**Teaching ELL: Classroom Setup Strategies**

Making your classroom ELL friendly will keep your EO students on track, too. A good classroom setup saves you time by making resources and supplies readily available for you and your students. For example, students can be more responsible for working independently when a map or word wall is right in front of them and easily accessible. Students are more comfortable when asked to write or illustrate when pencils, crayons, and other materials are within reach. A well-planned classroom setup makes the space more inviting and efficient for everyone.

* When placing tables and desks, think about creating spaces that can be used for various setups: partner work and small or large groups. Can desks be moved aside or grouped easily?
* Follow a daily routine and post your schedule using graphics or a rebus format if possible. When students know what to expect of their day, they are more comfortable.
* Frequently, one of the first things ELLs learn is the day on which they have a special class like gym or music. All students seem to like knowing what time they have lunch or recess!
* Place responsibility for learning on the students. Keeping supplies, math manipulative materials, and reference books within reach of the students enables them to access what they need on their own.
* Set up your classroom with word walls that have pictures or real objects (realia) Display rebus charts to provide pictorial cues along with word cues.
* Use graphics such as maps, photographs, and other visual displays as much as possible.
* Have plenty of chart paper on hand for recording strategies, word banks, and other class-generated ideas. Having more than one pad or stand accessible is helpful too. Keep a stand placed where large group instruction occurs and one placed for small-group instruction.
* Gather materials that can be used for hands-on learning, such as math manipulative materials, sensory learning materials (e.g., sandpaper letters), maps, and graphs.
* Set up a classroom library that includes a listening center with books on tape and earphones. Children love to listen to a story. ELLs can listen to a book on tape that they are not yet ready to read on their own. I find that my ELLs especially love to listen to song books and you may hear them singing along.