

Addressing U.S. Academic Vocabulary, Grammar, and Voice

Class Participation

Post discussion questions or topics in advance

- Providing students with questions to guide reading or even organizing syllabus by sub-topics can help them prepare to participate.

Ask questions clearly and give time for processing

- Try to avoid speaking too quickly and filling your questions with idioms that might be unclear to non-native English speakers. (e.g. “What’s the bigger score this author wants to settle?” could be “What is the author’s main intent?”)
- Try to ask non-native English speakers routine, summary questions that they can answer based on the reading assignment.
- Try to let other students respond or present something first so that they can hear possibly helpful vocabulary and begin to see your pattern of questioning

Be patient, understanding, and supportive

- Always try to positively reinforce ELL student participation: rephrase an ungrammatical response, ask clarifying questions, elaborate on response, etc.

Set specific appointments

- Many students will be reluctant to “bother you” on their own but will respond to a specific invitation or scheduled appointment.

Learn about your students

- Get to know their characteristics, backgrounds, goals, and processes as learners. Learning about them allows you to identify their challenges and respond more effectively.

Ask students to explain concepts

- Avoid asking, “Do you understand?” or “Is that clear?” Instead, ask students to explain what they understand so that you can better assess the content that they understand and the content with which they need help.

Allow students access to lectures through recordings or files

- Set parameters for when and how you will allow recordings (e.g., with prior notice, for their use in this course only, for purposes of language review only, etc.)
- Suggest they use their phones/laptops/tablets for recording rather than investing in any new equipment
- Provide outlines of your lectures or lecture notes on Moodle

Emphasize Key Points

Stress key words, write on the board, repeat yourself to emphasize, etc.

- Practice the “Rule of Three” (say it, show it, write it): State it aloud, demonstrate/illustrate it visually and concretely in class, and include it in a handout or Moodle resource for them to study later.

Use Visuals

Graphs, charts, and diagrams all aid language learners’ comprehension

- Try to show the concept in different ways other than words; images, charts, and diagrams can help multilingual learners guess meaning and anticipate helpful vocabulary.

Write Down Critical Vocabulary

Use handouts, projectors, or whiteboards to record key terms

- The more ways to communicate you use, the better chance your multilingual students will have of following your class and retaining your lessons.

Adapted from The Writing Center at UNC Chapel Hill

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/faculty-resources/tips-on-teaching-esl-students/>