

Presenter Tips – English Language Learner Classes

Thank you for coming to share information with the Hubbs Center’s students. We are happy to have you come. Below are tips to help you give a successful presentation with students whose first language is not English. The more *ways* you present the info, the better – speak, write, show... and *involve* the learners actively with the content.

Less is More

Set 2-3 learning goals, in other words, what are 2-3 key points that you want students to understand clearly? A presentation is most successful when it does *not* overload students with information.

EXAMPLE: Learners will be able to explain at least three services offered by the organization.

Write it Down

Use large print, few words and include key points on a PowerPoint or write them on the board. Give students a summary sheet that lists these key points as a helpful “take-away”.

Keep it Slow and Simple

ELL students will have varying levels of proficiency, so speaking at a slower rate, speaking clearly and simplifying language will help with understanding.

EXAMPLE: Instead of “Let’s get a show of hands,” use “Raise your hand.” Instead of using “cardiovascular disease,” use “heart disease.”

Check for Comprehension

After speaking for five minutes, ask specific questions about what you just presented to make sure students really understood what you shared with them.

EXAMPLE: What are things that you need to bring with you to a tax preparer?

Also, give time for student questions at the middle and end of the presentation.

Use visuals and props

Demonstration is especially helpful for English language learners because they may not understand all the information through words alone.

EXAMPLE: If you are doing a presentation about heart disease, bring a model heart.

Make it Active

Including one or more activities related to the materials you are presenting will make for an engaging experience and will optimize student learning.

EXAMPLE: Students get into small groups and are given a list of 10 beverages. They must list the beverages from those containing the most to those containing the least amount of sugar.

EXAMPLE: Divide class into teams and play a simple “Jeopardy” game using information from your presentation.

EXAMPLE: Give a warm-up and mid-presentation question that students discuss in pairs.

Collaborate

Expect to collaborate with the classroom teacher, so that the teacher can help ensure that students understand the presentation. Your collaborating teacher may write new words on the board, clarify points or assist in other ways during the presentation. You may want to confer with the classroom teacher prior to visiting to get oriented to the language level of the class and to share some things the teacher could “pre-teach” (e.g., vocabulary) before you come.

Assess

You may wish to have simple pre- and post- assessment sheets to identify what students already know at the beginning of the presentation and what they've learned by the end of the presentation. These would focus on the 2-3 key learning goals for the presentation.

Get Trained

If you plan to present regularly to audiences whose first language is not English, you can get training through the Minnesota Literacy Council (MLC). See www.mnliteracy.org/volunteers/training.

(Adapted from a document prepared by ELL instructors at Hubbs Center, St. Paul ABE, 2014)