Chapter 12
Some Practical Tips for Schools with NESB Students
CHAPTER 12: SOME PRACTICAL TIPS FOR SCHOOLS WITH NESB STUDENTS
Suggested Tips for Other Schools

The following tips are derived from suggestions made by participants in the study.

☺ Have a formal statement in the school charter regarding the school’s commitment to addressing NESB students’ needs which the entire staff and board of trustees of the school have been involved in formulating.

☺ Have staff — and preferably all staff — participate in a professional development contract for assisting NESB students.

☺ Make use of the expertise of staff in such agencies as the teacher advisory or support services, the Correspondence School, the Pacific Islands and Multicultural Resource Centres, and The Refugee and Migrant Service.

☺ Appoint a teacher (or preferably, especially in schools with large numbers of NESB students, two or more teachers) to the role of ESOL coordinator/teacher within the school.

☺ When NESB students are in an out-of-class support (withdrawal) situation, have the ESOL coordinator or other person working with them cover (for at least part of the time) the same topics being studied in the class from which the students have been ‘withdrawn’; this helps these students keep close links with their classmates in the regular classroom and facilitates their understanding of the material that their peers are also studying.

☺ Know there is an ever-increasing number of excellent resources available (see the following chapter, for example, on where to obtain resources).

☺ Set aside a place in the school for ESOL resource materials (books, etc) so as to improve ease of access to resources and to lessen the possibility of anyone who should know being unaware that useful resources are available.

“We are key teachers [in the school] because we were on the [professional development] contract [for assisting NESB students]. We have made resources that other teachers can use. In fact, what we are doing right now is setting up an ESOL resource centre in the school where there are bags of resources so you can go in and you can think, ‘OK, I am going to study Antarctica with my class’, and there will be a bag of Antarctica resources provided. So other staff are going to be provided with some [readily available] resources [when we have that organised]. … Prior to this, teachers have been doing things of their own accord [ie, each making their own resources]. If you have worked with NESB kids for years, you know that whatever you are starting, you’ve got your major unit and then you’ve got to provide another one for these [NESB] children as well. It does create an immense amount of extra work for which in the past we had no support. But it will be good once we get everything set up.” [Two classroom teachers, intermediate school.]
Enlist help from people in the community where possible (eg, as interpreters, liaison between home and school).

Encourage parents/caregivers of NESB (and all) students to feel at home in the school before seeking to enlist their help. In order to give them confidence and feel more at ease, clearly define for parents/caregivers how and in what ways they can help both within and outside the classroom.

Consider the possibility of providing (language) support for parents/other adults in NESB students’ families.

Help students already in the school understand the circumstances of NESB students as much as possible (eg, by studying the countries from which the NESB students have come) to facilitate the integration of NESB students; also ensure that NESB students are introduced on entry to the school to such things as rules and regulations, where and how to buy lunch, how to find their classrooms, etc, as well as being introduced to New Zealand customs, and ways of interacting or behaving in various situations.

Use peer tutoring (both on a one-to-one basis and/or in small group situations) as a teaching strategy, as, used judiciously, this can have important benefits for both tutor and tutored.

Support each other as teachers in working with NESB students by sharing ideas and experiences; ensure that the organisation of the school facilitates positive and effective networks of support.

Ensure that all classroom teachers are well briefed about incoming NESB students — that is, ensure that they have as much information as possible about each student’s ability, achievement, background before the students arrive in the classroom.

Share resources with other schools in your area and with other teachers within your own school; develop support networks with other schools. Participants in the study commented that those who run professional development contracts for assisting NESB students in Auckland (for example) like several schools in an area to take part in a contract at the same time so that they can support one another:

“If they [the contract organisers] have dealings with a whole range of schools [primary, intermediate, secondary] within the same area, the ideas are likely to be more effective, being carried through at different levels. You can share resources, you know what’s happening in those schools, you’re more supportive of each other. That’s part of the contract, setting up support groups in the area.” [ESOL coordinator, intermediate school.]"