

Affective Strategies for Better Communication in Teaching English Language Learners A B C's OF ESL

Adapt

Adapt activities so that every child can experience success. Adapt the lessons by changing the language, speed, and execution so that every student can understand regardless of their English level.

Building Background

Build background for each lesson so that every child has some prior knowledge of the task. Use visuals and hands on activities in order to build background knowledge and activate prior knowledge for new content. Giving the background may be necessary if the lesson content is unfamiliar due to their cultural background.

Comprehensible Language

Simplify the language but don't water down the content. Simple and basic language should be used when giving directions and instruction. Speak in normal tones and volume. Use language the students will understand.

Dictionaries

Try to have picture dictionaries, and dictionaries in students' native language. Such dictionaries will also be useful for the teacher. Dictionary use may be limited to beginning students and is legitimate if the dictionary is especially made for language learners.

Empathy

Simplify the language but don't water down the content. Simple and basic language should be used when giving directions and instruction. Speak in normal tones and volume. Use language the students will understand.

Filter (Affective)

This is the name given to the subconscious process of filtering the language that the learner will allow to be processed. The filter is highly affective and has a great impact on the student's participation and motivation to speak. The learners' motives, needs, attitudes, and emotional state trigger the filter. The higher the intensity of the filter the higher the level of filtered out language. More language will be screened out. The teacher can affect this filter in the way they create and manage the classroom climate to accept cultural differences

Graphic Organizers

You can never use too many graphic organizers. Use graphic organizers to help students visualize and make mental images of a concept. Organizing the material first helps to build background and provides a means for ELL students to solve future problems independently.

Humor

Use humor to lower stress and anxiety. Don't be afraid to poke fun at yourself. Let your children know that you are not perfect.

Interaction

Development of the ELL students' speaking skills will first be seen during social interactions. Their motivation to be accepted and involved drives the acquisition of social communication. While their social interactions may demonstrate developed oral language it is important not to equate this with academic language readiness. Development of academic language skills, both oral and written will be slower and follow the social language acquisition.

Journal

Using various forms of journals is an effective way for ELL to communicate in writing. Allow the students to write in their native language and observe the gradual transformation to English. Writing skills develop after speaking skills, therefore using the free form of journaling provides a non-threatening means for the students to communicate in writing.

Kinesthetic

Make language comprehensible during students' silent period with Total Physical Response. (TPR) Students can use physical cues to demonstrate understanding, such as pointing, touching, gestures, or physically arranging. Teachers can also use TPR in instruction to give directions and retrieve answers

Labels

A word rich environment helps convey meaning. Label everything and refer to those words, encourage their use in student writing to enhance understanding.

Meaning

Instruction should emphasize and focus on meaning over form. Understanding and comprehending refer to meaning and form refers to the proper structure of the English language. Comprehension is vital before correct construction of form.

Native Language

Remember to respect the native language of the student. It is the basis of their knowledge. The goal is to teach the new language (English) and the importance of the English language. If respect is not given to the native language the student will not transfer respect to English. Respect and allow use of the native language.

Open-Minded

As the ELL English ability improves, the types of questions asked should become more complex. Simple yes/no questions should only be asked of the beginning students. As students become more advanced, they should be asked questions which allow them to expand upon their answers, both in writing and speaking. Open-ended questions allow for more flexibility and alternative answers.

Peers

ELL students often gain more language from interaction with peers than with the teacher. With this in mind, ELL students may be paired with English-speaking peers for individual activities such as shared reading. Group activities may involve both English and native speaking students. Care must be taken that the limited English students are given an integral part to play in the group so they do not become silent observers.

Quiet

Newly arrived ELL students often require a “Silent Period” in which they are using their cognitive ability to listen and make sense of their auditory intake. The length of time needed for this quiet time will vary according to individual needs.

Realia

Utilize everyday real resources to connect the ELL with their new environment. Examples of realia are various sections of the newspapers, advertisement circulars, various catalogs, phonebook, menus, magazines, bank checks, basic application forms, maps, etc. Use as many real items as possible to convey meaning.

Survival Words

Focus on meaningful and authentic language. Assist the ELL in developing a functional core language (i.e. bathroom, address, name, everyday items).

Time (gift of time)

Allow time for the ELL to adjust to their new environment. Every ELL student acquires English at a different rate. In general it takes 4-7 years to become fluent in a language. Patience is vital.

Use Community Resources

Become familiar with the community resources and agencies available in the local area that may assist the ELL population. You may be able to find translators, tutors, mentors and volunteers from various agencies in the community.

Visuals

Pictures, drawings, graphic organizers, props, and drama help to convey meaning. Visuals with labels help to develop vocabulary.

Welcome

Give a warm welcome to ELL students and their families by integrating their culture into classroom discussions and activities. Teach facts and aspects of the cultural background of the students in the classroom. This supports the celebration and acceptance of diverse cultures.

Xenophobia

Xenophobia is the fear of anything that is foreign. An awareness of this phobia for teachers is important. Xenophobic behaviors can hinder ELL language development and

their acceptance into the classroom community. Teachers are encouraged to celebrate diversity in the classroom to guard against or alleviate any xenophobic tendencies.

Yes/No Questions

Yes/no questions are useful for the beginning ELL. The complexity of the questions should be varied to accommodate the language level of the students.

Students' auditory understanding will be greater than their oral capacity to express their understanding.

Zeal

Teachers' attitudes motivate the students and set the tone for learning. The teacher has the most direct impact and the greatest effect on how ELL students will prosper in the new language setting. View the assignment of teaching the ELL students with the same zeal as the first year of teaching.