

Additional Resources for the article International Students in Our Schools: Why? How?

(Ideas for a faculty in-service are on page 3.)

The first five are repeated from the September CSE Article:

- 1) Supply a vocabulary list ahead of time. Consider offering extra credit if students define words in English and their own language.
- 2) Arrange group work, making sure international students mix with students who will work well with them.
- 3) Repeat concepts in a lecture or student questions, restating or defining words that might give an international student trouble. Write difficult words on the whiteboard.
- 4) Prevent cheating, which students may see as sharing or working together, as much as possible by using multiple forms of a test. Monitor cell phones where they are visible.
- 5) During tests, allow students to bring definitions in with them. Translators on cell phones are usually not allowed because they tempt students to cheat. Some dedicated translators are acceptable, but slow students down.

Here are an additional 15 ideas mentioned frequently by teachers and in the literature.

- 1) Have students work with a “notes partner” or consider supplying teacher notes (from presentations like PowerPoint) for topics that are very vocabulary-intensive.
- 2) As mentioned in the first five suggestions above, it is important to prevent cheating. Some cultures may see this “sharing” as acceptable. Monitor make-up tests yourself and don’t let them be taken in the library or study hall. Use resources like Turnitin.com, if possible. If you suspect a student of cheating, deal with it as a “teachable moment,” and don’t take it as a personal affront. Provide gradually escalating consequences after you have made the rules clear to the student.
- 3) Encourage international students to offer answers when they feel prepared to answer. Be sure to call on them if they raise their hands and allow them extra time to formulate their answers. Be willing for them to participate differently than other students, but be sure to communicate what you expect for what grades.
- 4) During independent work time in class, routinely ask questions to the international students, (other than yes/no questions) to make sure they are understanding. Capture the one minute students are passing in papers or putting away materials to find out how a group activity went or what the international student gained from a class discussion.
- 5) Design tests so that difficult sentences are minimized. Read every test question for clarity with ELL students in mind (sentence structure and reading level). This will help any learning challenged students! Make sure directions are clear. If possible, use the same directions on tests frequently so they don’t have to figure them out each time. During tests, allow the student to ask you questions about the directions and meaning of words that are not being tested. Make it clear what vocabulary is being tested and therefore not able to be brought with them to the test.
- 6) Make extensive use of visual aids, modeling, graphic organizers, concrete objects, demonstrations, and multicultural examples when possible. Examples from the student’s host culture should be used when possible. Encourage students to draw and label things to aid them in understanding.

- 7) Use stating of objectives and summarization as common tools so that ELL students know what they are looking for and then listen for what they have gained from the lesson. This is good for all learners but especially helps the less organized, learning-challenged, or ELL students.
- 8) Turn a regular worksheet into a vocabulary assignment one day prior to using it in class. Pick words out with a highlighter that they should define, or draw a picture of, in order to be prepared for it in class the next day.
- 9) Paired reading: have the American partner read a paragraph in a book. Then have the ELL student read that same paragraph. Then have the pair answer questions, encouraging the ELL student to answer as many as he/she can with the American partner helping them to write the answers.
- 10) Enunciate carefully and clearly so that words are not run together. Speak loudly and slowly enough for everyone to hear you easily while still speaking naturally.
- 11) Bearing in mind it will take ELL students many times longer to get through reading assignments, allow for shorter readings when possible. Try to pinpoint crucial passages.
- 12) Increase the celebration of cultural diversity in the school, not only with the international students but also with students who come from various backgrounds within the North American culture. Helping students and teachers see that everyone has unique attributes and celebrating those differences will go a long way toward helping students see that being “different” should not separate groups of people. The teachers’ example of truly enjoying the international students will go far in setting a positive tone at the school.
- 13) Utilize afterschool programs to help students connect with their peers, follow their interests, and encourage them to speak in a more informal context. These connections prove to be fruitful in developing friendships that carry over into the classroom.
- 14) Create supportive environments somewhere in the student’s day where they can get academic help and, more importantly, be accepted for who they are. This may be the ELL support program or another type of academic or counseling assistance.
- 15) As a young Harvard graduate—who was the only Serbo-Croatian speaker in her school—said: “Don’t Give Up!” Even though it is hard work for both the teacher and the student, perseverance is necessary. Both will have to have the long view to make it through the difficulties of educating a student in a language other than their own. However, she says, it is worth the investment!

References

Ratcliffe, Martin, J.A., (Acculturation of International Students: Contemporary Curriculum Issues, Christian School Education (date unknown). This was posted on ConNexus without a date.

(ideas 13-15) Malone, Helen Janc, An immigrant student’s story: I was a dictionary girl. Education Week, Spotlight on English-Language Learners in the Classroom, EdWeek.org
http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2012/02/08/20malone_ep.h31.html

Helping English Language Learners Understand Content Area Texts, Indiana Department of Education,
<http://merrillville.schoolwires.net/cms/lib02/IN01001403/Centricity/Domain/166/IDOE-Helping%20ELL%20Understand%20Content%20Area%20Texts.pdf>

Ideas for a faculty in-service:

1. As teachers come in, have them sit with other staff members in a similar group (grade level, department, etc.)
2. Question 1: As the meeting opens, give them several minutes, depending on the size of the group, to share their best tip/technique with international students. It could be something that works with all students or something that worked with one particular student. They could focus on a student they currently have or one they have had in the past. (Some may not have had an international student, so be sure to adjust the time to what seems appropriate.)
3. Question 2: Ask them to share what seems to really frustrate or fail to connect with international students. Help them focus on instructional strategies, not on “bad behavior” of individual students. Tell them you are looking to focus on things that reveal cultural or languages differences or learned educational behaviors. These will help reveal how other cultures may educate differently and how that may cause us (and our international students) some adjustments.
4. Pass out the article and additional suggestions to the group. Tell them to concentrate on the two lists of suggestions they find in it. Tell them also to look at the list of additional suggestions above (this document). After they have been given some time to read through those, have each teacher pick one which they are not currently using and describe how they might use it in their classroom. Afterward, others may briefly give suggestions or feedback, particularly if they have experience in that area.
5. If there is time, have the groups come back together. Each group can choose one or two of the best ideas they came up with to share with the other groups. There may be some ideas they have decided to adopt unanimously as a grade level team. They may share the same difficult student and have decided to try one of the strategies. This would be something for them to share with the other groups.
6. The leader wraps up the session by summarizing some of the common themes that were shared and deciding on a plan to get back together in a month or six weeks and find out what progress has been made.

If your school is a CEU provider, write up the plan as you plan to implement it and submit it for approval. Take attendance and then each of your participants could gain a portion of a CEU for their participation.

If the school is NOT a CEU provider but subscribes to ConNexus Premium, they may choose to have the teachers watch one of the selections ahead of time and discuss it during the in-service time using questions similar to those above.

If neither apply, contact CEUs@acsi.org for more information on how to become a CEU provider. It is free for accredited schools.