

Effective Strategies And Accommodations for LEP Students



Initial Classroom Adjustments for LEP Students

You have just found out that you are going to have a student in your class who speaks no English. You also know the federal law requires that adjustments be made so that this child, along with his English-speaking peers, can make progress toward the standards. What do you do if you don't speak Spanish?



1. First of all, don't panic. You are a good and caring teacher, and the things you do to nurture all of your students will work for this one as well.
2. On the first day greet the student as you do all of the others. A friendly smile and warm tone of voice transcends languages. If you are his first English-speaking teacher, he will be feeling very anxious and perhaps afraid.
3. If you would like to add an additional little touch of welcome, you can learn to say "Buenos Días" (Good morning), Buenas tardes (Good afternoon), or Hola (Hello).
4. The first order of business is to get him settled in the classroom without paying him so much attention that he is embarrassed. If he does not understand where he is to sit from verbal clues, you can gesture. A lot of communication can take place without words. Seat him near the front, but not on the first seat.
5. Since you have all of those other students to take care of, you can't just spend time with this one. You can provide him with one of the other students to help, and ask that student to make sure he knows what he is supposed to do—like getting his book open to the right page, copying things you write on the board, passing work up etc. The student can get this across by modeling and pointing.
6. On the first day of class, you may not know your other students well enough to know if the one you assign to help is going to be right for this pairing, so make the assignment for this day only.
7. For the student or students who will be assigned to help this child, choose carefully. They need to be kind, interested in helping (you can sweeten this by giving a little extra credit or some other reward), and have a good understanding themselves of what you are trying to teach. Their understanding of your content will increase as they try to help their classmate.
8. The helping student can not only make sure that the Hispanic student opens books, copies assignments, etc. This student can also begin to teach the other student English, and perhaps learn a little Spanish in the process. You can help that along by giving the student a few words a day paired with a picture or object, to teach. And the Hispanic student can teach the Spanish equivalent. If the students are in elementary school, and have already learned to write, a great project would be a jointly produced (or two

individually produced) picture books labeled in Spanish and English. Included in this could be as many of your content area vocabulary words as possible to illustrate.

9. There are many things a student will need to know beside your content area—both in your class and out of it. For example, location of bathrooms, where to go for lunch and cost of meals, how to get on (and off) the right bus, appropriate dress (especially at high school), classroom routines such as “pledge to the flag” and “moment of silence,” the discipline code and what behaviors can get you in trouble. If some of the responsibility for teaching the student how to take care of these basic things falls on you, you can work with the ESOL teacher who serves your school to get this basic information across. And again, a friendly classmate can help with that.



Teaching Strategies

1. Seat the student near the front, but not on the front seat.
2. Pair the student with a classmate helper.
3. Speak clearly, a little more slowly than usual, and standing so that the student can see your face when you are talking to the class or to this student individually. However, do not exaggerate your speech so that it does not appear natural. Don't, for instance, speak really slow or in a louder tone of voice. When possible, Control the vocabulary you use, choosing terms that are used often, and more easily understood. Avoid the use of idioms. Say it in more than one way if it is an important point, and repeat it later. Pause between important statements to allow processing time Use gestures, actions, and facial expressions to give additional clues. Always embed language in context.
4. Pair everything you can with visuals-- Pictures, flashcards, the objects themselves. LEP students have a difficult time getting information just through their ears. Multi-sensory techniques, hands-on activities, and variety (pictures, videos, computer work,

- manipulatives, music, singing or chanting, motion, role-play, clapping for emphasis, cooperative learning, total physical response, etc.) really help. Provide key information (vocabulary, procedures, timelines, basic facts, etc.) in writing—either on the chalkboard or on a transparency, and have the student's buddy make sure he copies it.
5. LEP students cannot finish copying information before you have to move on. Many of them are copying words that mean nothing to them, so they have to look up at every word and then down at their paper. They cannot retain a sentence in their mind as their classmates can do. Provide them extra time by allowing them to continue copying from the board while you move on, handing them the transparency to finish, or by providing them a photocopy of the transparency or a photocopy of another student's notes.
 6. Try to lower the language intensity of the information the students have to copy. Numbered, one- sentence lines are much better than narrative paragraphs. Condense the information to the most essential possible. For example, give the student an outline of the lesson reduced to its most important points. Limit not only the amount of material, but also the number of concepts. Remember when he learns a new word, he must also learn the many words that are part of the word's definition.
 7. Provide examples of correct work that students can use as a model.
 8. Share strategies, techniques, problems and solutions with colleagues—especially those who also have a Hispanic student or have taught one in the past.
 9. Be aware and sensitive to cultural differences. Often students will nod their head or say yes to indicate they understand, but they really don't. Also, Hispanic students are taught to lower their eyes as a sign of respect when being taken to task by an adult. American students are taught that lowering one's eyes is a sign of guilt.
 10. If age-appropriate, encourage the use of a bilingual dictionary, and provide the child with a list of key vocabulary terms. If available, provide the child with a list of key terms already translated into Spanish and English. There are several content area vocabulary lists in the language section of this booklet.
 11. Check to see if your textbook publisher provides support materials in Spanish. Most of the new ones do.
 12. Print when possible or type. Be aware that many LEP students cannot read cursive writing. If they are old enough to have been taught writing in their own country, their writing will look different to you, and may, although probably neat, be sometimes difficult for you to read
 13. Call on the student, but in the beginning you might limit your questions to yes-no answer types or to a pointing response.
 14. Encourage student interaction through pair and group work. This child's language will develop much faster if he has to use it.



Working Toward the Standards and Assigning Grades

The student is now settled in your classroom, and has the basic routine under control with a little or a lot of help from you and a classmate. You are ready to start dealing with the problem of teaching content, working toward the standards, and assigning grades. At the high school level, this is a bigger problem because of the Carnegie unit. The following points may help.

1. Working toward the standards does not mean that a child has to master all or even any of the standards by the end of the year. He only has to show sufficient progress. Although this child may be below the knowledge level of his classmates in the content area, it is likely that he has learned more this year than they have. He just had a much greater distance to travel.
2. The law says that a non-English speaking child should not be held back for failure to master the material if language is the reason for the lack of success. Adjustments are required.
3. Keep in mind that passing a test is not the only means of assigning grades, and for this student, probably not the best way. An LEP student should be given credit for effort—doing the work you assign him—homework or classwork—should be weighed heavier than test grades at the beginning, and until his knowledge of English increases to give him a chance.
4. This child does not have to have the same grading criteria applied to him that you apply to the rest of the class. The rule is that if you adjust the grade to passing, although he has not achieved the passing percentile, you write in your grade book “adjustment for LEP”. (This information should not be shared with the student or his classmates.) However, this should not be a free ticket. He should be doing a sufficient amount of work to earn the grade.
5. If you are grading on amount of work done, the work assigned needs to be something the student can do. A language/content area picture scrapbook would be a good project for elementary students, with English language expectations increased as the year progresses from one-word labeled pictures, to simple sentences, to paragraphs. Remember, this child will be learning English very fast, both in your classroom, and through working with an ESOL teacher.

6. Some other possible evaluations might include using checklists, documented observations, learning logs, reading the test to the student, and compiling a portfolio.
7. Look for and record evidence of learning.
8. For the tests that you give the class, consider either modifying the test for this student, or accepting a lower percentage for passing. For example, in a biology class a student can learn to label a microscope or any other drawing and be tested on that. He can match words to pictures. He can be given content words to look up in a Spanish/English dictionary, and then use his work to make a test in which he either writes the Spanish for the word or matches the Spanish to English. Or perhaps in an English class learning SAT vocabulary, you could give the Hispanic students easier words to learn or give them less SAT words to learn at a time.
9. As mentioned above, grading adjustments should not be shared with any of the students, including this one, when it is possible to avoid it. However, it may become obvious to the class that this student is doing different work sometimes, and that there are different expectations. Some will complain and, possibly resent this. You can ask them to walk in the student's shoes by having them imagine how hard it would be if they had to do all of their work in Spanish. If that does not work, give them a test or an assignment written completely in Spanish.
10. Finally, don't assume your student can't do a task or pass a test unless you have let him try. Sometimes it is amazing what those kids can do with their little bit of language. And keep in mind that what he cannot do will be greater at the beginning of the year than the end. Gradually increase expectations as the year progresses.

Activities You Might Find Useful

- Role-play, drama, puppets, act out a story as it is read
- Total Physical Response-(Respond to spoken commands with action)
- Sound effects, music, singing, dancing, chanting, clapping, percussion rhythms
- Graphic organizers
- Realia, manipulatives, Hands-on activities
- Imaging: pictures, charts, graphs,
- Jigsaw reading
- Picture sequencing
- Reciprocal questioning
- Make a book or scrapbook to record some aspect of learning
- Cooperative learning
- Language Experience
- Projects
- Computer projects such as combining Internet research with PowerPoint Presentations, Microsoft Word generated newspaper or brochures, or Microsoft Publisher posters
- Language paired with Art assignments like writing words, sentences, paragraphs, poems, stories, scrapbooks, greeting cards, mobiles, brochures, etc. and illustrating them with drawings (or traced, cut-out, or computer art)
- Games
- Puzzles



Language Development

How long does it take a student to become functional in English? This depends on many factors, such as what is the language spoken in the child's home, how willing is he to try to speak the new language, anxiety factors, opportunities to listen and speak, and how much active instruction he is receiving in the language. Statistics only give you a rough average.

BICS-Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

The student can interact with others on a personal level on everyday topics

Average time - 5 years

CALP-Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency-Academic language

This is the language of teachers, classrooms, tests, and textbooks.

Average time - 11 years

Stages of Language Development

1. Preproduction - no speaking, silent stage, receptive language skills

Tasks that can be performed:

Pointing, drawing, moving, miming, matching, selecting, choosing, circling underlining, acting out.

2. Early Production-limited comprehension, a few words

Tasks that can be performed:

Naming, listing, grouping, saying, responding

3. Speech Emergence - increased comprehension, simple sentences

Tasks that can be performed:

Recalling, summarizing, retelling, describing, defining, role-play, explain, restate, compare, and contrast

4. Intermediate fluency-very good comprehension, more complex sentences

Analyze, defend, justify, complete, examine, create, debate, evaluate, and support

1. Silent stage. The student does not speak, or speaks very little. Language is receptive-- being taken in and organized.
2. Chunking. The student speaks with difficulty, and most often with peers.
3. Interlanguage. The student uses the structures of English and the native language.

4. Gaining control - The student understands and speaks English well. (BICS) Basic interpersonal language is in place but (CALP)-academic language needs more time.
5. Fluent English- The student is on the same level with English speaking students of his own age group. A student who begins his American school experience at the high school or junior high level will not reach this point before he graduates.

Planning and Setting Instructional Objectives

1. Find out at what level of language development is the LEP student.
2. What do you want all of your students to know and be able to do at the end of the lesson, unit or course?
3. How can you decrease this to the bare essential for the LEP student?
4. What vocabulary is essential to each piece of learning?
5. How will I get them there? (Strategies & techniques)
Create a list of strategies for teaching this lesson
6. How will I know they got there? (Evaluation strategies)
7. How will I use this information?



Checking Progress

The following form may be useful for getting an idea where your student is at various points in the year. It will also be very useful information for the ESOL teacher in assessing the student's progress in the mainstream classroom.

Progress Report

Student Name_____

Date_____

Class_____

Teacher_____

How would you rate this student's progress during the past month? (1-5 with 5 being the highest.) Use English speaking classmates as point of comparison.

Listening comprehension	1	2	3	4	5
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Reading comprehension	1	2	3	4	5
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Writing skills	1	2	3	4	5
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Works independently	1	2	3	4	5
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Asks for help when needed	1	2	3	4	5
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Completes assignments	1	2	3	4	5
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Interacts positively with peers	1	2	3	4	5
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Success on modified tests	1	2	3	4	5
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Success on unmodified tests	1	2	3	4	5
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Comments_____
