

Teaching and Learning Strategies for New Arrivals

As an overview:

- Give students a meaningful task related to the lesson even though they won't understand all the lesson content
- Provide a high level of visual support to attach meaning to language. For example: mime, gestures, videos, slides, pictures, photographs, diagrams, flashcards, illustrated glossaries, mind-maps, spider diagrams, word roses, timelines, Venn diagrams, graphs, flow charts, real objects etc
- Use active, practical tasks and vary the activities in a lesson
- Provide tasks they can complete independently: matching pictures, words, sentences or sentence halves; sequencing; text marking; labelling; giving yes/no true/false responses; use of tables/ grids/ charts
- Plan opportunities for speaking and listening
- Identify key vocabulary and teach it explicitly
- Provide good models of language
- Use home language where possible
- Remember it is tiring learning in another language!

In greater detail, this means:

Home Language

- Learning a few words in relevant languages, particularly greetings
- Let students teach staff and other students some words in their home languages
- Encourage parents to continue using home language with students at home
- Making labels and signs in relevant languages
- Encourage the pupils to share their knowledge about their first language – script, basic phrases and greetings, who they talk to in which languages, where their language is the official language etc
- Encourage pupils who share the same first language to talk together in first language
- Make sure other pupils see that you respect and value pupils' bilingual competence

Speaking and Listening

- Make sure that students' names are pronounced properly
- Be a good language role model by speaking slowly to students, but in a natural voice
- Allow students to be silent until they are ready to speak in English –remember that students can understand what is said before they can express themselves fluently. Make sure they are participating by using actions/drawing/writing to demonstrate they are listening
- Allow sufficient wait time for responses and opportunities for the pupils to rehearse responses
- Encourage productive language such as hello and goodbye
- Use a graduated approach to questioning, starting with closed questions initially, and moving on to more open questions as the pupil's language proficiency develops
- Provide activities where there is a degree of repetition
- Try to be consistent with your vocabulary e.g. decide whether to use 'tray' or 'drawer' and try not to switch
- Involve the new arrival in lots of opportunities to listen to English and to interact with peers in collaborative activities e.g. buzz groups, jigsaw, talk partners, summarising what their partner has said etc
- Demonstrate the meaning of instructions such as sit down, line up, come here

Reading

- Choose texts with clear print and illustrations and that are representative of all students' backgrounds and experiences
- Support the introduction of new texts with visual aids and artefacts
- Pre-teach key vocabulary in the text
- Use bilingual classroom assistants/support workers/EAL teachers to introduce a new text to pupils, for example by telling the story or explaining the text in the home language, or introducing new texts in a short warm-up session
- If the pupil is literate in home language, encourage the use of a bilingual dictionary as much as possible
- Provide lots of guided support by getting students to produce storyboards for a particular text, or use writing frames
- Revisit texts in paired reading sessions, pairing bilingual learners with fluent speakers of English
- Spend more time discussing the meaning of words, especially examples of idiomatic language
- Use guided reading to develop students' understanding of grammar such as tense and the use of prepositions
- Make books available to take home

Writing

- Build in oral practice before written work
- Show examples of requirements before task to model language structures and text type conventions
- Label pictures
- Match text and visuals
- Cloze procedure – filling in gaps in sentences or paragraphs
- Text highlighting or underlining
- Sequencing sentences to form a short, continuous piece of writing, which can then be written out
- Use writing frames, sentence banks and words banks to provide structure for a text
- Compile a glossary book of subject specific /everyday vocabulary, including pictures and/or translations
- Using ICT that supports understanding
- Encourage students to write about themselves, their home country and present circumstances, keep a diary or make a scrapbook or picture book about themselves. These techniques help develop understanding of complex events and feelings.
- Use sentence level work to develop students' understanding of grammar such as tense and the use of prepositions

Focused group work

- Group the EAL pupils according to their cognitive ability and not their language ability, and with good language models, not with pupils with SEN
- Provide scaffolding materials, such as picture prompts, word cards/bank, sequencing cards, tapes, bilingual dictionaries, picture dictionaries, adapted worksheets (e.g. cloze passage with picture substitutions)
- For new arrivals who speak very little English, provide intensive English support daily for 20

minutes to teach them the basics

- At times let pairs of students develop and teach mini 'lessons' to the new arrival, such as teaching how to tell the time. This can be just as beneficial for the 'teachers' as the learners

Practical activities

- Play lots of language rich games with students e.g. barrier games, enquire and eliminate, 20 questions etc
- Provide opportunities for play
- Baking, dance, drama, PE all provide wonderful opportunities for developing vocabulary

Celebrating diversity

- Tell folk-tales from the students' countries of origin and invite parents or others from the community to tell stories
- Use books and toys that depict people from different ethnic groups
- Celebrate various faiths

Position in classroom

- Sit the pupil next to sympathetic members of the class, preferably those who speak the same language and can translate or a well-behaved English-speaking child who will provide a good role model
- Sit the pupil near the front of the class and to the side so they can be near the teacher and also can see the other students speak

Planning

- Plan collaboratively with TAs /bilingual TAs or allow time to properly communicate the planning