

Thirty Strategies for Teaching ESOL Students

1. Use pre-reading activities to activate former knowledge.
2. Plan readings that have repetitious text.
3. Use Graphic Organizers.
4. Use visual aids.
5. Check frequently for understanding.
6. Check for word/sentence recognition.
7. Help students build vocabulary files.
8. Share outline of lesson.
9. Write key words that are to be used in the lesson. Supply definitions.
10. Encourage students to underline key words or important facts.
11. Use choral reading rather than individual oral reading.
12. Read to students.
13. Show the video of a text/act out the story.
14. Use chunking of material so that students do not get overwhelmed with text.
15. Choose just one selection to teach concept and test but give further readings for more advanced students.
16. Use short passages from whole texts to teach concepts. Tell (or read) the whole story – concentrate “skills” lesson on one passage.
17. Shorten assignments that encompasses the lesson to be taught (i.e., figurative or metaphorical language imbedded in one selection – not try to teach three or four selections to illustrate).
18. Extend time for assignments to be read and give only the key questions to be answered.
19. Provide repeated reviews and drills.
20. Mirroring – use text for student to copy from – teach noun or pronoun changes.
21. Have students make round robin outlines – allow for one word, short phrase or picture response.
22. Give open book tests for short answer and multiple choice – use same language and syntax/vocabulary as text. Do not expect essays (or full essays) from ESOL students during the language acquisition process.
23. Speak slower; shorten sentences; used words used in the text for explaining idioms and other concepts.
24. Do not assume ESOL students have cultural information to understand story.
25. Use language experience as a means of increasing reading skills.
26. Give controlled writing patterns to increase reading fluency.
27. Write/talk/rewrite to increase reading/writing fluency.
28. Allow students (in the beginning) occasionally to write an essay response in first language to gauge if the student is responding to any of the material read.
29. Use small groups/partner work.
30. Provide highlighted texts and materials for students for them to see what you consider important concepts.