

Strategies for Working with English Language Learners

- Introduce and focus on a few words or one new concept at a time; make sure your learner fully understands and can use these words before moving on to something else.
- Focus on survival words to meet every day needs—using his own experience always put vocabulary in real-life context.
- Employ real objects where possible and/or pictures, drawings.
- Use a lot of gestures and body language to help explain words and concepts.
- Emphasize oral and listening skills first—connect the sound of the word with the object.
- Speak and enunciate clearly (however, not too artificially slow); use only as many words as necessary, choosing simpler words and shorter sentences.
- Progress to reading and writing so that it reinforces spoken English. Your learner will become familiar with hearing, saying, then reading and writing the word (word recognition).
- Help her develop mechanical skills for writing, if necessary, such as properly holding and using a pencil, tracing letters and numbers.
- Familiarize her with the alphabet, including the sound of letters and how to print them; move fairly quickly into using the alphabet to form actual words, rather than just memorizing the alphabet.
- Encourage your learner to write new words into a Word Bank, which can simply be a notepad with separate pages for each letter of the alphabet. She can also write simple sentences using the word to help remember its meaning.
- Numeracy should be incorporated into regular lessons, such as using money when going shopping so that she can count money when paying and receiving change.
- Reading practice can initially emphasize phonetic decoding before reading for meaning.
- Do not use text heavy materials—use materials with very limited text, with larger fonts, and pictures.
- Start to work on reading skills to find information, using various types of real materials (forms, labels, instructions, advertising).
- Review some words and material from previous lessons.