Top Tips for Teaching English Language Learners

Sheridan School District 2

Vocabulary	Use visuals to represent the vocabulary. Repeat new vocabulary often and in context. Use the vocabulary in a variety of sentence types. Act out the vocabulary in Total Physical Response (TPR)[1]. *Translation may be helpful depending on how teachers use it. Have students identify cognates in their first language (L1), or similar roots, prefixes, or suffixes. In this way, students will advance their understanding of both languages simultaneously. Students may not have background knowledge or understanding of the target word in their L1 if translation is used simply word-to-word.*
Wait Time	Allow students time to think after posing a question: Begin calling on students only after several seconds have passed even if some already have their hands raised. This allows language learners the time to formulate their answers in their second language (L2). *This may also include time for students to process with classmates in partners or small groups.*
Comprehensible Input[2]	Rephrase your question or instructions in different words. Write instructions for students in addition to giving them orally. Speak slowly. Act out the idea. Model the actions a student is supposed to take.

---

[1] "The Total Physical Response Approach to Second Language Learning" by James J. Asher. The Modern Language Journal, Vol. 53, No. 1 (Jan., 1969), pp. 3–17 JSTOR

[2] Krashen, Stephen (1977). "Some issues relating to the monitor model". In Brown, H; Yorio, Carlos; Crymes, Ruth (eds.). Teaching and learning English as a Second Language: Trends in Research and Practice: On TESOL '77: Selected Papers from the Eleventh Annual Convention of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, Miami, Florida, April 26 – May 1, 1977. Washington, DC: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages. pp. 144–158. OCLC 4037133.

Top Tips for Teaching English Language Learners

Sheridan School District 2

Graphic Organizers	Provide sentence frames or sentence starters. These may leave blanks for learned vocabulary or complete ideas. Offer word banks (with or without representational images) in conjunction with sentence frames and starters. Have students begin longer written or oral pieces with organizational graphs, idea webs, topical columns, or idea matching.
Reading / Listening	Give a focus for their reading/listening before beginning. Specify if students are supposed to read/listen for key vocabulary, character traits, facts, etc. so they are prepared to answer questions when they finish. Provide guided notes so that students only fill in specific vocabulary or informational points from a whole lecture or lesson. Accompany reading or listening assignments with related images, objects (realia), or TPR.
Feedback	Give timely, specific feedback on student-produced writing and speech. Make suggestions for the student's next learning and output goal based on specific vocabulary or language needs you noticed.