
Using L1s in the young learner classroom

Webinar handout

by **Adrienn Szlapak**

Pedagogical frameworks that embrace the use of L1

- Culturally sustaining pedagogies (Paris, 2012) promote equity and ensure that learners' identities are respected
- Pedagogical translanguaging (Oliveira and Jones, 2023) - leveraging the learners' full linguistic repertoire to learn a new language.
- Functional approaches to language development (Clements and Szlapak, 2024) - language as a tool for communication

Translanguaging

This approach helps in creating a space for learners' L1s, making them feel included and valued. Translanguaging also acts as a scaffold for accessing learning content and supports language development.

Incorporating L1s

1. Brainstorming: a complex cognitive process that helps learners engage with the topic.
 - Set the context: Provide a prompt (picture, quote, question) to establish the context.
 - Give clear instructions: Ensure that learners know what is expected and how much time they have. Clarify that L1s can be used during the brainstorming but feedback will be in English.
 - Monitor students carefully: Provide language support if needed and encourage learners to support each other. Note down emergent language to feed back later.
 - Ask learners to share their ideas: Learners share their group's ideas in English. Put posters up around the room or list all ideas on the board for everyone's reference.
2. Flipped classroom: A lesson framework that gives learners that gives learners access to the materials you would like them to engage with before the lesson itself.

-
- Provide access to materials ahead of time. For instance, learners watch a video before the lesson.
 - Provide prompts to help learners focus on the most important aspects. For example, set comprehension questions or ask them to summarise certain parts of the video.
 - Use L1 support at home: They could ask their parents for help, use Google Translate or dictionaries, take notes and answer the comprehension questions in their L1s.
 - Acknowledge all contributions regardless of the language used to show that their home languages are valued.
3. Bilingual glossaries: Encourage learners to keep handwritten records to use technology such as Quizlet.com. Learner training and consistency are keys to success.
 4. Drafting written work in L1 lets learners engage with the topic more meaningfully before processing the language.
 - Set expectations: Ask learners to write the first draft in their L1s at home or in class. Clarify that the final draft will need to be in English.
 - Provide language support: Give them time to identify language they will need to look up and allow L1 discussion or use of a dictionary or access to AI tools.
 - Set clear success criteria: Provide a checklist and ask learners to assess their drafts. Learners should write the final draft in class with teacher support the first few drafts.

Set the rules around language use

It's important to establish when and how L1s can be used in the classroom. The output must be in English so that everyone understands all the ideas. Some tips are to always explain what form of language support is allowed, e.g. dictionaries/ online translators, to acknowledge all contributions, regardless of the language they are in, and keep it positive. We must avoid making learners feel that speaking their mother tongues is wrong.

References

- Clements, P. & Szlapak, A. (2024). *Supporting EAL Learners: Strategies for Inclusion*. DELTA Publishing
- De Oliveira, L. C., & Jones, L. (2023). *Teaching Young Multilingual Learners: Key Issues and New Insights*. Cambridge University Press
- Paris, D. (2012). *Culturally sustaining pedagogy: A needed change in stance, terminology, and practice*. In *Educational researcher*, (Vol. 41(3), pp. 93-97)

A recording of Adrienn Szlapak's webinar can be watched here:

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/webinars/webinars-teachers/valuing-multilingualism-mini-event>