

Ten Strategies to Remove Learning Barriers for EAL



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1. Use pupils home language to support them in learning the new language. Use translation tools to set challenges at an appropriate level for them. Substitution tables can be a good way to help them join in answering questions and start them understanding the order of words.
2. See learning a new language as a ladder towards bilingual. A taxonomy of learning can be utilised to recognise stages of the journey.
For example:
Prestructural: Silent phase – no prior learning in this language.
Unistructural: Simple, single words
Multistructural: Many words and phrases but parrot like in response. Unable to put old learning into a new context
Relational: Many words and phrases, able to put old learning into new context and adapt language to new situations.
Extended Abstract: Bilingual
3. Have a resource bank that links to each level of learning so that teachers across your whole school can quickly access resources to support individuals.
4. Link intervention to the curriculum wherever possible. Intense training in their new language outside of the classroom will support students in learning the language more quickly. If you also link this intervention to what they will be learning in the classroom, they will have the language to join in and feel part of the community more quickly.
5. Flip learning using their homework as a way of introducing them to the language they will need in your next lesson. Use their home language as a starting point and, wherever possible, involve their parents.
6. Assess students' starting points carefully and assess their progress based upon these starting points. Reward the journey to encourage a growth mindset and a belief in themselves that, with hard work, they will get there.
7. Remember that EAL is not SEN and set challenging tasks appropriate to their stage of learning.
8. Wherever possible, work cross curricular. Information overload does not lead to good learning outcomes. If you can allow them to practice new language in a new context, they will retain this learning more readily than if they are bombarded by new learning every hour. Discuss with colleagues the typical language required to access each subject. Reading, writing, communication and mathematics are the threads that run throughout the curriculum. Use this knowledge to make links.
9. In the beginning, images can speak louder than words. Provide students with words alongside images to help them interpret the meaning for themselves.
10. Practice, patience and faith will go a long way towards success. You must have a growth mindset as a teacher and know that they are on the journey towards bilingual. You are going to get them there!



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