Working with Low Level English Language Learners

Literacy Volunteers Charlottesville/Albemarle

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Start with Need to Know Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For life</th>
<th>For class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• My name is _______________</td>
<td>• I do not understand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My address is ____________</td>
<td>• Can you slow down?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I speak _________________</td>
<td>• Can you repeat that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• I need help.</td>
<td>• How do you say ___________?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Please call (911, my family member, etc.).</td>
<td>• What is this called?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• How do you spell that?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Use realistic and authentic materials

- Clocks
- Calendars
- Color photos
- Models
- Maps
- Menus
- Sales flyers
Teach in small chunks

• Don’t overload your student
• Trying to cover 6 pages in the book in two hours is counterproductive
• Focus on a series of small tasks

Limit written information

• If your student has no connection to writing in any language, “writing it down” won’t be as helpful to him/her as it is to someone who is educated
• Find a way that is more meaningful.
  • What do they do to remember things?
  • How can you connect their own method of learning to English?

Engage multiple senses

• Sight
  • Text
  • Pictures
  • Graphics
• Sound
  • Listening to the teacher
  • Recordings or videos
  • Singing & rhymes
  • Clapping to indicate syllable stress
Engage multiple senses

- Touch
  - Handling objects
  - Describing the feel
  - Making/building things
  - Describing shapes
  - Rearranging objects
- Taste & Smell
  - Food, spices
  - Flowers, perfume
- Actions
  - Moving about
  - Gestures
  - Physical games

For those who are interested, this letter group can produce:

- 6 -- 3-letter words,
- 10 -- 4-letter words,
- 6 -- 5-letter words, and
- 2 -- 6-letter words.

Source: TextTwist

Avoid teaching grammar terms
Use color to reinforce ideas

- Highlighters
- Colored index cards
- Colored photos

Allow time to process

- Hear/read the sentence in English
- Translate into first language
- Develop a response
- Translate response to English
- Realize that they don’t know the English words for half the words in their response
- Rephrase response using known vocabulary
- Say response
Teach the same material in different ways

Repeat & revisit

And finally....
A smile is the most important tool in your toolbox.