

GETTING STARTED WITH FORMER NAMS! TIPS AND INSPIRATION

In educational systems where there is a split between the 'arrival' period (e.g. in Belgium, where students from 12 years and older are put in a one-year reception class) and the so-called mainstream secondary schools, newly arrived migrant students (or NAMS) make an intense transition. As a teacher in a mainstream school, do you have former NAMS in your classroom? And are you looking for ways to help these students in the best way possible? If so, you will find useful tips in this document!

This document was compiled by the Ghent Follow-up Team, a cross-network collaboration between NAM schools from Ghent and the surrounding region.

General tips

Try to **visualise** as much as possible: use pictures, gestures or other forms of non-verbal communication, work with diagrams and presentations,...

Try to speak **more slowly** and **repeat** a lot (if possible in different words).

Encourage the pupil to **ask questions**, and regularly check whether the pupil has **understood** everything correctly by asking him/her to repeat the assignment or instruction in his/her own words.

Give assignments or longer texts **in advance**.

Highlight **keywords** in the text or support the students in doing so (possibly with the help of a dictionary).

Make sure students have **correct and complete notes**, especially in the run-up to tests or exams.

Write on the board what should be in the diary and notes.

Allow the student to take a **picture** of the **board schedule** at the end of the lesson.

Give alternative **reading assignments** (e.g. comic strips, books in simpler language).

Let the student use a **step-by-step plan, glossary or help card** during the lesson and in tests and exams.

Help the learner **structure** the learning material.

Provide **speaking and writing frames** for learners.

Use **pre-reading software** to make learners listen to (longer) texts.

If the pupil uses incorrect sentence structure or makes a language mistake, **repeat** the answer **in a correct sentence**.

Make clear **arrangements** with the student. Point out the student's **responsibilities** (e.g. make up for missed lessons, respond to opportunities for remediation, go to homework class, sit at the front of the class, etc.).

WELLBEING AND SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Recognise how **complex** the path is for many students and how different their home situation may be. **Be patient**.

Avoid tests in the first few weeks.

Do not draw too much attention to these students. Give them a chance to **integrate** into the group.

In the initial period, do not ask the pupil to **speak in front** of the class or **read aloud**.

Work with **buddies**: pair these new students with other students.

Agree upon a **discreet sign** that students can use to indicate that help is needed (e.g. by putting an eraser on the corner of the bench or through colour cards).

Give **positive feedback**. Place particular emphasis on what the learner can already do well, rather than (only) on what is not yet successful.

Give the student a **fixed place** in the classroom, close to both the teacher and the board.

EVALUATION

Evaluate the learning **process** and the learning **gains**. Do not try to evaluate purely in terms of the final curriculum objectives.

Give **clear instructions**. Work with separate **subquestions** on tests and exams and highlight **important words**.

Provide **structure** in the answer space.

Give the student an **alternative task** for a subject (e.g. discuss an important historical figure or a particular event).

Read test or exam questions **out loud**, and offer the student the possibility to ask for clarification.

Give **pre-printed tests**.

Give the learner **more time** during tests and exams.

During exams, let the learner explain their answer **orally**, and give the learner a chance to ask **additional questions**.

Let the student use a (digital) **dictionary** during tests and exams.

Provide a **glossary** with important specialist terms and let the student use it during (part of) tests and exams.

Do not deduct points for spelling and grammatical mistakes, or provide a certain percentage of the total score for them.

FLEXIBLE PATHWAY

As a school, you can set up flexible pathways for NAMS that have followed the one-year reception class. Often there is plenty of room to do so, provided that the offering of flexible pathways is mentioned in the school regulations. For instance, you can exempt students for a certain (part of a) subject. Below are a few possibilities.

Give the student **time off** for a **non-finality subject**, and use the time to work on language comprehension and language skills.

Give the student **time off** for **certain subject areas** that are less relevant for the later (educational) career. Let the student use time to look up unknown words, process learning material or prepare the next lesson.

Let the student follow lessons in a **lower or higher grade**.