

Strategies to support beginner EAL students in the classroom

1. Make sure the student knows your name. Introduce yourself and write it down for him/her.
2. Demonstrate the meaning of instructions such as sit down, stand up, come here.
3. Do not worry if the student says very little at first. Plenty of listening time is important when starting to learn a new language. There should be emphasis on communication rather than correction until he/she is more confident in English.
4. Involve the student in routine tasks such as giving out books and equipment.
5. Wherever possible, include links within the curriculum to the culture and language of newly-arrived students.
6. Give the student opportunities to listen to the sounds and patterns of English, for example through audio tapes.
7. Identify the key vocabulary and language structures of the text/activity.
8. Although the student cannot be expected to understand the content of all the lessons, ensure that you give him/her a meaningful task that is related to the lesson.
9. Integrate the student into the class activity, while differentiating at his/her level.
10. Use a range of tasks to develop listening skills and to focus the student's attention on key information, such as copying words or sentences under pictures; matching pictures to names, words or sentences; filling in missing words; sequencing; text marking; labelling; matching sentence halves; filling in tables and grids; giving yes/no, true/false responses.
11. Help a student who is unfamiliar with the alphabet with his/her handwriting and the correct use of capital and lower case letters.
12. Model or demonstrate the use of key vocabulary and language structures.
13. Involve the student in using language from an early point of the lesson
14. Provide opportunities for the student to repeat and produce the language in context, for example through well planned pair or group work.
15. Use bilingual and/or picture dictionaries.
16. Encourage the use of the home language for content learning, discussion and the development of new concepts. Support for the first language will enhance, not hinder, the acquisition of English.
17. Whenever possible, pair the student with a proficient speaker of his/her home language.
18. Exploit previously-used language and link to the student's experience.
19. Encourage students who are literate in their first language to use these literacy skills to support their learning e.g. by developing their own personal word lists.
20. Provide visual support such as artefacts, pictures, videos, computer programmes and so on, to help comprehension.
21. Use writing frames, word banks and sentence banks to provide scaffolding to support learner independence and to model the language to be learned and practised.
22. Use graphic organisers such as pie charts, graphs, pictograms, tables and grids to present curriculum content with reduced language input.
23. Allow the student time to summarise and reflect on what he/she has learned.
24. Wherever possible, encourage parents/carers to support homework tasks.

From *Aiming High: Understanding the educational needs of minority ethnic pupils in mainly white schools* (DfES0416/2004).

N.B: Newly -arrived students will differ in terms of their previous educational experience and their previous experience of learning English as an additional language. By no means will all new arrivals be beginners in terms of English language development.