

What teachers can do to help * us

A list composed in June, 2001 by * Korean, Dutch, Japanese, Indonesian, French, Italian, Czech, Hungarian, Filipino, Swedish, South American, German, African, etc. ESOL Plus students

1. Plan initiative games, icebreaker activities throughout the semester to help us and others know and use our names. This is the single most important thing that helps us. It gives us an identity in the class.
2. Assign groups made up of various nationalities. Don't let us pick groups.
3. Choose students randomly to answer questions even though they don't have their hand up.
4. Assign oral presentations (even though it may be painful).
5. Give us a chance to ask questions. Give us wait time to think before answering. "I'm going to ask you a question and give you a minute to think before answering."
6. Set up conferences with us. (We are too embarrassed to ask for them.)
7. Weekly plans really help - we can come to class knowing what we will need to discuss - also we don't have so many misunderstandings about what will happen in a class.
8. Small-group discussions are more comfortable for us. Whole class discussions are helpful if we have small group discussions first for practice.
9. Please speak more slowly ! Check to see if we are comprehending you.
10. Write on the board to illustrate and outline topics and vocabulary. Write down assignments in the same place on the board every day. Oral assignments are confusing and cost us grades.
11. "English only" classrooms help us and stop cliques and put-down behavior. Create friendly, helpful English-only rules agreed to by consensus of students that allow for non-English under certain conditions, for example:
 - Group discussions in non-English are reported back to the class in English.
 - One word/ phrase comments in non-English are not allowed.
 - Non-English discussions OK only at times that don't interrupt or stop flow of class.
 - Students must ask permission to discuss in their language.
12. Train us all – native speakers and ESOL – for group work.
 - Assign tasks to each member of the group. Examples are referee, note-taker, reporter to class, timer. A referee stops put-downs or rude behavior.
 - Don't let native speakers give us the menial or non-verbal tasks. Have them ask us what we'd like to do. Remind them we need a little wait time to answer.
 - Practice group-work skills as a class before we try group work.
 - Practice the items above such as wait time or discussion/reporting as a whole class.