Guidelines for English Language Learners

* Activities and materials should be age appropriate and geared to literacy levels.
* Some learners may be fluent in a language similar in structure to English; other learners may be used to a completely differently alphabet.
* Cultural expectations about teachers and education vary widely. What is important in one culture may seem unimportant in another.

Tips for Working w/ English Language Learners

* **Watch your language.** Speak simply and clearly. Use short, complete sentences in a normal tone of voice. Use actions and illustrations to reinforce oral statements. Visual aids, prompts, and facial expressions help to convey meaning. Avoid using slang or figures of speech; they often confuse learners.

* **Model correct usage.** When English language learners make a mistake or say something that sounds awkward, they are trying to apply what they know about their first language to English. Respect the struggle inherent in learning a new language.

* **Value the culture of the learner.** Start by asking your students to teach you about the language and customs of their country of origin. Then try learning a few words in their language.

* **Encourage conversation.** Meaningful interaction will speed progress. Activities like drama and sports create opportunities for students to interact with fellow students in meaningful ways. Tutoring sessions can take place anywhere - in a field, in the gym, in a park. Push back from your desks and move around.

* **Think of learning a new language as a process.** Have your students make and keep a language journal to track their efforts to use language in new ways.