

Glossary of EAL teaching and learning techniques

Mainly oral

| What is the technique? | How to do it? | Why do it? |
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| Visual presentation | Teacher uses an oral, visual and animated presentation to key learners into the topic matter. | EAL learners can quickly learn new vocabulary when they can associate it with a picture or artifact. |
| Talk partners An organised form of pair work. | Learners are carefully matched in pairs in order to discuss their responses to teacher questions when asked. | EAL beginners can be placed with more able, fluent speakers of English who can model appropriate language use. |
| Hot seating | Learners are given a character, often with a role play card to support. A learner who has read and understood her character sits in the middle of a circle of learners. Other pupils take it in turns to ask questions of the character who responds in role. | EAL learners hear real language in context. They are able to listen to other fluent speakers. Oral rehearsal develops the exploratory talk of more advanced learners and is good preparation for writing. |
| Discussion in first language | EAL learners are given time to talk about new subject content in their first language with another speaker of the same language. | EAL pupils are able to use subject knowledge learnt in their first language and key into a topic. Sometimes vocabulary is similar, especially in science subjects with Latinate vocabulary. |
| Oral prediction | Before reading the teacher asks learners to predict from title, pictures or sub-headings what the text will contain. | This technique requires learners to build on their prior knowledge including how texts work. It helps information retrieval. |
| Brainstorming or Spider diagram | A group of pupils are asked to generate ideas and words related to a (new) topic. These are usually recorded visually by the teacher or another student. | Gives EAL learners a chance to learn key topic vocabulary. Several pupils working together can extend each others' repertoire. |
| Mind mapping or concept mapping | This is a systematic type of brainstorm. Pupils link key topic words or concepts into sentences or paragraphs. The teacher may initially give key words to pupils to find links. These may be colour coded. | Allows EAL learners to build on prior knowledge and transfer learning from their first language. |
| Envoys Pupils carry information from one group to another | A group of 3 or 4 learners complete an oral or reading task on topic. For example describing a character from a book and choosing quotations to illustrate their points. Other groups work on different characters in the same way. After a period of time an envoy from each group is sent to the next group in a clockwise direction and reports to the new group. Then a second envoy goes to the next group and so on until all groups have heard each others' work. | EAL learners hear real language in context. They are able to listen to other fluent speakers. |
| Washing line A type of evaluative or ranking activity | Pupils are given adjectives or other evaluative statements. They have to arrange the words (or themselves) from strongest to weakest (e.g. <i>fantastic-excellent-good-OK</i>) | This is a good vocabulary expansion activity for more advanced EAL learners. It develops understanding of shades of meaning. |

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| Active listening (e.g. cloze) | Students have a prepared text with words deleted. The teacher reads the complete text and learners listen in order to insert the missing words. | EAL learners get a chance to hear a model text. Depending on which words are omitted they can concentrate on key grammatical or vocabulary items. |
| Information gap activities or barrier games | There are many types of barrier game. Each learner has a different piece of information (e.g. diagram, picture or text.) They both have to complete a single task by asking for and using information from the other. So one learner might have a map and draw a route while listening to her partner's set of directions. | The barrier or information gap requires real language to be used to complete a task. EAL learner can be paired with supportive, fluent speakers who can help scaffold the task through careful wording or questioning. |
| Message Abundancy The repetition of key words or concepts | The teacher presents the same information in two or more different ways in a lesson; for example, on a DVD, through text highlighting and while speaking. | EAL learners have several opportunities to pick up and absorb new words, phrases and concepts. |

Mainly reading

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| Jigsaw reading Groups read different texts and then regroup to feedback. | The class is divided into groups of 4 or 5. Each group is given a different text to read and questions or task about a topic. After the task has been completed, one person from each group comes together to form a new group with information from each text. They can then share their expertise about the topic. | The texts and tasks can be designed for different levels of EAL learner at appropriate reading levels. Emerging EAL learners will be supported by working collaboratively. |
| Underlining/Highlighting Learners use highlighters to mark different aspects of a text | Learners are given a complete text with instructions to highlight key aspects. These can be grammatical, such as underlining past tense verbs in blue, time connectives (conjunctions) in red; semantic E.g. all the nouns relating to time; or content based. For example all the sentences describing a character. | The technique draws learners' attention to the form and structure of texts at sentence or paragraph level. |
| Identifying reference items | Teacher highlights reference words in a non-fiction text (for example pronouns: it, this, these, theirs) learners have to identify and highlight the nouns to which they refer. | This helps more advanced EAL learners focus on the difficult process of cohesion and back referencing. It draws attention to how texts work. |
| Matching activities Learners have to match words and definitions or two parts of a sentence. | Words and definitions are printed on card which is then cut up. Learners work in pairs to match them up. | Through working together learners can practise using new vocabulary. Being able to move and manipulate text helps identify key language patterns. |
| Sequencing Learners have to re-assemble or sequence a cut up text. | A complete text printed on card is cut up. Learners work in pairs to reassemble the original text in the correct sequence. | Learners understand how a text works and begin to use their knowledge of key grammatical items such as conjunctions and pronouns which link sentences and paragraphs. |

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| Relevance sorting Learners have a set of cards with key points about a particular question. <i>E.g. What were the causes of the first world war?</i> | The key question is written in the centre of concentric circles. Pupils place their supporting evidence cards around the centre with the most relevant points nearer to the centre. | This is a useful planning strategy for essay writing in English or Humanities subjects. It enables learners to prioritise and organise the writing of longer texts. |
| Ranking and justifying activities (e.g. Diamond Nine) | Learners are given a set of cards to evaluate in some way. For example, deciding which character is most to blame for an event in a narrative. They must arrange the cards in order from best to worst. In a Diamond Nine there are always nine cards which must be ordered into a diamond pattern. (see page xxx) | EAL learners hear the language of justification and evaluation. It supports EAL learners in bridging talk and writing. |
| Joint construction Various activities that involve the teacher guiding learners in how texts work. | Teacher or other students model how to read a text, such as skimming and scanning or how to write a paragraph with topic sentence and supporting evidence. | Helps EAL learners to become meaning seekers and teaches strategies to identify, understand and use vocabulary items in source materials. They can take an increasing role in the joint construction using what they have learnt about the language features of a new genre. |

Mainly writing

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| Cloze A specialised form of gap filling | A text is prepared with one type of word omitted, e.g. all nouns, all verbs. It can also be used for learning new subject vocabulary. | Supports EAL learners in looking at semantic patterns or sentence structures such as past tenses, prepositions. |
| Selective cloze | A text is prepared with every 7th or 8th word deleted (or every 10th if it is for beginners). Learners collaborate in pairs to find suitable replacements for the omitted words | Helpful for teachers to assess learners' comprehension of more complex texts. If they cannot get about 80% correct the text is too difficult. |
| Dictogloss A supported dictation | This is a listening and writing activity. The teacher chooses a short text on a topic that is familiar to the learners. (about 100 words for EAL beginners and intermediates) She reads the text aloud whilst learners listen. On the second and third readings learners may write notes. Next, pupils work in pairs and then fours to try to reconstruct the original text. | Learners hear a model text on a familiar topic. They collaborate to reconstruct complex sentences and scaffold each other's learning. |
| Sentence starters | The teacher prepares a topic-specific list of key sentence patterns for learners to use. An extended version of this technique, covering a complete text, would be a writing frame (see below) | This is best for beginner and developing EAL learners who are unsure of how to start writing. |
| Writing Frames | The writing frame is best used as genre-specific scaffold. The teacher usually provides key connectives and linking phrases. | Emerging EAL learners are supported to link together short simple sentences into complex sentences and paragraphs. |

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| Key Visuals or Graphic organisers | Key visuals are a type of graphic organiser. They are used to show the underlying structure of a text, for example a flow chart signifies a sequential text; a two way table can illustrate an argument for and against; or a tree diagram can classify scientific information. Teachers can either use the visual to help students make notes whilst reading about a topic or use the visual and notes as a plan and preparation for writing. | The use of visual organisers helps EAL learners see the underlying structure, form and purpose of key genres of English writing. | | | | | | | | | |
| ICT based tools (e.g. bilingual dictionaries and thesauruses) | Apart from use of book – based thesauruses and dictionaries, Microsoft Word can be used to great effect. Learners highlight and then right- click on a word and select 'synonyms' or definitions. A dialogue box will appear with other suggested words with a similar meaning. | Emerging and consolidating EAL pupils need to expand their vocabulary as fast as possible. Using a bilingual dictionary supports the transfer of learning from first language into English. | | | | | | | | | |
| Substitution tables | Teacher provides model sentences with various choices in a tabular form. Learners generate their own sentence following the set patterns. <table border="1" data-bbox="2041 919 2410 1033"> <tr> <td>Today</td> <td>is</td> <td>sunny</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Yesterday</td> <td>will be</td> <td>cloudy</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tomorrow</td> <td>was</td> <td>snowing</td> </tr> </table> | Today | is | sunny | Yesterday | will be | cloudy | Tomorrow | was | snowing | The technique enables EAL pupils to focus on form and write accurate grammatical sentences whilst also having some vocabulary and content choice. |
| Today | is | sunny | | | | | | | | | |
| Yesterday | will be | cloudy | | | | | | | | | |
| Tomorrow | was | snowing | | | | | | | | | |
| Peer Assessment strategies | When a first draft of a text has been written, learners swap their writing and read and comment on its effectiveness or mark work according to agreed success criteria. | It provides further opportunities to recycle and consolidate language and encourages real life communication with peers. | | | | | | | | | |
| Oral and written feedback on both content and language. | Teachers mark work with specific grammatical or linguistic foci. For example in a narrative text, requiring learners to have consistent use of the past tense, or in an argumentative text, to use a range of modal verbs. | The technique draws attention to the form and structure of texts. Can help EAL learners to realize what they have to do to reach higher levels in examinations and progress in their language learning. | | | | | | | | | |
| Visual approaches to identify how well assessment criteria have been met. | During class work, especially during the listening phase at the start of a lesson, the teacher asks learners to display coloured cards to show whether they have understood. Green signifies the student is confident, Amber, not sure and Red no understanding. (Also known as traffic light system) | EAL learners may be initially reluctant to ask for help. This gives them a less threatening way of signaling (in) comprehension. | | | | | | | | | |
| Self assessment checklists | Students mark a self assessment check sheet with •, X or O to show whether they have understood. | EAL learners may be initially reluctant to ask for help. This gives them a less threatening way of signaling comprehension. | | | | | | | | | |

Strategies listed in the glossary and other key EAL-friendly approaches are highlighted in bold in the EAL support panels.