INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE NEEDS

There are two distinct cohorts of students who have an additional need relating to language:

→ Students for whom English is a second or additional language (EAL). These students will arrive with varying levels of English. They will typically need to 'catch up' with acquisition of academic standard language taking 7 – 10 years from first starting language learning.

→ Students for whom English is their first language but have an inherent difficulty with language acquisition, with a likely impact also on their literacy. Sometimes they will have been formally diagnosed as having a Speech and Language Difficulty / Speech Language Communication Need and/or Dyspraxia, Dyslexia.

The following strategies will be beneficial to both cohorts.

1. Try to place the student with students who can offer 'good models of language'.
2. On planning seating arrangements, try to pair the student with a responsible peer to repeat instructions and demonstrate tasks.
3. On planning a new topic, make a list of subject-specific words that will need to be actively taught. Each word will need to be taught and applied 3 – 5 times before it becomes known. A tally chart will help you teach words systematically.
4. Use starter activities for pre-tutoring subject-specific words. Always use visual prompts and place words within the context of a sentence.
5. Be aware that specific academic words such as **'compare', 'discuss', 'highlight', describe', 'explain', 'example', 'investigate', 'analyse'** will all require some modelling – otherwise the student is likely to interpret them generically as 'write' or 'talk about'.
6. Use a display board to show key vocabulary (with picture prompts) for a particular topic and regularly remind students that it's there.
7. Cue student into a change of topic of conversation/presentation – ask the students to stop what they are doing, allow for a silent pause / ensure eye contact and say *"Now we are going to talk about....."* For students who routinely struggle with understanding language, verbal communication can become akin to 'white noise' and they will appear to have concentration issues.
8. Begin work on a new topic with student's existing knowledge and experiences –

make a mind map or other visual representation of what they already know.

9. Use the student's name before asking a question or giving a direct instruction. With EAL students, please ensure you are pronouncing their name correctly.

10. Keep verbal instructions simple, and in the order you want them carried out. Be aware of how many 'information-carrying' words you are using: *"Get your **maths book** from the pile on **my desk**; on a **clean page, write** the **date** and **copy down** the **learning objective** and **make a start** on the **calculations at the bottom of the boar."** has more information-carrying words than many articulate students will be unable to remember.

11. Try to adopt a 'show and tell' approach to instructions. Rather than just saying the instruction, show the student what they should be doing by working through an example.

12. Give student time (at least 10 seconds) to respond to a question or instruction and then, if necessary, repeat what you said. Say the same words unless you think the vocabulary was too difficult to understand.

13. Break activity instructions down into steps rather than giving them as a whole. Give each part of the instruction before the step, allow time for the students to work on it – with support when necessary, then provide the next instruction.

14. Check for understanding by asking the student to *show and tell* you what they have to do.

15. Agree a private signal that the student can use to show you when they have not understood. This can be as simple and as discreet as putting a coloured pen on their desk.

16. Be aware of the length of teacher-talk. Support teacher-talk slots with pictures, real objects or mime.

17. Create visual summaries of discussions as you go - mind mapping, flow charts, diagrams, comic-strip format.

18. Give the student time to think, or talk to a partner before answering a question, or say *"I'm going to come back to you in a minute to ask you about -----. But first I'm going to ask Y a question."*

19. If the student can't answer a question, scaffold/support till they can rather offering the answer or saying "Can anyone help x?" Elicit responses by offering sentence

starters such as *"This shows that…"* or *"I have found that…"*

20. Use a hierarchy of questions – start with an open question *("What do you think might happen next?")*, then if support is needed frame the question as alternatives *("Do you think x or y?")*.

21. If you cannot understand what the student has said, do not pretend that you have – ask for repetition in different words.

22. During whole class discussion, accept student's mispronounced speech but repeat / rephrase in a phonetically and grammatically correct version. This is known as *recasting*. i.e. *"It is in the front."* → *"Yes, it is on the front."*

23. During 1-1 discussion, try to encourage the student to correct their own mispronounced speech by asking them, *"Can you say that again slower?" "Are you sure you saw the word _____ like that?"* This is known as *repairing.*

24. Support oral work with sentence starters (*"First...next...finally", "I think... but on the other hand", "I think… because…" "Similarities I have found are… Differences I have found are…"*).

25. Support writing with writing frames and lists of vocabulary to choose from.

26. Provide with glossaries of commonly used and subject specific vocabulary that they can take away and use.

27. Allow extra time to complete all tasks and be aware of the fatigue that the student may experience because of the amount of extra effort that they have to put into processing language.