

Guidelines for Teaching English Language Learners

- **Have high expectations for learning.**
 - English language learners can flourish in an academically challenging environment.
- **Facilitate the development of essential language and literacy skills at each student’s level of oral language proficiency in English.**
 - Language learning is a social process.
 - Native language use is likely to continue outside of formal instruction as students interact with peers or adults who speak their native language.
 - English language learners benefit from meaningful opportunities to use English and interact with peers.
 - Language development and vocabulary is enhanced by engaging in instructional conversations with students (e.g., “*Tell me more about . . . , What do you mean by . . .*”). Instructional conversations also include restating what the student has said: “*In other words . . .*”
 - Speech sounds in English may be different from those of the students’ home language and do not need to be corrected continuously. Use judgment when correcting differences in speech sounds.
- **Develop literacy through instruction that builds on language, oral and reading comprehension, print concepts, and the alphabetic principle.**
 - Introduce content in the student’s native language whenever possible.
 - Begin formal reading instruction in a second language when the student has adequate language proficiency to comprehend the language of the text.
- **Use language during instruction that is comprehensible and meaningful to students.**
 - Build on words and concepts that transition easily from one language to another. This helps students access what they know of the topic in their first language and apply it to English.
 - Adjust the English vocabulary to the level appropriate for the student.
 - Repeat, rephrase, and extend students’ language to support language learning.

- Use nonverbal cues, including gestures, facial expressions, dramatic portrayals, and physical responses.
- **Create an instructional program that meets the needs of your students.**
 - Provide opportunities for students to engage in extended dialogues and enhance second language learning in small group and one-to-one settings.
 - Recognize that students may need to reread passages several times before comprehending the text.
- **Activate background knowledge and connect to students' lives.**
 - Provide discussions about a topic prior to reading, and make connections to students' lives.
 - Use videos and pictures to provide a context for language and conceptual content.
- **Use graphic organizers, charts, and other visuals to enhance comprehension.**
- **Provide opportunities for discussion of topics.**
- **Recognize and value the different discourse (speaking) patterns across cultures.**
 - Provide extra support for students who speak dialects, especially during decoding and spelling activities.

(Au, 1993; August & Hakuta, 1997; Cummins, 1981; Pérez, 1998; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; UTCRLA, 2000b)