

# Tips for Engaging English Language Learners

## Names:

- Learn to pronounce them correctly.
- Don't try to change them.
- Don't make assumptions based on names. (first, last, marital status, ethnicity, etc.)

## Families:

- Respect the family structure.
- Provided extended explanation for things you send home. (homework, flyers, etc.)

## Home Language:

- Respect the home language.
- Encourage 1<sup>st</sup> language literacy.



## Culture:

- Be aware of your own.
- Remember different does not mean better or worse.
- Consider impact on classroom. (fasting, gender issues, respect, holidays, religion)

## Space:

- Give students their own space and make sure they understand that it is for them.
- Seat them near you, but more importantly, near students who can help them.

## Speech: (*Yours*)

- Speak slowly, not loudly or strangely.
- Make eye contact, be seen and heard.
- Act it out, use gestures and drama.
- Repeat, rephrase, repeat, rephrase.
- Minimize idioms, slang, jargon, etc.

## Speech: (*Theirs*)

- Expect a silent period. They are listening.
- Applaud attempts, regardless of success.
- Don't force it.
- Don't make assumptions based on what you hear. (social language vs. academic language)

**Visuals:**

- If a picture is available, use it.
- Watch the video on mute, does it make sense?
- Stick men are a fabulous thing.

**Instruction:**

- Decrease language load, not content.
- Display and discuss objectives ahead of lessons.
- Structure opportunities for participation. (assign questions ahead, give notice)

**Writing:**

- For a beginner, copying is writing, so is drawing.
- Less is more.
- Ask for completion, not creation.

**Grouping**

- Give them buddies. (social and academic)
- Remember that they learn way more from each other than from you.

**Assessment:**

- Most students find it easier to tell you the answer than write about it. Oral response is an appropriate accommodation.
- Fair does not mean the same.
- Maintain high standards.
- Praise effort and improvement.

**Mistakes:**

- Create safe atmosphere where it is OK to take risks.
- Don't correct form. Do correct content.
- Rephrase and repeat questions and answers.
- Wait Time! The answer might be coming.

**Benefits**

- You will learn lots of new things.
- You will see your impact immediately.
- ELLs are fun, funny, and fun to teach.
- You will learn about yourself and your own culture.
- Every day will bring new surprises.