

QUICK TIPS FOR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

Please see your building's ESOL Staff, or contact the ESOL District Coordinator, for more ideas on how you can best work with the specific ELLs in your classroom. The following page presents only some quick tips. For additional useful information, please read the Cultural Awareness pages in the Berlin Public Schools ESOL Handbook 2012 (*see pp. 21-26*).

Advice for General Education Teachers working with English Language Learners

Assign, and place your ELL student next to, a "buddy." Rotate this helper occasionally.	Ask a student in your class to act as a "buddy" to your ELL. Rotate this position occasionally. This will be a huge affective and academic comfort to your ELL. It may also provide support to you when the buddy can assist your ELL or advocate for him/her.
Keep directions clear and concise! Simplify wording.	Keep the number of steps to a minimum. Check to be sure that the ELL understands the directions. Rephrase. Be aware of idiomatic expressions and figures of speech.
Use correct grammar! Speak naturally.	Many people think that by not conjugating verbs, ELLs will have an easier time understanding them. This is the worst thing you can do! This will only teach your ELL incorrect grammar. If your ELL is having difficulty understanding you, rephrase using different vocabulary.
Provide an alternate or modified assignment when the lesson is not easily comprehensible.	Think about differentiated instruction. You might consult your ESOL Staff for suggestions or assistance in modifying an assignment or lesson.
Pre-teach vocabulary.	Inform ESOL Staff of key terms and concepts prior to the initial presentation in the classroom.
Adjust or shorten assignments to allow for success.	It takes ELLs much longer to complete assignments than your native speakers. Do not hesitate to shorten reading and writing assignments. Highlight important vocabulary and concepts.
Let our ELL know that you value his/her language & culture. Be a model for the other students of acceptance & interest.	Invite your ELL to teach you and other class members his/her language (i.e., counting, greeting, holidays, etc.). This is a wonderful learning opportunity for your other students.
Encourage peer interaction.	Group interaction facilitates learning through sharing and reinforcing concepts.
Encourage your ELL to indicate when he/she does not understand you.	This may be difficult for some cultural backgrounds. For unusually reserved students, arrange a nonverbal cue so they can signal to you they need help.
Don't force the new ELL to speak until he/she is ready to.	When he/she is ready, encourage participation. Don't be concerned or overstress correct pronunciation or grammar. Instead, model correct grammar back to the student.
Provide appropriate accommodations when testing.	Allow extra time; use simplified formats; grade on content, not grammar and spelling; ask ESOL Staff to assist in explanation/paraphrasing of questions.
Use hands-on activities whenever possible.	This facilitates learning by providing context.
Use visual aids whenever possible.	Gestures, pictures, audio-visals, etc., help with comprehension for ELLs and others in your classroom. Use graphic organizers. Post key ideas/vocabulary on your classroom walls. Provide handouts with key ideas that ELLs can refer to as needed.
Whenever presenting material orally, provide visual context cues.	For example, provide a written outline for lectures. You may also ask the "buddy" to provide a copy of notes for your ELL.
Communicate with your building's ESOL Staff!	

Ideas abstracted from "Advice for non-ESL, Regular Classroom, Teachers working with Non-English Speaking Students." Judith Priestly and Sharon Rawson, *Elementary ESOL News* Winter 1991/Vol. 13 No. 2.