ESL Strategies for Mainstream Classrooms

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Affective Filter

- Emotional state
- Culture shock
- Acts like a shield
- Blocks input
- Stops the learning process
Lowering the Affective Filter

- Respect the Silent Period
- Allow me to use my home language
- Collaborative work
- Buddies
- Hands-on activities
- Stick to a routine
- Praise me
- Make me feel welcome
- Pronounce my name correctly
- Let me respond non-verbally
- Give me time to think
BICS vs. CALPS

- Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills
- Playground talk
- Socialization
- Survival English
- Seems effortless
- 1-3 years

- Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills
- Classroom language
- Necessary for academic success
- 5-7 years
Comprehensible Input

- English is a speeding train - ESL students are trying to keep up!

- Slow down the speeding train – make input *comprehensible*

- Now students can get on the train and learn even more!
Making Input Comprehensible

- **Total Physical Response**
  - Hands-on activities
  - Skits
  - Gestures
  - Dances

- **Comprehension checks**
  - Point
  - Match
  - Act it out
  - Non-verbal responses

- **Scaffold instruction**
  - Build on the known
  - Use visuals and realia
  - Act it out
  - Allow use of home language

- **Modify**
  - Your language
  - Classwork
  - HW
  - Tests
The Home Language

- No language = no learning
- Literacy skills will transfer from L1 to L2
- Remember the affective filter!
- Benefits and challenges
Benefits of Bilingualism

- Provides multiple pathways to knowledge
- Makes language learning easier
- Opens windows into two worlds
- Broadens job opportunities
Challenges Presented by L1
Linguistic Interference

- Phonetics
  - Some English sounds don’t exist in L1
  - Two sounds in English are variants of the same sound in L1

- Syntax
  - Gender
  - Articles
  - Word order
  - False cognates
Literacy Interference

- Sound-symbol correspondences
  - Same symbol, different sound!
- Alphabetic Principle:
  - 1 sound = 1 letter
  - 1 letter = 1 sound
- New alphabet
- Conventions
  - Capitalization
  - Dialogue
- Syntax
Modifying Reading Selections

- Adjust length
- Include charts, maps, diagrams, etc.
- Use text with section headings
- Provide a summary
- Teach the text backwards
Modifying Assignments

- Highlight key points
- Adjust length
- Use hands-on activities
- Make the work meaningful
- Identify a language objective and a content objective for each lesson
Modifying Instruction - 1

Watch out!

- Idioms
- Passive voice
- Prepositions
- Multiple-meaning words
- Personal space
- Body language
Modifying Instruction - 2

Try to use...

- Slow, clear, friendly speech
- Simple verb tenses
- Names instead of pronouns
- Plenty of wait time
- Either/or questions
- Full forms instead of contractions
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