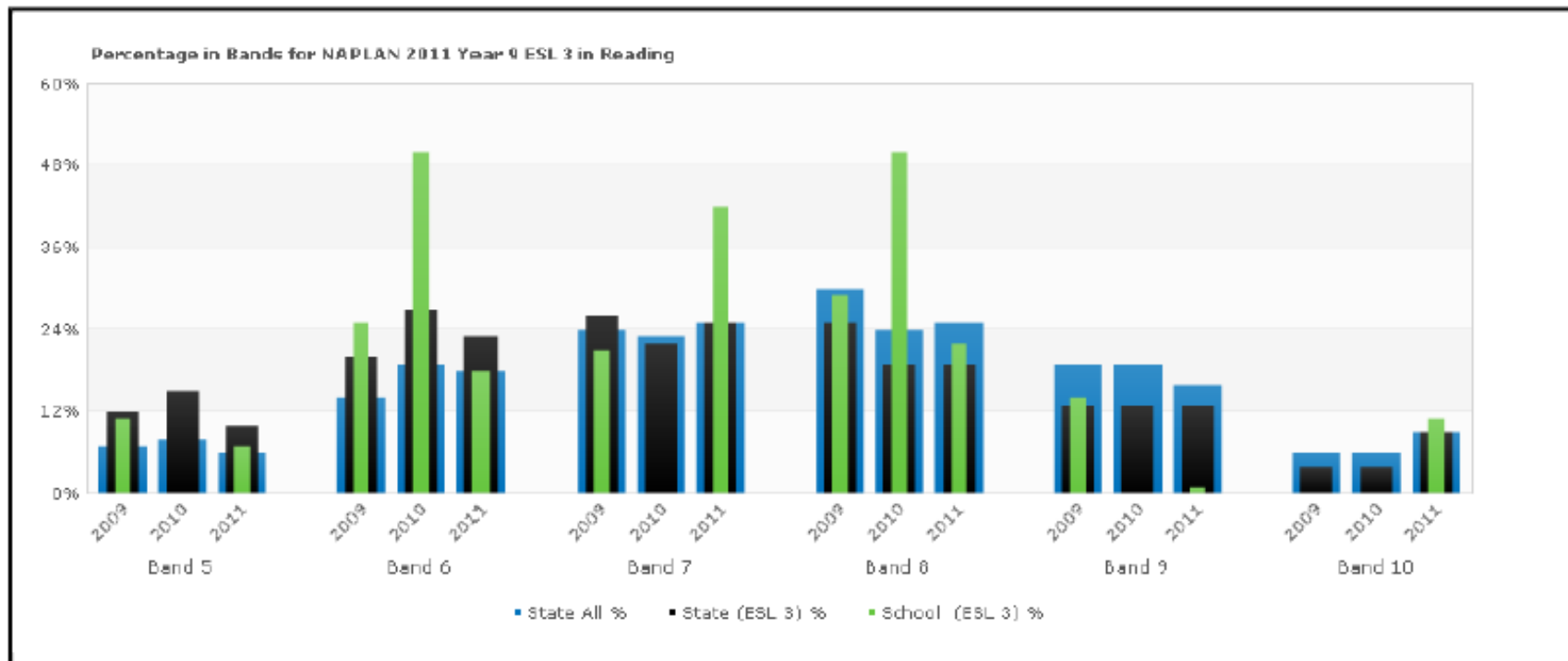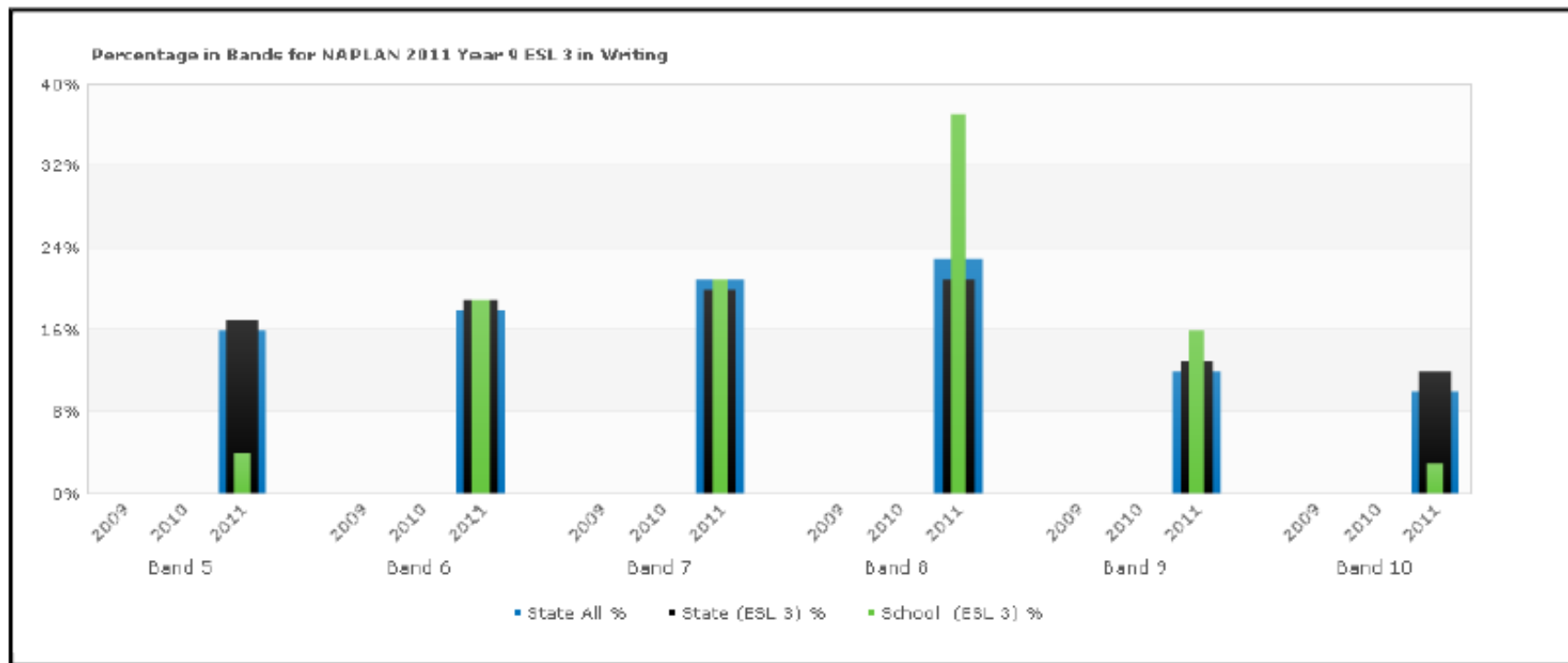
NAPLAN Results

Percentage In Bands

Percentage in Bands for NAPLAN 2011 Year 7 ESL 3 in Reading

Legend: State All %, State (ESL 3) %, School (ESL 3) %

Percentage In Bands

Percentage in Bands for NAPLAN 2011 Year 7 ESL 3 in Numeracy

Percentage In Bands

Percentage in Bands for NAPLAN 2011 Year 9 ESL 3 in Reading

Percentage In Bands

Percentage in Bands for NAPLAN 2011 Year 9 ESL 3 in Writing

Percentage In Bands

Percentage in Bands for NAPLAN 2011 Year 9 ESL 3 in Numeracy
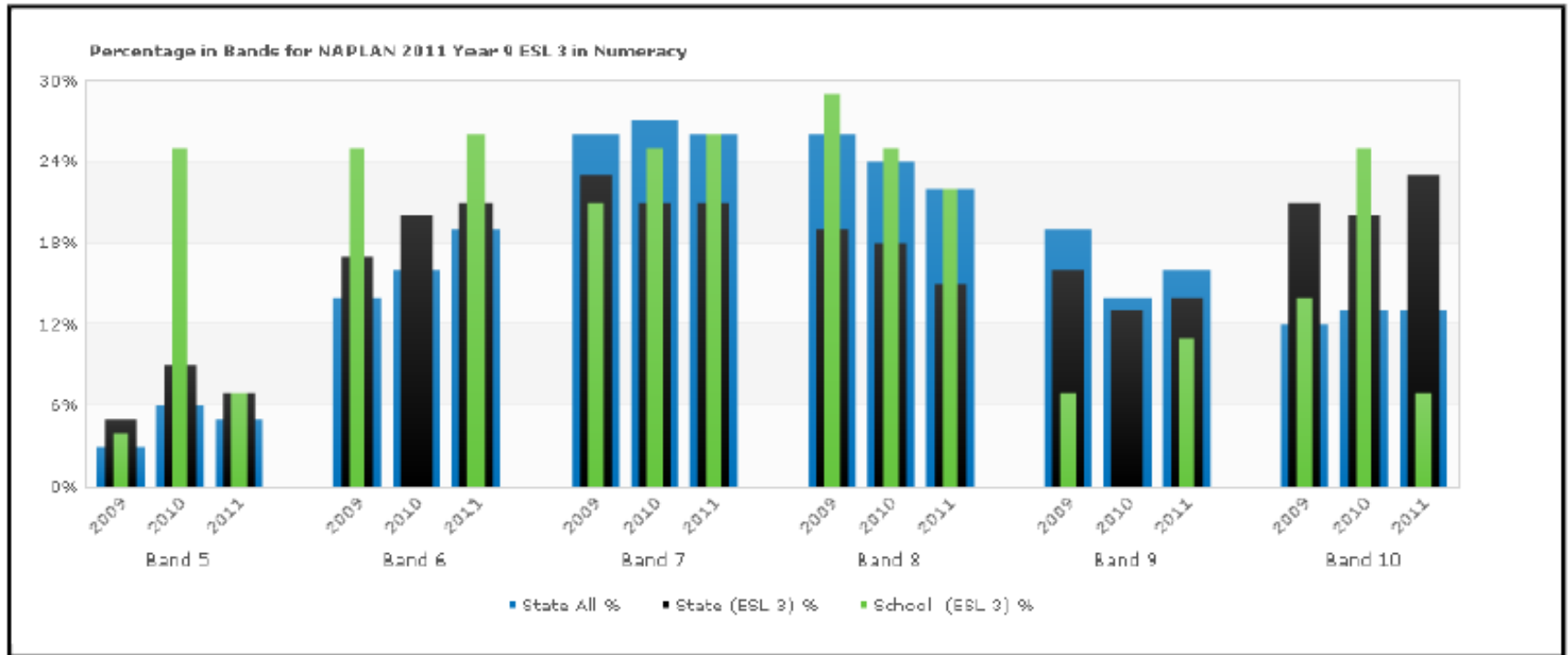
ESL Strategies

•Keep expectations high

•Make learning meaningful and relevant to their needs

•Balance written and oral work – students will acquire oral language before the written – provide thinking time

•Use explicit instruction – write key steps and terms on the board

•Use scaffolding to support students' written and oral development

•Be aware of cultural differences and value what each student brings with them to the learning environment.

Developing Language

• Teach language and vocabulary through the subject content

• Modify work to suit level of language competency, but keep it challenging and interesting

• Use class organisation to support oral communication e.g. seating arrangements for group or pair work

• Explicitly teach new language (subject terms and concepts; text types, grammar, pronunciation)

• Use message abundance and recast language - students need to see and hear the language

• Model appropriate language structures and text types – show exemplars

• Encourage students to keep a glossary or set of flashcards to learn new vocabulary.
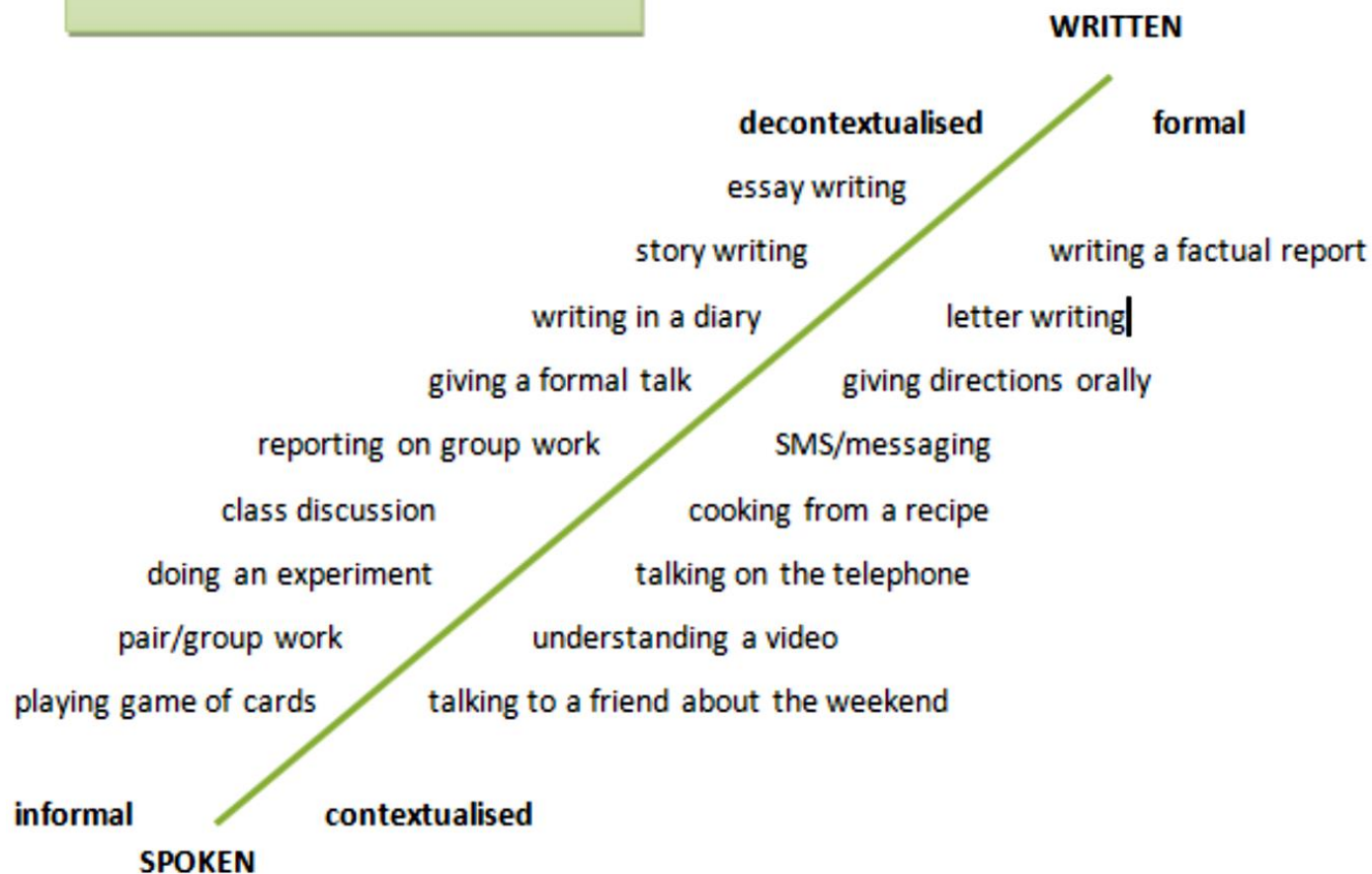
Visual Stimulus

• Use visuals as much as possible to demonstrate and reinforce learning – a data projector connected to the internet is a great tool

• Use graphic organisers (diagrams, timelines, concept maps, flow charts) to represent and organise ideas and to develop thinking skills

• Consider the classroom environment – use posters; labels; displays of student work as models; scaffolds; word lists

Presentation of Worksheets

•Consider the appearance and organisation of worksheets. Use main heading and sub-headings to structure notes. Avoid using columns; speech bubbles; too much text and too many concepts. Add images with captions. Explain subject specific terms. Leave space for students to add their own notes.

Assessing and Planning

- Don't correct every mistake – look for their knowledge and understanding

- Use rich assessment tasks that are appropriate to students' stage of development.

- Use backward mapping to develop a teaching and learning cycle and embed ESL teaching/learning strategies within each topic or unit of study.

- Consider using the 'Flipped Classroom' model – this provides students with the opportunity to preview the subject content/vocabulary before the lesson. May take the form of video clip, audio files; an article, vocabulary exercise.

Shared Learning – Effective teaching practices
Instructions

Instructions
1. Move into groups of 3-4 participants.
2. Select a facilitator who will time the presenter and move the group through the activity.
3. Each participant will describe in no more than 2 minutes, an effective strategy that they have used to support ESL learners. Other group members may not interrupt or comment. You may take notes as you listen.
4. Each participant takes turns to ask one clarifying question if necessary.
5. Each participant may then add a positive comment on the strategy.

Strategy 1:

Strategy 2:

Strategy 3:

Strategy 4:

Designing Worksheets to Engage ESL Learners

Outline the main features of the unit of work – *'Future Space Travel'*.

What problems might the ESL learner encounter when using this unit of work?

What could you do to make the unit more accessible to ESL Learners?

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.
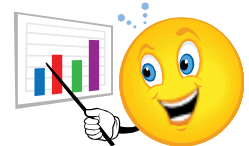
2. Teaching Oral Language

- 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.