TIPS FOR TEACHERS TO USE WITH ESOL STUDENTS AT DIFFERENT STAGES
IN LANGUAGE ACQUISION

For a student who knows NO English:

1) Speak to the child, pronouncing his name correctly. Make sure the child knows that he is welcomed in your class. Pair the child with a "buddy" as a partner. It is not necessary to pair the child with someone who speaks the same language. Know that even though the non-speaker does not seem "engaged" because of his silence, he is still "taking it all in."

2) In teaching, use pictures and bring in objects to build vocabulary (the buddy can help by pointing to the picture and having the newcomer say the word).

3) In using textbooks, the non-speaker can listen to an English speaker read the most important part of the chapter to him. The new student can echo short sentences. Choral reading is also good. Listening to recorded or taped reading is excellent for the student.

4) Show a video of a text or act out the story.

5) Teach the student to recognize, say and form the letters in their names. Teach other letters individually in the context of a known word, such as a classmate's name or a key word in a story you are reading.

6) If the student does not know the English alphabet, the buddy can help him learn the letters, or language master cards can be used with the language master machine.

7) Colors, numbers, shapes, body parts are good first lessons.

For the student who does not know enough English to read yet:

1) Begin by teaching the alphabet using as many modes for learning as possible. Point out letters in the words in the stories you read to them, have students hunt for letters around the room, cut out letters, and make clay letters.

2) Start with vocabulary building by giving the student a list of important words from a book chapter (no more than 8 at a time). The student can look up the word in a bilingual dictionary and draw a picture.

3) Have students make flashcards of the things they see in the classroom. They can draw a picture on a card and color it. Buddies can help them to learn the names after they draw the pictures. Have the student write a sentence with each card such as: This is a _____. Another ex: I like _____.

4) "Big" books are helpful; students can see both text and illustrations easily. Leave out words for students to predict. For example, "Once upon a _____".

5) Make a copy of a textbook page. The student can circle words or letters called out by the buddy or teacher. Words can also be marked out; students can find the missing word in the text and fill in the blank.

6) Students can make sets of important words and corresponding pictures. They can play Concentration with their buddy to practice the word.

7) Have students use Yes/No cards to answer questions after working in textbooks. Ask simple questions.

For the student who is starting to decode:

1) Write a sentence from the text on a sheet of drawing paper. Read the sentence to the student and have them illustrate it.

2) Use graphic organizers.

3) Give open book tests. Provide short answers or multiple choice tests.

4) Choose several sentences from the text, write each on a sentence strip, cut the strips into words; have students arrange each group of words into a sentence.

5) Print sentence strips from a section of the story and have students work together to put them in order.

For students who can read well enough, but lack comprehension:

1) Read sentences at a slow-to-normal speed, enhancing the expression. Leave "digestion" time after each sentence or paragraph.

2 "Chunk" material (shortened passages or paragraph selections to teach concepts) so that students do not get overwhelmed with the text. The student can draw illustrations.

3) Make sure student is placed in Guided Reading or other small reading groups. Taped or recorded stories are excellent.

4) Read a passage several times.

5) Allow students to retell the sequence of the story. This can be done either verbally or by illustration.

6) Students can summarize the events of the story (beginning, middle, and ending) by creating a chart.