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Research exercise: English Language Learners

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Abstract:

Current research shows that the number of English Language Learners in America is steadily increasing. This paper explains some approaches that are effective in teaching English Language Learners. These approaches include teachers using visual aids in their lesson plans, integrating their home cultures into their class, being patient with them, and work with them outside of class. This paper includes aspects from each approach in great detail. All of these approaches contribute to the success of English Language Learners in the classroom.

Introduction:

What is the best approach for teaching English Language Learners? As the percentage of English Language Learners in America is steadily increasing, it is becoming more important for teachers to be able to adapt their methods to teach these students. Teachers use many different approaches in helping students that do not speak English as a first language to become successful in school. If teachers use visual aids in their lesson plans, integrate their home cultures into their class, are patient with them, and work with them outside of class, English Language Learners will become more successful in the classroom.

Visual Aids:

- Incorporate graphics and hands-on models into the lesson plans.
- Generate mental illustrations.
- Include graphs and charts.
- Teachers should use gestures as much as possible.
- Wordless picture books are helpful in the early grades.
- Label physical objects throughout the classroom.

Bring Culture to the Classroom:

Teachers should make ELL’s feel comfortable in the classroom environment. Some bilingual classrooms do this by using two languages to teach the students. Teachers should not make students feel as if their native is a secret from the rest of the class. The students’ first language can be used as a tool to help them transition to English.

Allow ELL’s to make connections to the lesson by telling stories from their home life. This opportunity for them to speak will help them practice using English. For students that are struggling or do not feel comfortable in the classroom setting, it may be beneficial to ask the student’s parent to visit. Sometimes parents can see what teachers cannot.

Be Patient:

When asked a question in English, ELL’s translate the question into their first language in their mind. They then answer the question in their first language, and then translate that answer back to English. The students then answer the teacher. During this process, the teacher must be patient.

Many times, English Language Learners are more focused on getting the right answer than they are with grammar. Teachers must be patient and allow students to try it on their own. Constant corrections will only lower their confidence and discourage them from speaking. Once English Language Learners are able to understand grammatical errors, teachers should provoke students to give a more correct answer.

Tutoring:

If ELL’s are struggling, they may need extra help. Many schools support this through after school tutoring programs. Once students have grasped a concept from the language, teachers can extend their knowledge by showing them the next step that is slightly beyond what they have already learned.

References:


