



English Language Learners at Museum School

One thing some of you asked for this year, was help supporting your English language learning students document their learning, and be successful at Glenbow. We've been working with a few concepts for a while, testing some new ones out, and asking our colleagues, and here's what we've learned that might help you:

Keep us in the loop

If you are working with ELL's, give us a heads up. We can work together to come up with some goals for that student, and some tools we can use throughout the week. We have incredible access to visuals that we can use with a bit of extra planning.

Practice thinking routines

Everyone should have a thinking routine or two that they're comfortable with before they come. You may make some accommodations to the primary ones you use for your ELL's. Having a rubric or visual guide for your thinking routine definitely helps uptake for ELLs (make your own, or download one).

Bring your regular routines here

If you have regular routines around things like starting your day, changing focus, lunch and snacks, or going outside, use them with Museum School too. Your facilitator is your co-teacher, so if they suggest a routine, always feel free to step in and let them know of one you're working with that might work better. You may not be able to bring all your routines into Museum School, but if you use a special chime, or chart, or tool – feel free to incorporate them into your experience with us. If you have a particular way of getting students attention, let us know and we'll use yours. We have ways we do things at Museum School, but we're

always willing to adapt and use ways that best suit your class.

“Teach Hub” recommends learning to Stop & Think... (the following is from their website)

Teach the “Stop and Think” strategy to help students evaluate their own learning. If you observe a student having difficulty in class, ask them to stop their work and think about the following questions: What am I struggling with? What can I do differently? What questions do I have? Who can help me answer those questions?

The crux here is, making an environment in your classroom where students know they can and should ask for help if they’re struggling. This is a tough one for sure (isn’t it “neat” how kids deflect when they’re struggling?), but can become part of your overall classroom atmosphere.

Do some practice sketching

Have students work with object sketching throughout your year. Your object doesn’t have to be something exotic (although exotic is easier to find than we think sometimes - my young folks have asked more than once how those “big CD thingies” work, and I dust off the record player for their amazement). It’s just helpful if everyone knows that when you ask them to sketch, you’re asking them to notice detail, take time, and capture the object.

Prepare everyone to use labels

Adding simple labels might also be a good beginning step for ELL’s, and it’s worthwhile for everyone to start something like a “word bank” in your classroom. Before a word goes up on the wall, make sure everyone knows what it means (“rough” is accompanied by feeling several rough objects etc.) If the gap between the ELL student and the other students is really big, have everyone make presentations for each word. Ask them to imagine teaching their word to someone who doesn’t know what it means. This activity can also be a reminder that part of your year-long inquiry is “slow learning” – really taking the time to explore ideas and concepts.