



How are we able to help
our diverse student
population with language
barriers?

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What is a language barrier?

A language barrier is..

When a person has difficulty communicating with another person due to different languages spoken

The lack of a common language that prevents two or more people from speaking to or understanding each other through verbal communication

How does a language barrier affect a student?

Language barriers can have long-term negative effects on a student's academic performance

The two ways it can affect a student are:

1. Emotional Factors
2. Physical Factors

Emotional Factors

Students may avoid communicating in fear of being ridiculed, or mocked, by other students. This can destroy the student's confidence and self-esteem.

The fear can also come by not knowing how to fully express themselves

- Emotions
- Needs
- Wants

Physical Factors

Students may avoid participating in class, which can be hard to assess if the student understands the material

1. Might be unable to know how to answer a question
2. Might not be comprehending the material being taught



Classroom

How are we able to support our ESL students
in the classroom?

Buddy System

A buddy system is when another student is assigned to be a peer, or buddy, to your ESL student. Having a buddy system helps promote building relationships to other classmates

- Assign a buddy who speaks a similar language
- Buddy will help the ESL throughout entire school day

Accommodations- Highlighting Words

Highlighting words can help student understand what to focus on with their classwork

- Teach, or reinforce, vocabulary words student is learning
- Teach unknown words

Teacher should prepare this beforehand, ensuring they know the materials being used for lesson

Example: Science worksheet involving the planets in solar system, teacher should highlight the names of the planets to help student know the names and how to spell.

Accommodations- Differentiate Material

Students are expected to be at grade-level standards, which becomes a disadvantage for ESL students.

Content should be differentiated and implemented at their level of understanding

- Center work & small-group helps to teach to their understanding

Modifying classwork & assessments to reinforce

- Limit multiple choice answers
- Provide an alternative format

Accommodations-Visual Aids

Using visual aids helps students visualize the content, which can help reinforce their understanding through a different communicative aspect that is not spoken language

Visual aids include:

1. Images
2. Actions
3. Gestures
4. Expressions

Build Relationships

Building relationships with ESL students is crucial for success and progress to be made

Begins by learning their name & pronouncing it correctly, as different cultures value their name

- Builds trust & makes student feel respected
- Ensure other classmates know and pronounce name correctly too

Incorporate their interests & show they are valued by wanting to learn from them



Families

How can we support the families of our ESL students?

Families- Language Barriers

As much as children are able to speak and understand English to an extent, their parents may speak little to no English.

If a teacher needs to communicate with a parent that speaks little to no English,

- Have a translator such as a fellow colleague who speaks the language or a translator hired for the conference
- Do not use the student as the translator

Families- Inflexible Schedules

Families may work at jobs that do not permit flexibility in attending school events. This can be caused due to the nature of their job, or because they might work multiple jobs in order to provide for the family

A teacher can help by:

1. Making themselves available at a time that is convenient for the family
2. Allowing phone conversations instead of face-to-face conversations, which can be flexible for the family but also avoid social anxiety of face-to-face

Families- Limited Resources

Families can also have limited resources, meaning they are unable to have transportation to the school or inability to find childcare for any siblings of the ESL student.

When a family has limited resources, it can become difficult in having conferences with the parents immediately about concerns or student performance

There are multiple ways that teachers, or districts, can help accommodate to these reasons.

Families- Limited Resources

Accommodations can include:

1. Districts providing bus, train, or subway passes for families to have transportation to the school
2. Video record back-to-school night presentations and make accessible online if a parent is unable to attend in-person due to their limited resources
3. Virtual conferences can do the same as video recordings, giving the family the ability to still attend without the stressor of finding a way to transport to the school
4. Providing temporary childcare at the school if a family is unable to hire, or find, a babysitter for any siblings