

The barriers to learning for ESL students are:

1. Socio-cultural adjustment
2. Language
3. The expectations of the Australian educational culture

It is the third point here in particular where lecturers and tutors can support students.

Improving learning outcomes for ESL students leads to improving learning outcomes for all students

Learning Styles

- ✓ Differentiate for the students the place of rote learning and analytical thinking in your syllabus
- ✓ To encourage students to critically receive knowledge have some focus questions at the beginning of the class
- ✓ Identify the key concepts for students
- ✓ Be clear about what you want the students to do – summarise, identify, or argue
- ✓ Provide models for students, both spoken and written

General

- ✓ Make your expectations of learning explicit from the outset. Put them down in the course guide, but also go through them in the class
- ✓ Use culturally inclusive/sensitive language
- ✓ Speak clearly and always face the students when speaking
- ✓ Avoid colloquialisms and abbreviations
- ✓ Use outlines and simple overheads to outline your lecture
- ✓ Provide outlines for notes to be taken from
- ✓ Put up and explain the crucial vocabulary for the sessions – especially the technical jargon
- ✓ Ensure students can link the classes – so you may comment on where this class leads on from the last one/ end each class with a summary and a note on the next class

Teaching

- ✓ Explain/publish the modes of delivery and their purpose i.e. Lectures, labs, tutorials etc. and what is expected of the students in each of these
- ✓ Be specific about the use of texts – only 1 text or are students expected to make extensive use of the library
- ✓ What sort of texts are appropriate? Can students use only online materials or do they have to do some library research?
- ✓ Be explicit about the amount of time students are expected to work on their own outside formal classes and explain what you mean by independent learning
- ✓ Emphasise the role of problem-solving in their learning (students are often very confused about the term “critical”)

Role of Teacher & Role of Learner

- ✓ Be sensitive to cultural norms of these roles
- ✓ At the beginning of semester take time to create a supportive and interactive class by
 - Getting students to introduce themselves (not in a large group, but perhaps asking students to move around on a 1-1 basis or in small groups)
 - Putting students' names on the whiteboard so everyone can access them and thus use people's names in the class
- ✓ When using groups in the class, think about the different constructions – self selected or teacher directed?
- ✓ Make clear when you will be available for consultation.
- ✓ Make clear also the amount of reading/preparation expected for the class. Publish lists of essential reading/tasks and extension reading/tasks

Assessment

- ✓ Make clear links between course objectives, content and the assessment task –
- ✓ Publish and explain criteria for assessment tasks
- ✓ Give a clear written guide for referencing, including a rationale for referencing
- ✓ Use culturally inclusive scenarios
- ✓ Construct clear and direct questions, using appropriate and familiar language
- ✓ Set a short introductory task to assess English language competence
- ✓ Consider giving students the opportunity to resubmit an early task so they can take up and learn from your feedback

References

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Carroll, J. & Ryan, J. (2005) *Teaching International Students – Improving Learning for All* Oxon: Routledge **370.116 T253bgen**

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ENHANCING LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS FROM LANGUAGE BACKGROUNDS OTHER THAN ENGLISH

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