

TEACHING CONSUMERISM TO E.S.L. (ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE) STUDENTS

*Dr. Morton Tener
Glassboro State College*

Many teachers who teach students with English as a second language, unfortunately, attempt to teach these students with standard materials paced more slowly, or use materials designed for slow learners, or utilize materials limiting the language experience to the natural language. The problem in many cases may not reside with the teacher but with the administrator and curriculum personnel. Teaching E.S.L. students requires an examination of three crucial areas: the teacher, materials, and teaching methodologies.

The teacher must be willing to teach E.S.L. students, must be given appropriate training and supervision, have available sufficient and proper materials, possess a reasonable competency in the student's native language, be able to utilize resource personnel appropriately, have sufficient planning time, and have administrative support.

Materials should be interesting, accurate, and relevant to the proper level of difficulty. Type should be clear and easy to read. Illustration and visuals should be plentiful. Information and translations to the natural language should be a part of every learning segment.

The curriculum and the teacher must provide for the integration of business concepts with E.S.L. learning activities. To meet these objectives, the teacher should prepare "home-made" materials in addition to presenting commercially prepared materials. While publishers have a broad based perspective, generally, they don't realize the special needs of individuals or particular groups of students.

The following are some language learning communication skill-building activities that can be utilized by business teachers.

Reading

A — Comprehension

1. Students read small portions of content and identify main ideas.
2. Students put main ideas together and form concepts.

B — Vocabulary

1. Students keep vocabulary list.
2. Students translate business terms into native language, additionally listing synonyms and antonyms.

Speaking

A — Large Group

1. Tell about personal consumer experiences in free conversation in large groups.
2. Verbal summarizing activities in large groups.

B — Small Group

1. Small group interaction as a follow-up with teacher or teacher aide as monitors.
2. Role play of a business situation.

Writing

A — Beginning

1. Students rewrite passages changing from one grammatical structure to another (singular to plural, present to past).
2. Students double check with each other after completion.

B — Conclusion

1. Teacher checks written work pointing out errors but does not correct.
2. Students review and make corrections.

Enrichment Activities

...Work puzzles, games.

...Visuals with student explanations.

...Write to a business specifying complaint or compliment.

...Mini-conversation — two students to tape a 10 minute conversation depicting a buy-sell situation, job interview, or product inquiry.

...Conversation week — a student to initiate and conduct a one-minute discussion on "what is new at the mall," "my part-time job," "my new hairstyle."

It is a good idea for the teacher to be the first presenter in all enrichment activities. It sets the stage and promotes confidence.

The following is an example of an E.S.L. mini-conversation:

Teacher: Jose, where did you get that nice belt?

Jose: I went to the mall with my parents. We got there early on Saturday so the belt would not be bought by someone else. I saw it Friday on my way home from school.

Teacher: Why did you go with your parents?

Jose: Because they wanted to see it and they had to pay for it.

Teacher: We're curious. Did you pay for it by cash, check, or on credit?

Jose: We paid for it by cash. Since my parents are not working and getting help from the government we do not have a checking account or like to buy things on credit.

Teacher: Is this your first experience at the mall?

Jose: No. I go there a lot just to look around.

Teacher: What other things did you see that you would like to buy?

Jose: Shirts, pants, and jewelry.

Teacher: In a few sentences give one main idea about a mall.

Jose: Well, there are a lot of stores that sell many things. It is a lot of fun just looking at all the things in the windows. You also don't have to worry about the weather since it is all inside.

In summary: (1) E.S.L. students do not need to be treated as low ability students. (2) Use proper pace in instruction. (3) Personalize content. (4) Concentrate on communication skills using the consumer experience as a base for content. (5) Teacher attitude must be positive.