



## Twenty-Five Quick Tips for Classroom Teachers

by Judie Haynes

**Put any five of the following tips into practice and your English language learners will benefit from the improved instruction.**

Do you want to create an effective learning environment for your English language learners? Pick five ideas that you have never tried from the list below and implement them in your content area or mainstream classroom. You will be surprised to see how much the learning of ELLs improves.

### **Before Teaching the Lesson**

1. Determine the English language learning level of your ELLs. Be realistic about what you expect ELLs to do.
2. Plan ahead. Think about how you will make the content comprehensible to your ELLs. Consider the following questions.
  - How will you link the content to the students' previous knowledge?
  - How will you build background information? Show a video or read a book aloud about your topic first.
  - Decide what language and concepts need to be pre-taught.
  - How can you develop content area vocabulary? What visuals will you need?
3. Reflect on how you can teach to oral, visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning modalities.
4. Prepare teaching aids such as maps, charts, pictures, and flashcards before the lesson is taught.
5. Add vocabulary word banks to student activities.
6. Adapt text so that the concepts are paraphrased in easier English. Eliminate non-essential details.
7. Find non-fiction books in the library written at a lower level about the topic you are teaching.

### **During the Lesson**

8. Build on what ELLs already know.
9. Simplify vocabulary and sentence structure. Pre-teach vocabulary in context.
10. Use embedded or yes/no questions; give ELLs questions you will ask in advance so that they can prepare.
11. Introduce concrete concepts and vocabulary first.
12. Teach students to categorize their information using graphic organizers. Create semantic and story maps.
13. Demonstrate highlighting techniques so that students can highlight important information.
14. Review and repeat important concepts and vocabulary.
15. Provide concrete “real” examples and experiences.
16. Teach ELLs to find definitions for key vocabulary in the text.
17. Help ELLs become acquainted with their textbooks (table of contents, glossary, index, etc.)
18. Model your thinking processes for students using “think-alouds”.
19. Tape record part of your lesson to reinforce learning.

### **After the lesson**

20. Have classmates make copies of their notes for ELLs to use.
21. Have ELLs watch videos or listen to tapes about current lesson using close caption feature.
22. Provide follow-up activities that reinforce vocabulary and concepts.
23. Have students work in small groups or pairs so that language and concepts are reinforced.
24. Adjust homework assignment to your ELLs’ English language proficiency.
25. Modify assessment so that your ELLs have an opportunity to show what they have learned.