

Dorset Primary School No.5132

ESL Policy

PURPOSE:

This policy is designed to enable ESL Learners to develop their English language skills in both social and academic contexts.

BROAD AIMS:

- Create an environment where learners feel secure and are prepared to take risks
- Support and value learners' languages and cultures
- Build on the knowledge, skills and understandings that students bring to the learning context
- Build on the linguistic understandings students have of their own language
- Encourage the use of the learners' first language if the learner is literate in that language
- Use themes and topics which are relevant to learners' particular needs
- Expose learners to socio-cultural information which enables them to understand and participate in Australian culture and society
- Focus on purposeful communicative activities which are comprehensible and appropriate to the learner's age and needs
- Generally teach the macro skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing in an integrated way, although at times there may be a need to focus on a particular aspect of one eg pronunciation, listening to specific instructions
- Focus on developing learners' oral language skills for oral language development and to support writing
- Support the learner's language skills development through scaffolding the learners' language
- Explicitly teach new language (vocabulary, text types, grammar, sound knowledge, pronunciation, intonation) in the context of a theme or topic
- Use pair and group work and peer/cross age tutoring to maximise language interaction in a low stress environment and to encourage risk taking
- Jointly deconstruct and construct texts to model how texts work to achieve their purposes
- Use an experiential approach to provide meaningful contexts
- Use visual cues wherever necessary to clarify and reinforce concepts
- Use graphic organisers (diagrams, timelines, concept maps etc) to represent and organise ideas and to develop thinking skills
- Recycle language to ensure its learning
- Encourage older learners to keep a glossary or a personal dictionary of words and meanings
- Ensure that assessment tasks, activities and criteria are relevant to the student's stage of English language development
- Use SSO support to work with a student on individual needs

GUIDELINES:

TEACHER TALK

- Keep talk to a minimum
- Use clear, common and consistent instructions and repeat or rephrase if necessary
- Speak at a normal pace and volume
- Don't use too much jargon
- Support instructions with visual cues as much as possible

SPECIFIC STRATEGIES/ACTIVITIES

Teaching oral language

- To develop oral communication skills, focus on activities that encourage learners to talk in a supportive environment such as in pairs or groups.

Such activities include:

- information gap activities where learners have to exchange information in order to complete a task
- opinion gap activities where learners share and discuss their own personal feelings, attitudes or preferences about ideas or topics
- mime and role-play
- general communicative activities eg games, group work, songs
- everyday classroom interactions

To develop the more formal oral language skills:

- formal talks, including the oral genres, and reports
- debates
- performance

With different students, there may be need to focus on particular aspects of oral language such as pronunciation – this can be done on an individual basis with SSO support.

ESL learners may experience difficulty in hearing and producing some English sounds because they do not appear in the learner's language.

Similarly, stress, rhythm and intonation will also differ from the first language.

Provide many opportunities to hear and practise language through rhymes, songs, chants, games, drama etc.

TEACHING READING

Reading for the second language learner involves transferring skills from the first language (if he or she can read in the first language) to the second as well as becoming familiar with:

- new set of sounds and sound groupings which differ from the first language
- new intonation patterns and their meanings
- new patterns of stress and pause
- new sets of culturally-specific knowledge, values and behaviours
- new grammar conventions eg different word order in sentences
- new print conventions eg reading from left to right

Choose reading materials that:

- have good visual cues to enable the student to access the story easily
- reflect the experiences, knowledge and interests of the learners

Use bi-lingual books, big books, stories with lots of repetition, class made books based on class experiences and reading schemes with thematic interests.

- Involve the ESL learner in a number of reading experiences every day which focus on language in context eg
- exposure to meaningful print in the immediate environment eg signs, charts, labels
- modelled deconstruction of a range of whole texts to develop understandings of the organisation and language features of different genres and the conventions of English
- taped reading
- shared book experiences and big books
- wordless books/ picture sequences/ photographs to build a story/recount
- cloze activities to focus on comprehension or on different aspects of language

- **pre-reading activities** which prepare the reader for the text through activating prior knowledge about the topic, developing a shared overall knowledge of what the text might be about and teaching strategies for predicting the text content

- **reading activities** which develop language and reading skills in context

- **post reading activities** which focus on responding to the text in order to gain a greater understanding of text, extract information for other purposes, critically interpret and analyse the text and give personal responses to the text.

TEACHING WRITING

ESL Learners are learning to write in a new language where he or she may have:

- no literacy skills in another language due to limited or no previous schooling
- limited oracy skills in English
- limited knowledge of the 3 cueing systems
- a lack of shared cultural knowledge
- a lack of understanding of the specific genres taught in schools and their particular social functions

Therefore teachers can scaffold learner's writing by

- modelling all aspects of the writing process
- teaching the text organization and language features of different genres through a range of different activities
- jointly constructing texts with students
- supporting the development of editing and proof reading skills
- using shared experiences (eg excursions) to write class or individual books/texts
- using photos and other visual stimuli (such as sequences pictures) in the early stages of writing development particularly
- using groups and pairs to develop group texts

Other writing strategies

- encourage students not to focus too much on their mistakes
- encourage writing for real purposes by publishing in innovative ways eg newsletters on the school's intranet
- encourage the use of different strategies for accessing vocabulary needed and for recording new vocabulary for use in future writing
- teach all aspects of word knowledge and spelling through specific activities including games, quizzes etc.

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