



Accommodations and Assessment for ELL's

Tips for Teachers in Accommodating
the Unique Needs of ELL's

Allegheny Intermediate Unit

K-12 ESL Program

Title III Consortium

2009



Know Your Students

- Does your ELL ...
 - Have limited formal schooling?
 - Come from a war-torn country?
 - Have a much different understanding of school?
 - Lack knowledge of everyday activities and practices in the United States?
 - Have family situations that limit parent involvement?
 - Have anxieties about their new country and school?



Understanding Second Language Learning

- It is difficult to learn a second language at any age.
- Age is usually not a factor in time needed to learn second language.
- Conversational Skills do not indicate Language Proficiency.
- Silence is often a necessary part of the process.
- Errors often indicate progress. Try restating correctly, rather than correcting.



Where To Begin

- Create a classroom that is warm and inviting.
- Classroom routines should be predictable. Comfort comes from knowing the routine.
- Have high expectations for all students, including ELL's. They should be included in classroom activities even when their language barrier may be a limitation. Give them responsibilities that make them a contributor to the group or class.



How to Accommodate

- Allow extended time.
- Introduce key vocabulary before the lesson.
- Use flash cards.
- Provide a copy of notes for ELL. More advanced ELL's may be able to use a cloze format for note-taking.
- Provide highlighted text.
- Use visuals.
- Write key words on the board.



How to Accommodate

- Type handouts. Struggling to read a teacher's handwriting can complicate the process.
- Read aloud *daily*.
- Plan ahead for your ELL's.
- Have a bilingual dictionary available.
- Divide large pieces of information into small chunks.
- Use hands-on activities and manipulatives.

How to Accommodate

- Put text on tape or CD.
- Number paragraphs in text.
- Allow time for students to work together.
- Use graphic organizers.
- Find high interest, lower level reading material to support your content.





How to Assess

- Grade only what the student has completed. Do not mark unanswered questions wrong.
- If using the same test as the mainstream students, only require that the key concept questions be answered.
- When using multiple choice, cut four or five choices down to two or three.
- Grade for content, overlook minor language mistakes when overall meaning is there.



How to Assess

- Work up to more difficult methods of testing (in order):
 - True/False* or Yes/No
 - Matching in groups less than 10
 - Multiple Choice with 2 choices
 - Fill in the Blank with Word Bank
 - Fill in the Blank
 - Complete sentences
 - Questions and answers
 - Short Paragraphs
 - Essays



Wording Test Questions

- Research has shown that simplifying test questions so that they avoid unnecessarily complex English is the best way to assess English Language Learners.
- Consider rewording test questions as an accommodation. Remove unnecessary language, multiple meaning words, and simply assess the concept in the most straightforward manner possible.



Assessment and Grading

Remember that an English Language Learner cannot fail a course because of a lack of English proficiency.





Resources

- Everything ESL
 - www.everythingsl.net
- Pennsylvania Dept. Of Education – ESL Department
 - <http://www.pde.state.pa.us/esl>
- Allegheny Intermediate Unit
 - <http://www.aiu3.net>