

Teaching Tips to Facilitate the Learning of Limited English Proficiency Students

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1. The more structure, the better. An organized presentation of material does wonders.
2. Multi-modality approaches – transparencies, pictures, writing on the chalkboard, handouts, etc. – enhance and clarify lecture material.
3. Metalanguage that clearly indicates main points and transitions to new points aids students in following lecture material. Lecture outlines are also helpful.
4. Students are helped by graphic representations of chronology.
5. Group work encourages learning.
6. Students benefit from having instructions given both orally and in writing, and they should be asked to repeat information back. Students need dialogue about assignments and should be encouraged to meet with teachers for clarification of what was stated in class.
7. Concrete step-by-step description of procedures, in both visual and auditory formats, will help students to understand lectures and assignments. For example expectations regarding papers could be spelled out precisely:

- A strong and appropriate thesis statement
 - An introductory paragraph
 - A given number of supporting ideas
 - Sufficient details to assure clarity
 - An estimate of the number and type of research references expected
 - A concluding paragraph
- Format or style requirements

Students may need to do more than one or two revisions of papers. Requiring a rough draft of papers is a useful way to correct misunderstandings before they negatively impact grades. Comments on papers should be specific, explaining what the problem is, rather than simply noting that there is a problem.

8. Concrete modeling of assignments is useful. For example, samples of strong papers written by students in previous courses could be made available.
9. Often students know the information, but they do not have the written language skills to express what they know on in-class written examinations. If the instructor's intent is to measure a student's knowledge, an oral examination might be preferable to a written one.

Be wary of interpreting the behavior of non-native speakers in the same way as that of American students. Behavior that is appropriate in one culture may be viewed negatively by another. For example, the Latino student is taught extreme respect for authority, which may lead him to be silent and relatively passive in class. Such behavior should not necessarily be interpreted as indifference or lack of preparedness. It may be helpful to clarify classroom expectations in private conversation with the student.

