The background features a central silhouette of a person holding a book, surrounded by various educational symbols like papers, books, and letters (A, B, C, G, a).

**The International TEFL Corporation**

# **An Introduction to TEFL**

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# Teachers and Learners

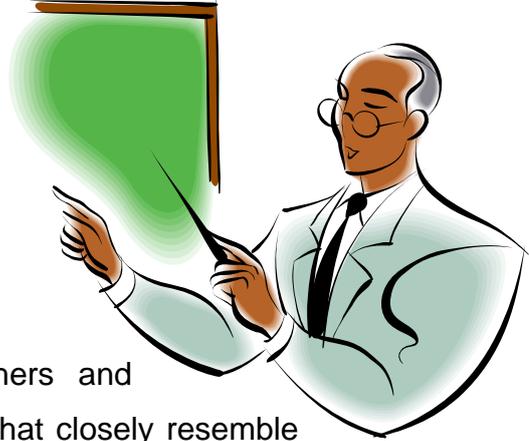
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We will start by examining the qualities, roles and responsibilities of both teachers and students in the classroom.

## Teachers

### *What makes a good teacher?*

Ask this question to a number of teachers and students and you are likely to get answers that closely resemble the following:



- A good teacher should be kind and patient.
- A good teacher should really love teaching.
- A good teacher should be lively and entertaining.
- A good teacher is able to motivate learners.
- A good teacher has a good knowledge of his/her subject.
- A good teacher should have good rapport and interaction with the class.
- A good teacher should be able to involve all students equally throughout the lesson.
- A good teacher should be able to correct students without offending them or affecting their motivation.
- A good teacher should know students' weaknesses and try to give help and individual attention where necessary.

We can see that the first four examples above are concerning a teacher's personality, whereas examples five to eight are more of a reflection on the relationship between the teacher and the students.

So, what exactly does make a good teacher? A simple answer may be, a teacher that really cares about his/her teaching, but cares even more about the learning of the students.

### **The role of the teacher**

In recent years there has been more emphasis upon 'student-centred' lessons, as opposed to 'teacher-centred'. The reality is that some stages of a lesson will be more centred on the teacher and others will be very much more centred on the students. This will largely be dictated by the type of activity concerned. If we are able to make these changes appropriately our effectiveness as teachers will be greatly enhanced.

During a typical lesson a teacher will have some, or all, of the following roles:

#### ***Manager or Controller***

When teachers take on the role of a controller, they are effectively in charge of the class and of the activity in a way that is quite different from an activity where the students are working on their own, in pairs or as part of a group. The teacher would normally be standing at the front of the class giving explanations, reading aloud etc. Many very charismatic teachers are very comfortable with this approach as they feel that they are able to inspire the students. Many other teachers are not as comfortable with such a role as it places all the attention on the teacher and detracts from the students' own experiences.

Of course, as with other roles, the teacher as a controller has its place in the classroom but certainly shouldn't be overused.

### ***Organizer***

This role is one of the most important, as teachers very frequently find themselves having to organize students to do various activities. Often this will involve giving instructions, organizing students into groups/pairs, initiating activities, bringing activities to a close and organizing feedback.

It is extremely important that teachers are comfortable in this role, as chaos could be caused if students are not aware of the task, or how the groups are supposed to function.

### ***Assessor***

Students are usually very keen to find out whether or not they are producing correct English and this is where the teacher will need to act as an assessor, giving feedback and correction as well as evaluating and grading.

It is vitally important in this role that the teacher is fair and consistent with all the students as well as being very sensitive to the students' reactions and providing necessary support.

### ***Prompter***

There are times when students will lose the thread of what they are trying to say or become stuck for ideas. When this happens the teacher needs to decide what to do about it. Should the teacher allow the student to work it out for him/herself? Or should the teacher gently encourage the student along? If you choose the second option you are, in effect, acting as a prompter.

When prompting we want to help, but we have to be careful not to take the initiative away from the student. Therefore a great deal of sensitivity and encouragement is required.

At times we may also find ourselves prompting the students to use English and not their native language!

### ***Participant***

At certain stages of the lesson the teacher may wish to participate in the lesson as an equal, not as the teacher. There can be a number of reasons for this such as being able to liven activities up from the inside of the group as opposed to prompting from outside the group, or evening the number of students for pair work activities in classes with an uneven number of participants.

When participating it is important for the teacher not to dominate the activity or focus attention upon him/herself.

### ***Tutor***

Tutoring implies a more personal role for the teacher. This role will often be employed when students are working individually and need some guidance and support or when they are working in pairs and we stop briefly to give encouragement.

Again, care needs to be taken to ensure the teacher gives equal attention to all students and to avoid intruding too much.

### ***Resource or Facilitator***

The teacher devises activities that allow the students simply to get on with the process of learning a language for themselves.

There are many occasions when the teacher will wish to withdraw completely from the activity and leave the students to participate in tasks without any interruption or interference. The teacher still needs, however, to be available as a resource in case the students require any assistance or guidance.

When acting as a resource we want to be helpful and available but we have to resist the temptation to spoon-feed.

### ***Model***

The teacher, and particularly a native-speaker of English, is often the only source of real, live English the student has ever encountered. The teacher is the fount of all knowledge on English grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation, and in these areas they have particular responsibility and authority in the eyes of the learner. Many adult learners particularly want to benefit from the speech or pronunciation model that the teacher offers.

### ***Observer or Monitor***

Often during the course of a lesson the teacher will wish to monitor what is going on in the classroom. This can give the teacher information as to how long an activity is likely to take and how successful it has been. During oral communicative activities the teacher may also want to make notes for correction or praise at a later stage.

While observing it is important that the teacher generally maintains a distance from the students so as to not distract them from the activity that they are involved in, but there are occasions when the teacher may also need to move in a little, to hear spoken work or to look at writing in progress, in order to monitor effectively.

### ***Which role and when?***

The role that we employ is largely going to depend on the type of activity and what we wish the students to achieve. Some stages of a lesson will require that the teacher is more dominating or leading, while others will require a more withdrawn role. It is important that the teacher is able to switch between these roles appropriately and is aware of how to carry out the required role.

As well as having the attributes of a 'good teacher' and knowing which role to take and when, an experienced teacher will know how to involve and engage the students, how to effectively use mime, gesture and his/her voice. These are all areas that were dealt with in the unit on classroom management.

# Learners

## *What makes a good learner?*



When looking at learners of English we have to consider a number of factors, such as age, culture, language level and motivation for learning. Any of these factors could have a bearing on what we perceive to be a 'good learner'. However, there are a number of general characteristics that successful students appear to possess. These can include:

- A willingness to listen to the language.
- A desire to experiment with the language.
- A willingness to ask questions.
- An ability to think about their own learning process and methods.
- An acceptance of error correction.
- A desire to learn.

These are all qualities that successful learners usually have and it is the teacher's responsibility to encourage and foster these attributes in the classroom.

## **Age**

Young learners or adults? It is important to define the difference between young learners and adults. Generally, *adults* is taken to mean those who are 18 years of age or more, and the term is fairly self-explanatory.

However, there are at least three categories of young learner.

First (and possibly the most difficult) is the post puberty or early teen age learner i.e 13-plus, who is often unmotivated, self conscious and unwilling to take risks or experiment with language.

Second is the pre-puberty learner, corresponding to primary school or 8 to 12 years old, who are usually more receptive to the new sounds, words and grammar of a foreign language.

Finally, the very young learners, who are often pre-schoolers aged 7 years and less. These are becoming an increasingly bigger market the world over. They have shorter attention spans, and in the case of the very young ones have not even completely mastered the grammar of their mother tongue, but all are generally amenable to fun games, singing, drawing, etc.

**Learning experience** – Adults will usually come into a classroom for the first time with a long history of learning experience. They will usually have gone through a number of years schooling, as well as other courses. These learning experiences (both good and bad) will often cause them to have a fixed view of how teaching should be carried out. Adults also come with their own history of success and failure, which can influence their belief that they can succeed with the language.

Young learners, on the other hand, have also probably had some prior learning experience but it is unlikely that their views are as fixed and they are more likely to have an open-minded approach to new learning experiences and methods.

**Motivation** – Adult learners will usually have made their own decision to attend classes and as such will usually be quite motivated. Younger learners, however, have rarely made that decision for themselves and may be somewhat lacking in motivation. A caring teacher will help build and encourage motivation by making classes varied and interesting.

**Nervousness** – Adults are often more nervous about a new learning experience than younger learners. ‘Loss of face’ and anxiety about success are major factors here. It is important for the teacher to be gentle and encouraging while helping build confidence.

**Language awareness** – Adults usually want to be able to match new language to their native language and this can sometimes lead to problems. Younger learners are far more likely to be able to absorb language from context and usage in much the same way as they acquired their own language.

**Behaviour problems** – Adults have a greater attention span than younger learners and as a result present fewer problems for the teacher regarding behaviour and discipline. Discipline in the classroom will be dealt with in detail in unit 3.

**Life experience** – Adults naturally have more life experience to bring in the classroom and this can make the lessons more varied and interesting. It is also usually easier for a teacher to build rapport and have interesting discussions with adult students of a similar age.

### ***Culture and first language***

Different cultures have different approaches to learning. Students from certain Asian countries, for example, are often noted as being very serious about their learning and respectful to their teachers but sometimes lacking in creativity and willingness to communicate. The problem possibly stems from the fact that in these areas, the teacher is often still expected to do all the talking and the students are encouraged not to speak in class unless addressed directly by the teacher. In some schools TEFL teachers are sometimes frowned upon and some classes considered unruly because of the noise. (Inevitable and necessary when there is choral work or pair and group work!) Conversely, the popular opinion of Latin American students is the exact opposite. Students from different linguistic groups are likely to have very different problems with the English language. Good teachers should be aware of their students’ customs and differences that could affect the success of the classes.

### ***Language level***

Distinctions between different levels of ability in the English language clearly have to be made. The most common breakdown is as follows:

**Beginners** – From zero knowledge of English to a very basic knowledge of English which cannot be quickly or easily activated.

**Elementary** – Students at this level are likely to be able to form basic sentence structures and communicate on simple topics.

**Low/pre-intermediate** – Able to communicate and understand a greater variety of topics but lacking general fluency and depth of language awareness. Still likely to make many errors even with basic structures.

**Intermediate** – Able to understand and communicate on a wide range of issues using limited vocabulary store but still lacking in accuracy and fluency.

**Upper Intermediate** – Should be able to actively communicate on almost all topics using a greater range of language but still lacking in accuracy.

**Advanced** – Students should have a very good knowledge of the English language and now will be studying more subtle language items.

It should be noted that while the above terms are the most commonly used their actual meanings can differ considerably depending on where you work and which textbook you may be using, an elementary student in one country could be viewed as intermediate in a different country!

The Common European Framework recently established by the Council of Europe state the following 6 levels, which broadly equate to the levels listed previously:

- Breakthrough, Basic User A1
- Waystage, Basic User, A2
- Threshold, Independent User, B1
- Vantage, Independent User, B2
- Effective Operational Proficiency, Proficient User, C1
- Mastery, Proficient User, C2

Teachers often have their own favourite levels. With lower levels success is easy to see and usually good fun. It may be a bit restricting, however, for the teacher due to difficulties the students have in communicating in English. Students at this level are not likely to ask too many complicated grammar questions and the teaching is mainly visual.

Mid-level students have already achieved a lot and success can be difficult to measure. To get to this level, students are usually motivated and the teacher is able to communicate with the students on a greater range of topics. Ingrained mistakes at this level can be difficult to iron out.

Higher level students already know a lot of English and are usually highly motivated. The danger is that they can sometimes feel that they have reached a plateau and fail to see progress. At this level the teacher needs to encourage students to take more and more responsibility for their own language learning.

Obviously our teaching and the complexity/speed at which we speak to our students will largely be determined by the level of the students in front of us. Many activities can be adapted to more than one level, but there are some which are patently more suited to one level. It would be rather pointless and possibly patronising to give an advanced student very basic material. Likewise there is no sense in giving beginners activities which are they have no hope of comprehending or completing!

## ***Motivation***

There are many reasons why students may have decided to attend your English class. Adult students will usually have made that decision themselves and so will have some degree of motivation. Some of the most common reasons for attending English classes are:

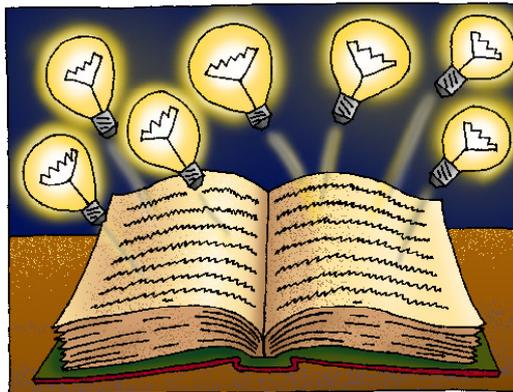
- For future career prospects.
- For travel purposes.
- To improve grades at school/achieve success in exams.
- To study or live in an English speaking country.
- To communicate with colleagues/friends/partners.
- Out of interest in languages.

Whatever the reason a motivated student has a greater chance of success than a student without motivation. The teacher has to ensure that lessons are enjoyable, interesting, varied and useful in order to maintain or build that motivation.

## ***In conclusion***

As can be seen from the above, the relationship between learners and teachers is a very important and complex issue. An enthusiastic, sensitive, motivated and caring teacher is much more likely to have successful students who enjoy their learning and continue attending classes. As a result we can say that a 'good teacher' will most likely have 'good students'!

Where you can, make reference to your own experiences as a learner and/or teacher, or to the experience of others whom you may have observed.



# EFL methodology

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Learners of English who have the opportunity to live in an English speaking environment while studying have a huge advantage. They are surrounded by the language continuously and are able to put acquired language into practice in everyday, realistic situations. However, the majority of English learners are living in their native countries, where English is not the first language and as a result do not have these benefits. Many of these students may have the opportunity to use English at work, with their friends or in some other practical way where they are able to use their English on a fairly regular basis. Many other learners of English are not so fortunate and their only contact with the language may be daily, twice weekly or weekly English classes at school or at a private language institute. As a result these students do not get the same exposure to the language and opportunity to put it into practice.



As children we all learnt our native language without the aid of language teachers and course books. We simply absorbed the language around us, processed it and through trial and error formulated internal ideas and rules to allow us to be able to use the language fluently and accurately. This 'natural language acquisition' is impossible to replicate in the classroom but many of the most popular methodologies in EFL teaching today do try to imitate it as far as is practical.

For as long as people have been learning and teaching language, there has been continual, and often heated, debate as to which methods and techniques produce the best results. The most common of these, along with a brief description, are listed on the following page.

### ***Grammar – translation***

This was probably the mainstay of language teaching and learning for hundreds of years, and indeed is still practised in many situations. Many of us will have been exposed to this system of learning in the state school sector. The basic principle of this system is, as its name suggests, learning about a language through finding equivalents in the students' own language and the foreign language being learned. It is, in effect, a system of translation.

The major drawback with grammar-translation is that it seems to prevent the students from getting the kind of natural language input that will really help them acquire the language. The danger therefore, is that students will learn about the language rather than learning the language itself. This methodology also requires the teacher to be proficient in the students' native language.

### ***Audio – lingualism***

This is the name given to a language teaching/learning methodology based upon behaviourist theories of learning. This theory basically suggests that much learning is as a result of habit formation through conditioning. Audio – lingualism concentrates therefore, to a large degree, on long repetition-drills, in which the students would be conditioned into using the language correctly.

Audio – lingualism largely went out of fashion because most linguists believed that language learning consisted of more than merely forming habits and that speakers of a language are able to process language more effectively from the knowledge they have acquired. However, it is useful to note that language drills are still popular (though in a much more limited way) especially for low-level students.

### ***Presentation, Practice and Production***

In this method teachers first present the context and situation for the language, as well as explaining and demonstrating the meaning and form of the new language. The students then practice making sentences with the language in a controlled way (including drilling) before going on to the production stage where they are able to be more creative with the language.

PPP has proved to be extremely effective in teaching simple language at lower levels. It is less effective with higher level students who already know a lot of language, and therefore do not need such a marked production stage. Many teacher training centres (and teachers) still use PPP today. The system

does, however, lack a good deal in flexibility and it is easy for the lessons to become too 'teacher-centred'.

### ***Task-Based Learning***

In this method the focus is more on a task than the language. Students are given a task to complete (while using the English language). When they have completed the task, the teacher can, if necessary – and only if necessary – provide some language study to help clear up some of the problems they had while doing the task.

### ***Communicative Language Teaching***

The communicative approach stresses the importance of language functions (such as agreeing, inviting, suggesting, etc) as opposed to reliance only on grammar and vocabulary. This approach also suggests that if students have enough exposure to the language and opportunity to use it then language learning would, in effect, take care of itself. Activities in CLT typically require students to use the language in real life situations, so role-play and simulation have become popular with this method. CLT places far more emphasis on completion of the task than the accuracy of the language.

### ***Community Language Learning***

In CLL students will typically sit in a circle and it is up to them to decide what they want to talk about. The teacher (standing outside the circle) will help, as and when necessary, with language problems that arise during the course of the discussion. This methodology has helped teachers focus on the need to make the lessons as 'student-centred' as possible by allowing the students to choose the topic and language.

### ***The silent way***

The most notable feature of the silent way is the behaviour of the teacher – who says as little as possible. This is because it was believed that if the students had to 'discover' the language for themselves, learning will be better facilitated rather than just remembering and repeating what had been taught. Many teachers have found this method to be a little unnatural in application.

## ***Suggestopaedia***

This method largely focuses on the need for the students to be comfortable, confident and relaxed in order for learning to be more effective. Another feature is that the teacher and students exist in a parent-children relationship; students are given new names and traumatic themes are avoided. A suggestopaedia lesson has three main parts. Firstly there is an oral review of the previous lesson. This is followed by the presentation and discussion of the new language. Finally, students listen to relaxing music while the teacher reads the new dialogue.

## ***The Lexical approach***

This approach argues that words and phrases are far better building blocks for language acquisition than grammatical structure.

## **Which methodology is best?**

With so many different approaches and methods it can be rather difficult to decide which is the best to use. Unfortunately there is no clear answer as much will depend upon your individual circumstances. Your personality, the culture of the students, and their needs will all play a part in your decision. In reality, each method has its pluses and minuses but certain conclusions can be drawn:

- Students need as much exposure to language as possible.
- Students need a certain amount of input from the teacher.
- Communicative tasks offer real learning possibilities but are not enough on their own.
- Anxiety and stress need to be low for effective language learning.
- Where possible students should be encouraged to discover language for themselves.
- Vocabulary is as important as grammar. Both need each other.
- The methodology that the teacher prefers may not be the preferred or correct option for students from different cultures. Compromise may be necessary.



# ***Engage, Study and Activate***

If, as discussed earlier, students need to be motivated, be exposed to the language and have the opportunity to use it, then we need to make sure that all these factors come into play in the classroom. The most effective method for this was put forward by Jeremy Harmer, where he called these elements 'ESA' – Engage, Study and Activate.

This approach allows all of the previously mentioned conditions to be applied and gives the teacher a great deal of flexibility in the classroom. Overall this is probably the most effective of all the methodologies and is particularly appropriate for trainee and new teachers. As such this is the method that this course is based around.

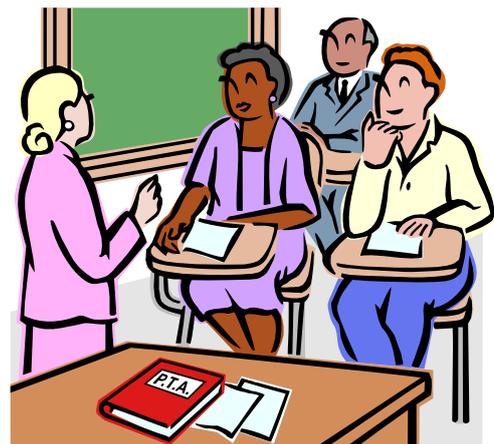
## ***Engage***

This is the sequence in the lesson where the teacher will try to arouse the students' interest and get them involved in the lesson. If students are involved and interested, they will find the lesson more stimulating and fun, thus reducing inhibitions and leading to a more conducive language learning environment.

Activities and materials which tend to engage students include; games, discussions, music, interesting pictures, stories etc. Even if such activities are not used it is vital that students engage with the topic and language that they are going to be dealing with.

For example, the teacher will show the students a picture of someone and lead that into a discussion before reading about that person. Or, if the language topic is for example, can/can't, the teacher might start with pictures and a discussion about favourite animals before discussing what they can and can't do etc.

Remember, if students are engaged, they will learn far more effectively than when they are disengaged.



## **Study**

These activities are those where the students will focus on the language (or information) and how it is constructed. These activities could range from the practice and study of a single sound to an examination and practice of a verb tense!

Sometimes the teacher will explain the language, at other times the teacher will want the students to discover it for themselves. They may work in groups studying a text for vocabulary or study a transcript to discover style of speech. Whatever the method, Study means any stage where the students will be focused on the construction of the language.

## **Activate**

This is the stage where the students are encouraged to use any/all of the language they know. Here students should be using the language as 'freely' and communicatively as possible. The focus is very much more on fluency than accuracy with no restrictions on language usage.

Typical Activate activities include role-plays (where students act out as realistically as possible a dialogue between two or more people e.g. doctor and patient), communication games, debates, discussions, and story writing etc.

These ESA elements need to be present in most lessons to provide a balanced range of activities for the students. Some lessons may be more heavily focused on one stage or another but all stages should be included wherever possible.

To say that all three elements need to be included does not mean that they always have to happen in the same order. Instead we can vary the order to give us greater flexibility in the content of our lessons. We can even have multiple stages per lesson which might look more like EASASA.

## **Example of a 'Straight Arrow' ESA lesson**

A 'Straight Arrow' lesson is where the teacher takes the lesson in the ESA order. First the teacher *Engages* the students, then they *Study* the language, finally they try to *Activate* the language by putting it into production. Following is an example structure of a 'Straight Arrow' lesson sequence for lower level students with the learning objective – "At the end of the lesson students will be able to talk/write about what people and animals can and cannot do (using the auxiliary *can't*)."

- **Engage** – teacher shows students a picture or video or mimes various animals. The students say which animals they see and whether or not they like these animals and why. The teacher can then expand by asking which of these animals they have ever seen and where, or if, these animals exist in the students' country, etc.
- **Study** – teacher shows students a particular example and elicits sentences from the students by asking “What can it do?”. Students respond with example sentences such as “It can/can't fly/swim/run very quickly”. The teacher makes sure the sentences are using the correct grammar and helps correct any mistakes. A brief explanation of the structure of can/can't sentences may follow as well as a bit of work on the pronunciation of can't.
- **Activate** – students work in groups and design their own 'super animal'. They then make a presentation to the class about the animal they have created and about what it can/can't do.

We can show this kind of lesson in the following way:



Straight Arrows lessons can work very well with certain structures. The above example shows students the meaning of can/can't and how they are constructed, allows them to use the language in a controlled way (in the study sequence) and then gives them a chance to activate the language in a fun way.

However, such lessons may not be the best way to deal with more complex language. The lessons will also become very predictable and potentially boring if this is the only way we teach. Therefore we will sometimes use this method and sometimes we will choose a different sequence for our lessons.

### **Example of a 'Boomerang' ESA lesson**

A 'Boomerang' sequencing of the lesson gives us more possibilities, while still incorporating ESA. See the example below, with the learning objective – “At the end of the lesson students will be able to use language involved in job interviews.”:

- **Engage** – students and teacher discuss issues about jobs and interviews and state their idea of the perfect job etc.
- **Activate 1** – students role-play (act out) a job interview. One of the students in each pair takes the role as interviewer, the other as interviewee. Before starting such a task, the students will need time to plan what they are going to say. While they are doing this activity the teacher makes a note of the mistakes they make and the difficulties that they have.
- **Study** – when the role play is over, the teacher works with the students on the language that caused the students difficulty during the role-play. They would then do some controlled practice of the language.
- **Activate 2** – students role-play another job interview, incorporating some of the new language from the study section.

This variance on the 'Straight Arrow' technique ensures that the teacher is only supplying the students with language when they have already demonstrated that they do not know it and have need of it. Such a lesson would follow the pattern below:



The difficulty with this sequence is that the teacher has to try and predict what problems the students are likely to have in the first activate stage in order to have materials/ideas for helping students in the study phase. Such a lesson might be more useful for higher level students as they will need quite a lot of language for the activate stages.

### ***Example of a 'Patchwork' ESA lesson***

The 'Straight Arrow' sequence is useful as the teacher knows what the students need and will take them logically to the point where they can use that language. The 'Boomerang' sequence is also useful as it allows the teacher to see what the students need before teaching the language. However, many lessons aren't as straightforward as this and will require a lot of mini-sequences building to a whole. This is a 'Patchwork' ESA lesson. A typical example can be seen below, with the learning objective – "At the end of the lesson students will be able to use language involved with travelling and holidays.":

- **Engage** – students look at various holiday photos and talk about which the students prefer and why.
- **Activate** – students look through extracts from a travel brochure commenting how they feel about each holiday and which they would choose.
- **Activate** – students act out a role-play between travel agent and customer using the travel brochure.
- **Study** – the teacher goes through useful vocabulary regarding holidays from the brochure and other language that may have cropped up during the role-play.
- **Activate** – students design their own hotel/tour to add to travel brochure.
- **Engage** – teacher and students discuss their favourite advertisements on TV/radio.
- **Study** – students analyze structure of typical language for advertisements.
- **Activate** – students write a radio commercial for their hotel/tour. They can then record it for playing to the rest of the class.

Such lessons allow for a greater deal of flexibility and provide a nice balance between study and activation.

### ***Ideas for engage phase***

Typical engage phases include discussion and prompting based around pictures, drawings, mime, video, short tape extract, short reading text, headline, real objects brought into class, etc. It can also involve a general discussion without prompts (for example if the students are going to read a text about Bill Gates in the study phase the teacher may ask “What do you know about Bill Gates?”; “What would you like to know about him?”, etc.) The most important element is to plan this stage so the teacher doesn’t run out of ideas/prompts and is able to fully engage the students before moving on to the next phase of the lesson.

### ***Ideas for study phase***

Common study activities include:

**Explanation/elicitation** – teacher explains or elicits from the students the structure/formation/meaning of new language.

**Pronunciation** – language drills (choral and individual repetition), tongue-twisters, mouth diagrams to show how we form particular sounds.

**Spelling** – hangman, word searches, crosswords, unscrambling jumbled words.

**Meaning** – gap fills (students fill in missing words in sentence), matching exercises such as matching pictures to definitions, matching answers to questions, words to definitions, true or false activities etc.

**Word order** – unscrambling jumbled sentences into the correct sentence order and inserting words into sentences in the correct place.

**Analysis** – looking at texts/dialogues and analyzing typical constructions.

### ***Ideas for activate phase***

**Role-play** – students act out everyday roles in realistic situations. For example, doctor and patient, lost person asking local resident for directions, shop assistant and customer, etc. It is vital when doing role-play to allow the students enough time to plan their roles and develop what they are going to say.

**Surveys** – students conduct surveys as to how many/which of the students do a certain thing, etc.

**Producing materials** – students, in pairs or groups, put together an advertisement, brochure, news broadcast, etc, relating to the language point.

**Communication games** – there are many resource books full of games that will practice particular language points. Many of these games have been adapted from games we have all played such as monopoly, clue/cluedo etc. Most good schools will have copies of these books. The key word here is communication.

**Debate/discussion** – this can be whole class or group debate on a particular topic.

**Story building** – students create stories based on topics, headlines, picture prompts, etc.

The above are just a few examples of ideas for each stage. Using a variety of different activities will help keep students (and teachers!) fresh and stimulated. Remember that the engage stage should *engage* the students fully, the study stage should provide for controlled practice, to see that the students have understood the language and can construct it in an accurate, controlled way, while the activate stage should give the students a chance to use the language fluently along with the rest of their language knowledge.

## ***Giving Feedback***

Having stimulating activities isn't much use to the students unless they are provided with some kind of feedback as to how well they have done, or which answers they have correct and which are wrong.

The aim of giving feedback is to encourage self-awareness and improvement. By providing ongoing feedback you can help your students to evaluate their success and progress. Feedback can take a number of forms: going through activities checking students' answers, giving praise and encouragement, correcting, setting regular tests, having regular group discussions, individual tutorials, etc.

The type and extent of feedback depends largely on the following factors:

- Individual students
- Culture and the expected role of the teacher
- The stage of the lesson
- The type of activity



When giving feedback on oral or written work, always be on the lookout for positive points to comment upon even if mistakes have been made. Be positive.

Ways of giving positive feedback can range from an informal 'well done', publishing good written work around the classroom, using it as a model, to using a grading system.

Make sure that feedback from an activity is clear and audible so students have an opportunity to correct their own work.

## ***Correction Techniques***

The ability to correct is a skill that takes time and experience to perfect. It is an area in which students are often critical of the teacher. Too much correction can be equally as off-putting as too little. It is also important to note that praising the students is equally as important as correcting, if not more so.

In teaching EFL it is usual to distinguish between mistakes and errors. A mistake can be thought of as a slip of the tongue or the pen. The student is able to correct himself or herself, either unprompted or with the help of the teacher or other students. An error is something that is more deeply ingrained and may be made because:

- The student believes what he or she is saying is correct
- The student does not know the correct form
- The student knows the correct form, but can't get it right

### ***The positive side of errors***

- At least the student is trying
- By making errors learners are experimenting with language, which is part of the learning process
- By noting errors the teacher can see what needs focusing on in future lessons



### ***Who corrects?***

- **Self correction**

This should be the first option as it provides the student with the opportunity to reflect upon what he/she has said and to try again.

Before students can correct themselves, they must be aware of the following:

- 1 Something is not accurate
- 2 Where the error is
- 3 What kind of error it is

If the student is unable to correct him/herself fairly quickly then move on rather than humiliating the student by pausing the class when the student is clearly unable to self-correct.

- **Student – student correction**

If the student is unable to correct his/her own mistake it is often useful to allow the other students to correct the mistake. Students usually like helping each other; however, this method should not be used if the teacher feels that it would make the student who made the mistake feel uncomfortable or confused.

- **Teacher – student correction**

This should be the last resort. The other two methods allow the students to identify the problem and correct it. If the teacher corrects straight away, then the students don't have to think about the mistake and work out why it is not correct. Therefore they are less likely to remember it and are more likely to continue to repeat the mistake in the future.

### ***What should the teacher correct?***

It can be difficult for teachers to know exactly what type of mistakes to correct. Generally we can say that for activities where accuracy is the focus (the study stage) correction is more vital than for activities where fluency is the primary objective. That doesn't mean to say that we will correct every single mistake/error in the study stage and never correct in the activate stage.

There are three occasions when it is relevant to correct:

- 1 The mistake is with the language point we are teaching.
- 2 The mistake is being regularly repeated either by the student or other class members and so risks becoming ingrained.
- 3 The mistake seriously impedes understanding.

When one of the above mistakes/errors is made the teacher can indicate that something needs correcting by repeating it to the student with a questioning tone, asking if they think it is right, by saying “again?”, by having a puzzled expression or by putting it up on the board. Putting it on the board is probably more useful for more complex mistakes as it allows all students to focus on the mistake and think about it. This technique also allows the teacher to highlight on the board the type of mistake and where it is.

Remember never to jump into a student’s speech to correct. Wait until the student has finished speaking or until the end of the activity to avoid interrupting the flow of the activity, whichever is the most appropriate depending upon the type of task (for example it is better to correct mistakes from role-play at the end of the activity, so as not to break the flow).

Bear in mind that corrections should reflect the stage of the lesson. For example, it would be appropriate for a more correction during a study phase, when the students are learning new concepts. During engage and activate stages however, we would want to encourage as much communication as possible, so correction should be kept to an absolute minimum. Leave the students to get on with it!



## ***Correcting writing***

Probably the most effective way of correcting written work is by using codes in the margin or the body of the writing. This makes correction neater, less threatening and gives the students a chance to correct their own work. Frequently used codes refer to issues such as tense, spelling and word order. Typical codes include:

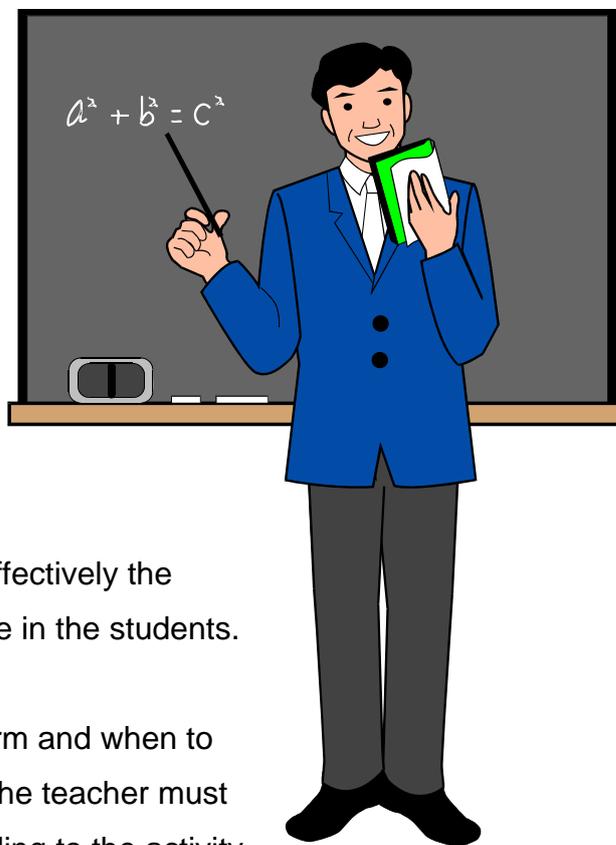
<b>Code</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
s	spelling
wo	word order
t	wrong tense
s/p	wrong usage of singular/plural form
^	something is missing
[ ]	something is not necessary
m	meaning is not clear
na	usage is not appropriate
p	punctuation is wrong

Of course you can come up with your own codes as long as you explain their meaning to the students. With lower levels you may like to write the code above the mistake to make it clear exactly where the mistake is. With higher levels it is a good idea to write it in the margin on the corresponding line and let the students try to work it out for themselves. Only after they have had a chance to correct their own work should the teacher look at it again and deal with any mistakes the students weren't able to correct for themselves.

# Classroom Management

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Contrary to popular belief, it is not true that you have to be an extrovert to be a good teacher in the classroom. Some good teachers are very low-key, while other teachers, both lively and amusing, are regarded as nothing more than entertainers. You will find your own style of teaching through practice in the classroom.



However, for a class to be able to learn effectively the teacher must be able to inspire confidence in the students.

As teachers, we must know when to be firm and when to leave the students alone. In other words the teacher must be flexible and change his/her role according to the activity and situation without being dominant or leaving the students uncertain.

Classroom Management is the skill of organising and managing the class, having a friendly, relaxed manner and maintaining discipline.

## ***Eye contact, gesture and the voice***

As we all know it is very difficult to speak to someone who is always looking elsewhere or someone who looks us in the eye all of the time. Also, we are aware that eye contact can convey messages.

Good eye contact in the classroom is essential to establishing good rapport with the students. A teacher who never looks students in the eye will appear to lack confidence and could then have problems with discipline – on the other hand, staring at the students is not very productive either.

### **How can eye contact be used in the classroom?**

- To show students that they are all involved in the lesson.
- To ensure that students understand what they are supposed to do and what is going on.
- To indicate who is to speak (often with a nod of the head).
- To encourage contributions.
- To hold the attention of students who are not being addressed.
- To maintain discipline.
- To signal students to start, stop or get a move on.
- To indicate that something is correct or incorrect.
- To check that everybody is participating.

Bear in mind that eye contact should be avoided during any activity which is not teacher-centred (an activity where the focus is on fluency, or the students are working together in pairs/groups).

## ***Gesture***

Good use of gestures (at least commonly understood international gestures) can be effective and useful in the following ways:

Convey the meaning of language

Manage the class – e.g. to reinforce instructions

To add visual interest

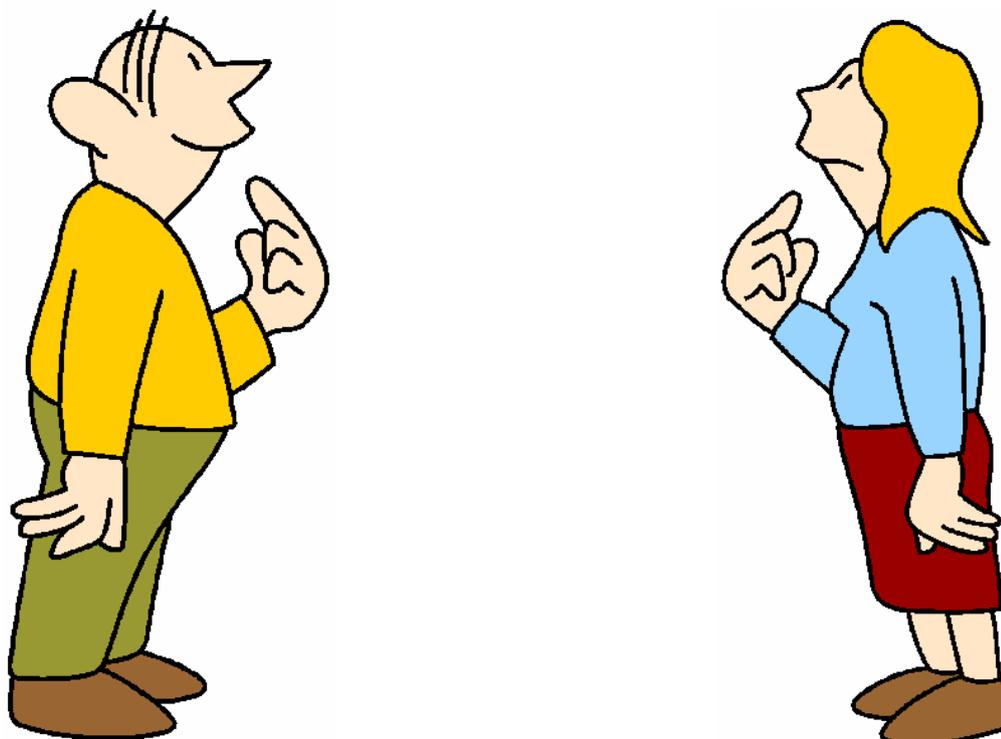
To increase the pace of the lesson

To reduce the need for verbal explanation

**Think about which gestures you could use for the following situations.**

- listen: *Put your hand behind your ear*
- repeat in chorus:
- get into pairs:
- stop:
- good:
- not right:
- nearly right:
- unusual idea:
- identifying a student:

Gestures should only be used if they are obvious in meaning or the meaning has already been established with the students.



## ***The voice***

If your voice does not have the correct clarity, range, variety or projection, you will have a difficult time in making your instruction / explanations understood to all members of the class.

Your voice should change naturally according to the circumstances, e.g. individual tutoring lesson or 16 young children. Obviously greater projection will be necessary in a large, noisy classroom than a small quiet room. An effective teacher will also adapt the complexity of his/her language to suit the level and ability of the students.

As a class often follows the lead of the teacher, the lesson can be livened up or quietened down by an alteration in the teacher's volume.

The greater the variation of the voice, the greater the effectiveness. A dull monotone will only create boredom and lead to students not paying attention and misbehaving.

## ***Using students' names***

Student's names can be used when you want to:

- organise an activity
- acknowledge the students
- indicate who is to answer or respond
- get the attention of a student

The name of a student should be used at the end of the question, not at the start. This keeps the whole class alert, as they do not know who will have to answer.

## ***Grouping students***

There is no real limit to the way a teacher can group students, though factors such as class size and classroom furniture can be problematic. Activities geared to the whole class, students working alone, pairs and larger groups are all appropriate and each has its own place in the classroom.

### **Whole-class grouping – pros and cons**

- Creates a sense of belonging among the group.
- Allows students to interact with any other class members.
- Suitable for activities where the teacher needs to be in control/have the attention of the class as a whole.
- Quicker and easier organization.
- Reduces opportunities for students to speak.
- Can be off-putting to shy students who may not wish to participate in front of the whole class.

### **Students working on their own – pros and cons**

- Allows teachers to respond to individual differences in pace of learning, ability etc.
- Less stressful for students than contributing in front of the whole class.
- Helps the student become more self-reliant.
- Restricts possibilities for student to student interaction and group belonging.

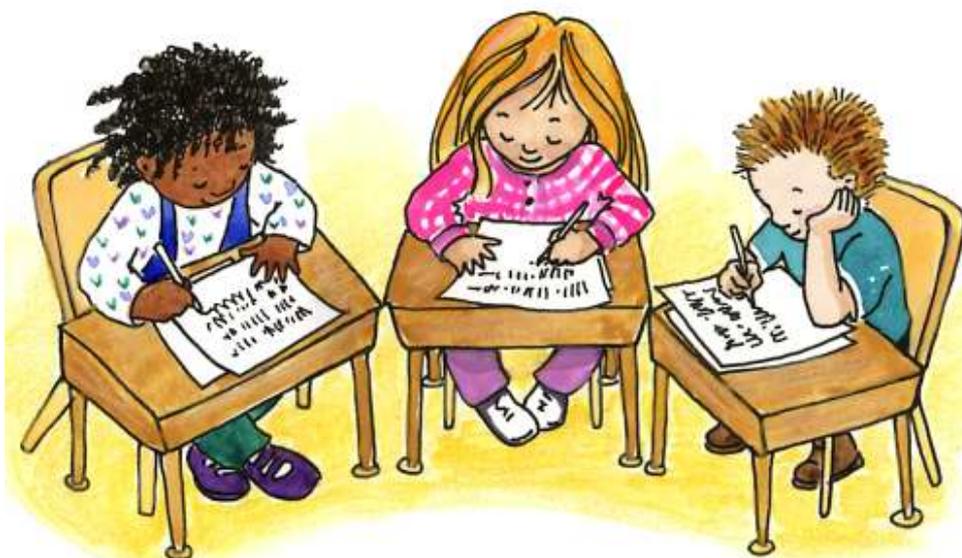
### **Pairwork – pros and cons**

- Dramatically increases opportunity for student talking time and student to student interaction.
- Allows teacher to work with certain pairs while others continue working.
- Gives students a safe environment to try out ideas before sharing with the group.
- Allows students to share ideas and thoughts.
- Allows stronger students to help and support weaker ones.
- Allows students to share responsibility for work and removes the burden from the individual.
- Quick and easy to organize.
- Can be rather noisy. Students may try to revert back to their native language and avoid using English.
- Some students prefer to communicate only with the teacher and don't like interacting with another student.
- Students may find themselves working with a partner they don't particularly like.

## Groupwork – pros and cons

- Like pair-work, it can visibly increase student talking time and student to student interaction.
- Personal problems are less problematic than in pairs.
- Encourages students to cooperate and negotiate in English.
- Students are able to choose their level of participation.
- Sometimes is very noisy.
- Can take longer to organize and get started.
- The exchange of ideas among group members can slow activities down too much.
- Some group members may dominate and passive students don't get adequate opportunity to participate.

The grouping you choose is likely to be very much dictated by the class size and type of activity. It is a good idea, where possible, to mix things up to create as much variety as possible. In order to allow sufficient opportunity for student talking time and active participation, a fair amount of pair and group work should be used, particularly in study and activate stages.



## ***Classroom arrangement***

The way in which you organise the position of the students and yourself is of great importance and largely depends on the following:

- Space available
- Type of chairs / tables
- Age of the students
- Nationality
- Student personality

You may feel that it is better to put a weak student together with a stronger one for pair-work activities. In any group you will, at least occasionally, want to mix pairs as it adds variety if the students get to work with different people and personalities. The mixing of pairs is also an effective way of dealing with pairs who do not work well together or become problematic when working with each other.

As a teacher you have the authority to move the students for the benefit of an activity, cohesion or discipline. This should be done firmly but politely, and from the start of the course, so that the students do not get too used to sitting in one place. However, students should not be moved without reason. There must be some purpose to it that the students can see.

Where the teacher has the space and conditions to be able to vary the seating arrangements he/she will need to consider a number of issues. The type of activity and the answer to the following questions should help the teacher decide which is the most suitable for each lesson or stage of the lesson.

- How are the teacher/student relationships likely to vary in each case?
- How will it affect the classroom atmosphere?
- Which arrangements are the most conducive to the teacher maintaining effective control over the class?
- In which situation will the teacher dominate most? What will the teacher's role be in each case?
- Which arrangement is the most suitable for the students to be able to talk to each other?
- Which arrangements allow the students to communicate without interference from the teacher?
- How will the size of the group affect the arrangement?
- What activities might be suitable for each possible arrangement?

### **Orderly Rows**

This has been the traditional form of seating for many years in most schools. The teacher has a clear view of all the students and all the students can see the teacher. It makes lecturing easy, enables the teacher to maintain eye contact and helps reduce discipline problems. If the rows are well-organized the teacher should be able to move freely around the classroom. Such seating is particularly effective for whole class activities. In larger classes of twenty five or more students it is often the best and only solution.



### **Circles and horseshoes**

Often used in smaller classes where the teacher and board are situated at the open end of the arrangement. The teacher's position is less dominating and there is less of a feeling that a student is at the front or back of the classroom. This often allows students to be more focused on the lesson. These arrangements often make pairwork easier and allow students to have eye contact with all other class members. The classroom in effect becomes far more intimate.

### **Separate tables**

When students are seated in small groups at individual tables the classroom becomes even more informal. It is easy for the teacher to work at one table while the other groups continue their work. This is particularly useful for groupwork but can create discipline problems when students feel that they are part of a small group rather than the class as a whole. The teacher will probably be unable to maintain eye contact with all students.

### ***The teacher's position***

Students are often sensitive to your position in the classroom and whether you are sitting or standing. It can tell them:

- What kind of activity it is
- What the teacher's role will be
- What the students are expected to do

If you stand, then you will be able to be seen by all students, move around the classroom and control the class. However, it can be tiring and make the students feel dominated. If you sit, you are slightly relaxing control of the class, you can have your materials at hand and make the classroom atmosphere feel more intimate. When monitoring the students' work, try to do so without intruding and stopping the flow. Monitor at the start of the activity to check that they have understood, and again about halfway through to check on progress and pace.

What should the teacher's position and movement be during the following lesson stages?

*Language presentation* – the teacher will probably want the attention of the whole class, so standing is the best option.

*Giving instructions* – As above the teacher needs the attention of all students.

*Reading activities* – When students are reading there is no real need for the teacher to dominate so much. Sitting and occasional monitoring of progress would be appropriate here.

*Activation stage* – The teacher should relax control completely and be available if needed. The teacher should remain at a distance from the activity, preferably seated.

*Controlled practice* – Occasional monitoring but otherwise the teacher should allow the students to focus on the activity.

*Checking work in progress* – The teacher will want to move from group to group but without intruding and stopping the flow of the work.

### ***Writing on the board***

Unfortunately, there is no way you can avoid turning your back to the students during board-work. There are, however, a number of ways in which you can reduce the amount of time you spend with your back to the class.

- Use an overhead projector (OHP) if possible
- Prepare cards with vocabulary
- Invite the students to write on the board for you
- Write on the board whilst students are engaged on a different task
- Write in small sections and turn around to face the class every now and again.
- Make sure that you always have chalk, board pens or OHT markers and erasers to hand – they often get mislaid, ‘borrowed’ or worn out!
- Have board work already up before the class starts. If you don’t want the students to see this immediately, you could always cover it with a sheet of paper until it’s needed.



### ***Giving individual attention***

- Make sure you know all the students' names. Don't just pick on the students whose names you know.
- If necessary, spend longer with students who do not understand or who cannot do the task, but try to keep the other students occupied by giving them a task to get on with.
- Don't teach exclusively to only the strong or weak students.
- Don't go around the room asking students in order. It is very predictable and students will not pay attention until they have to. If you don't use any regular order, then the class will be kept on its toes.
- Don't allow individual students to "hog" your attention or the limelight.
- Remember to include all students equally in any activity.
- If students do not want to, or cannot contribute, it may be better to let them remain silent. They should never feel that they are being picked on. To help build such a student's confidence, ask him/her simple questions that you know he/she is likely to be able to answer correctly, giving praise when he/she responds.

### ***Teacher talking time and Student talking time***

The balance between TTT and STT largely depends on the type of lesson / activity, and on the level of the students. In the classroom the teacher will speak more when:

- Presenting, checking, modelling or clarifying
- Providing language input
- Giving instructions, setting up activities
- Establishing rapport

### ***Advantages of TTT***

A vital component of learning a language is exposure to it. The teacher should be able to provide the students with a source of natural, correct English that is specifically geared to the students' ability. Very few other resources can provide such comprehensible language input.

## Disadvantages of TTT

Whenever the teacher is talking the students should be listening and therefore not talking themselves. This reduces the amount of time available for students to speak and actively participate in the class. We should therefore try to keep TTT to minimal levels while still realizing that it plays a useful role.

## How to avoid unnecessary TTT

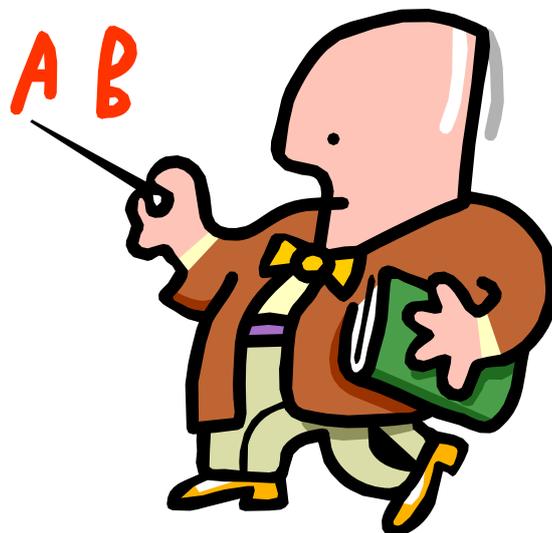
- Choose carefully the language for explanations and instructions
- Avoid TEFL jargon
- Use gestures, mime or pictures
- Don't over-elaborate
- Use language that is below the level being taught.
- Basically, keep it simple!



## ***Giving instructions***

How can you make your instructions effective?

- By attracting the student's attention.
- Making sure everyone is listening and not working. Don't give out handouts that may distract attention.



### **Using simple language**

- Use language at a lower level than that being taught.
- Longer more complex language wastes time, slows the students down and is prone to misunderstanding.

### **Being consistent**

- Use the same set of words for the same instruction (everybody, again, look, listen, repeat, say, turn to page ...)
- With beginners, teach them the necessary language for following instructions.

### **Using visual clues**

- Reinforce instructions with visual clues; realia (real objects brought into the classroom), mime, gesture and pictures
- Write the instructions on the board (or use cue cards) if you want the students to do different things. Give one instruction at a time. Don't weigh the students down with numerous, lengthy instructions that will not be understood or will be forgotten by the time they come round to doing the task.
- Give a demonstration as an example. Usually, showing is more effective than telling.

### **Checking the instructions**

- Ask questions to *check* they understand the instructions. "Do you understand?" is not an acceptable question as it does not check. Asking students to explain back to you is far more effective and does check if they have understood.
- Monitor to see if they are following instructions correctly.

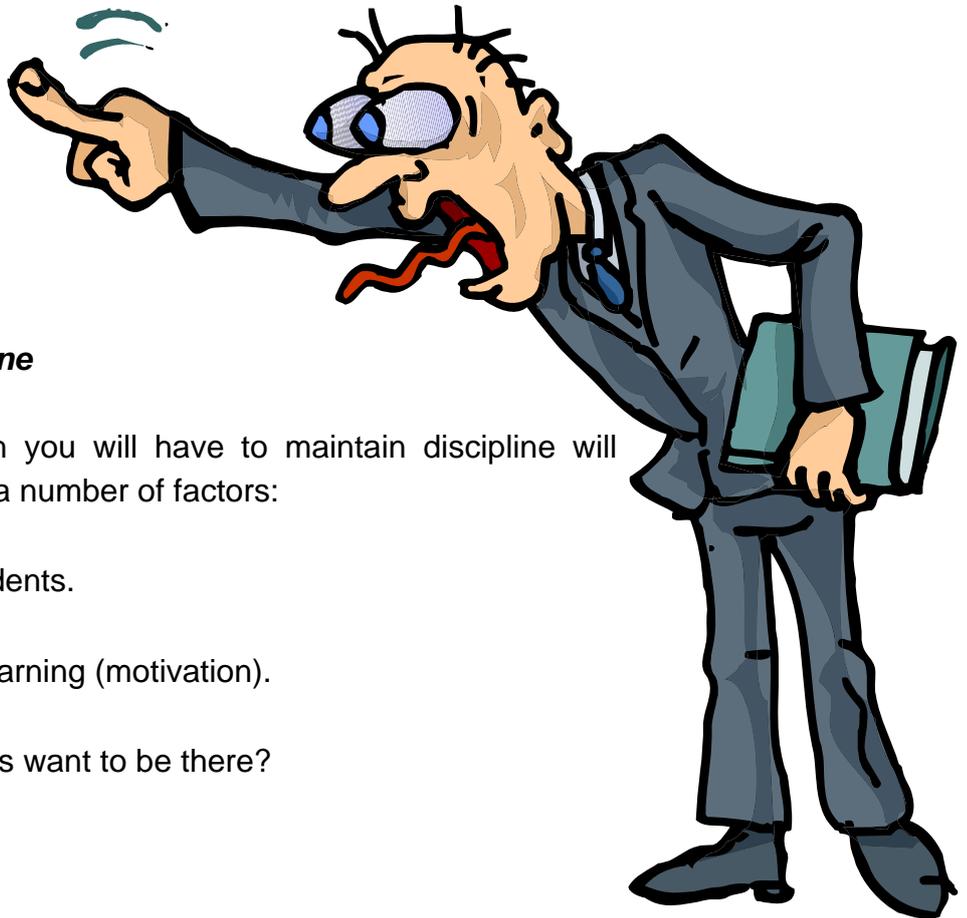
## ***Establishing rapport***

Rapport between the teacher and students (and between the students themselves) plays an important part in determining if a class is successful and enjoyable. Students are more likely to contribute and take part in the lessons when the atmosphere is relaxed and they get on well with the teacher. While the students play a large part in setting the atmosphere in the classroom, it can be encouraged and stimulated by the general attitude and approach of the teacher.

### **Here are some practical ways to help establish rapport and class spirit:**

- When making seating arrangements, be aware of which students get on well together and which do not.
- Make sure the students know each other's names and a little basic information about each other.
- At the beginning of a course have an ice breaking activity.
- Choose materials and activities that involve the students talking to each other and sharing personal opinions / ideas.
- Use plenty of pair-work and group-work activities.
- Change pairs frequently so that students have a chance to work with a variety of people.
- Get the students to help each other.
- Let students correct each other.
- Do not let individual students dominate the group (or yourself).
- Do not supply everything yourself. Elicit from the students and get them involved.
- Give clear instructions.
- Look as if you enjoy the job.
- Have the right manner.
- Be positive in everything you do.
- Show personal interest in the students.
- Personalize activities to students' surroundings and interests.
- Ask for comments and opinions from the students.
- Don't forget to smile!





### ***Maintaining Discipline***

The degree to which you will have to maintain discipline will largely depend upon a number of factors:

- Age of the students.
- Reasons for learning (motivation).
- Do the students want to be there?
- Class size.
- Principles and atmosphere of the school. Some institutes have a much stricter attitude towards student behaviour than others do.
- Respect between students and teacher.

Some of these factors can be influenced by the teacher while others cannot. It is important that the teacher strikes the correct balance between exercising control and encouraging a relaxed, friendly atmosphere conducive to learning. When in doubt, err on the side of control initially, especially with children and teenagers. It is much easier to relax control at a later stage than to exert it.

## **Reasons for problem behaviour**

There are many reasons why disciplinary problems can occur in the classroom. These can often include:

- Family problems
- Low self-esteem
- Boredom
- Peer pressure
- Lack of respect for the teacher/other students
- Class size

Some of these problems are out of your hands but many disciplinary issues can be prevented by the teacher.

## **Preventing problem behaviour**

You can help stop problems arising in the first place if:

- you are punctual
- you are well prepared
- you are consistent and fair
- you do not let personal feelings influence your treatment of students
- you never make threats that you cannot or are not prepared to carry out
- you return homework promptly
- you never lose your temper
- you show the same respect for your students as you expect from them
- you make your lessons interesting and varied
- you are enthusiastic about your teaching
- you establish rapport with the students

## **Responding to problem behaviour**

If you have done everything possible to prevent problem behaviour, what can you do if it still arises?

- Act immediately – don't wait for the problem to worsen. This could simply involve stopping and looking at the student. However, sometimes stronger action may be necessary.
- Focus on the behaviour and not the student.

- Change the classroom dynamic – reseat the students if necessary/appropriate.
- Keep calm – shouting almost never helps.
- Keep the problem student behind after class and reprimand in private.
- Keep to the school’s disciplinary code and don’t make threats that you cannot enforce.
- Use the knowledge of your colleagues. They have probably been in the same situation before and should be able to offer suggestions. Don’t be too proud to ask for advice.
- Bear in mind that it’s possible to go ‘over the top’ with rules.



Mrs. Mutner liked to go over a few of her rules on the first day of school.

# Teaching new language

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Whatever the level of the class, and however the teacher arranges the study phase of the lesson, there are four things that students need to do with new language; be exposed to it, understand its meaning, understand how it's constructed and be able to practise and produce it.

Grammar is often said to be the tree trunk and branches of a language while vocabulary and functions are the leaves that add beauty and variety. Certainly one does not appear so attractive and appealing without the others and none are truly effective alone. Therefore we have to ensure that students are introduced to new language in a balanced and manageable way.

Some lessons that we teach may include new grammar, vocabulary and functions. More often than not lessons will introduce, or be specifically focused on, just one area.

We can easily apply our ESA methods to introduce new language. Lessons that are specifically targeted to grammar or vocabulary commonly use the 'straight arrow' ESA approach, whereas functions-based lessons are more commonly approached with 'boomerang' or 'patchwork' ESA structures. This is certainly not a rule that has to, or even should, be followed. An effective teacher will think about which structure is most appropriate to the class and to the language that will be introduced.



## ***Teaching Vocabulary***

Vocabulary is very important to the students, especially at the early stages when students are motivated to learn the basic words they need to get by in the language.

As a rule, a learner's receptive (words the student knows but doesn't use) vocabulary is much larger than his or her productive (words the student knows and uses) vocabulary; the students can usually understand many more words than they can actively use.

How easy or difficult a vocabulary item is will largely depend on a number of factors:

- Similarity to students' own language
- Similarity to English words already known
- Spelling and pronunciation
- Appropriacy



### ***Selecting Vocabulary***

Whilst there is a general consensus about which grammatical structures should be taught at which levels the same is not true of vocabulary. One of the biggest problems of vocabulary teaching is how to select which words to teach. Although the teacher is generally guided by the course and teacher's book, the following criteria can be used:

- Appropriacy to the students
- Appropriacy to the task
- Frequency and coverage – how often are the students likely to use/come across the language and can it be applied to different situations (The Cobuild English Dictionary gives some very helpful frequency information.)
- Teachability – for example, beginner students need very clear and visual language

### ***What do students need to know about a vocabulary item?***

- Meaning – what it means
- Use – how/when it is appropriate to use
- Word grammar – where it belongs
- Interaction – how it interacts and affects other words
- Spelling – how it is written
- Pronunciation – how it is spoken

### ***Techniques for vocabulary teaching***

#### **Engage**

The following methods can all be used to help engage the students and to elicit/explain meaning

- Realia
- Mime and action
- Pictures
- Contrast
- Discussion
- Discovery



## **Study**

Study activities can include:

- Gap-fill exercises
- Word searches
- Crosswords
- Matching exercises
- Example sentences
- Pronunciation exercises such as drilling
- Study from texts and dialogues

## **Activate**

The activate stage of a vocabulary lesson may include such activities as:

- Open class, small group or pair discussion
- Role-play
- Simulation
- Story building
- Material production task (poster, advertisement, etc.)
- Debate

A typical 'straight arrow' structured ESA vocabulary (for household furniture vocabulary) lesson for lower level students with the learning objective – “At the end of the lesson students will be able to use vocabulary associated with houses, rooms and furniture” might look something like this:

**Engage** Open class activity where students share information about where they live, type of house they live in, rooms they have. Maybe students can be asked in the lesson before to bring pictures or draw a floor plan to show other students. If this is likely to create any social discomfort, the teacher can bring a picture of his/her house, or houses in general, for discussion.

**Study** Teacher shows a small text, or plays dialogue, of someone describing their house. Checks pronunciation, spelling, meaning, etc with some of the study activities mentioned above.

**Activate** Teacher tells small groups or pairs of students that they can design their perfect house, complete with furnishings, money no object. Later students present their 'dream' house to the class, and the class has a discussion on pros and cons of each house before voting on which house they would like to live in.

Please note that this isn't the *right* way to approach it. It is just one way. There are many other ways of achieving the same end. A patchwork structured approach can be seen in unit 3.



## ***Introducing grammatical structures***

Which new language structures we introduce are largely determined by the level of the class and the course syllabus we are using. However, in all cases, the students will need to know what the language means, how it is used, what the grammatical form is and how it is said/written.

- Meaning – what the language means
- Use – how/when it is used
- Forms and Patterns – formation and patterns of the language
- Spoken and written form – any differences in forms. For example in written form 'I am going to.....' often becomes 'I'm gonna.....' in spoken form.

### ***Techniques for presenting and practising language structures***

#### **Engage**

- Discussion
- Scenario building
- Prompting
- Question and answer
- Using pictures, drawings, real objects, mime, etc.

#### **Study**

- Intonation and pronunciation patterns
- Looking at the language in context through texts and dialogues
- Choral and individual repetition (drilling)
- Gap fills
- Information gaps
- Sentence word order activities (unscramble jumbled sentences, etc.)
- Sentence building

#### **Activate**

- Communication games
- Role-play
- Story building
- Discussion/debate

A typical ESA patchwork grammar lesson for mid level students with the learning objective – “At the end of the lesson students will be able to talk/write about films and books using the past simple tense.”:

**Engage** Students discuss favourite books/films, what they liked about them, etc. If teacher has told them in advance, they can bring copies in.

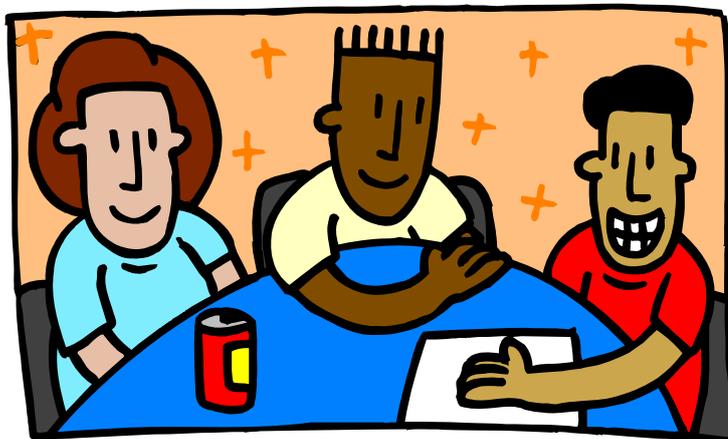
**Activate** In pairs students write brief synopsis of a book or film they have seen.

**Study** From the synopsis, analyze the usage of the past simple tense. Further study activities to reinforce meaning, formation and pronunciation.

**Activate** In groups students write short story from picture prompts.

**Study** Group passes story to another group who check for correct usage of past tense. Any errors discussed/analyzed in class.

**Activate** Chain story communication game. One student starts the story, the next continues, and so on.



## Teaching language functions

As well as vocabulary and grammar, language also consists of functions. Language functions include areas such as inviting, refusing, agreeing and disagreeing, suggesting, etc. Teaching language functions also includes the appropriacy (or appropriateness) of the language in terms of the kind of language they use – formal, informal, tentative, technical etc.



Language function lessons will stress the need for activation of language and is perhaps most effectively used with the boomerang and patchwork type ESA lessons that we saw in unit 3. Certainly role-plays are very useful here.

A typical function (inviting in this case) ESA boomerang type lesson could be:

**Engage** Students talk in open class about their favourite leisure activities, why they like them, how often they do them etc. Teacher uses prompts to get students opinions on certain other activities.

**Activate** Students walk around class inviting peers to join them in their favourite activities until they have found at least two students who would like to do so.

**Study** Teacher and students listen to invitation dialogue on tape. Compare to the language they used and analyze ways of inviting formally/informally and accepting/rejecting such invitations appropriately. Some pronunciation and other study exercises used to reinforce.

**Activate** Using new language students role-play in pairs. One wants a date with the other and invites. The other isn't keen on the date so makes excuses. The winner is the student who doesn't run out of invitations or rejections!

# Lesson Planning

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## ***Should we plan lessons?***

There are various schools of thought on this issue. Some theorists suggest that lesson planning is not a good idea as it creates a more fixed, teacher centred lesson. It is true that too much planning can make lessons rather rigid and stop the teacher being flexible to the needs of the students. However, it is very difficult



for inexperienced teachers to be able to be as flexible as this would require. The teacher is expected to let the students decide what to do in the class but an inexperienced teacher would find great difficulty in being able to conduct a lesson in such a way, as he/she wouldn't be prepared to deal with some of the language problems that may arise from such a lesson and lessons, therefore, may well lack direction.

Most teachers will find themselves somewhere between these two extremes. They will make notes, or complete lesson plan forms, but will build in flexibility.

The writing of lesson plans has a number of important functions:

### **1 An aid to planning**

Writing down what you expect the students to achieve by the end of the lesson, and how you intend to make that possible, helps you to think logically through the stages in relation to available time.

### **2 A working document**

A lesson plan helps you to keep on target and gives you something to refer to during the lesson. However, it should not stop you from being flexible and responding to the needs of the class. For example, if the class is really enjoying a particular activity, the teacher will probably want to extend the time allocated to that task and maybe postpone other tasks until a later lesson.

### 3 A record

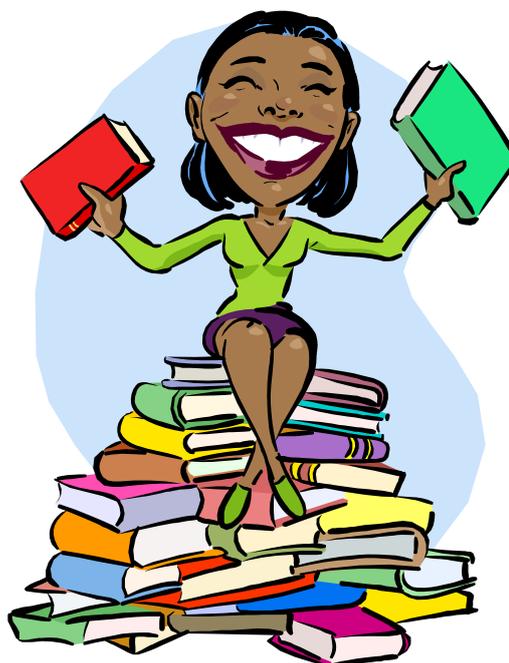
A lesson plan acts as a record of what a class has done and which materials have been used. Are you likely to remember what each class did six months ago if you haven't made a record of it? Recording class content will also help if you are ill and another teacher has to cover your classes.

#### *How should a lesson plan be written down?*

There is no special way in which a plan must be written. Some teachers write formal plans, some jot notes, some log details into class notebooks. Each teacher has to find their own way. If you have to change your plan during the lesson for whatever reasons you should also make a note of those changes so that you will have an accurate record.

Basic principles of lesson planning are:

- Keep it simple. You may need to refer to it during a lesson.
- Do not try to script the lesson.
- Structure it and maintain the same structure.
- Write the anticipated time for each activity in the margin.
- Check for balance of skills. Try to make sure activities fit together to give the lesson a smooth flow.
- Keep it flexible and open to adaptation.



## ***Being Organised***

Before you start the lesson there are a number of practical things you can do to make sure your lesson goes smoothly.

- Check that you have your lesson plan.
- Run through your lesson plan and make sure you have all the necessary aids and materials needed.
- Check that the equipment works!
- Lay out materials and aids so that you can easily find them.
- Arrange the seating as desired.
- Make sure that the board is clean.
- Be ready to chat to the students as they come into class. This will help break the ice with the students and get them in the mood to learn.

## ***What should be included in a lesson plan?***

What you include in a lesson plan is very much up to the individual. You will see a sample lesson plan form later. This doesn't mean that you have to use that exact same form, though you are welcome to copy and use it if you wish. Many experienced teachers just write a few brief notes on a piece of paper.

At the start of your teaching careers you are probably going to want to structure your plans more, so that you have a clear guide as to what you want to achieve and how you are going to do it. We recommend including all of the following in your plan:

**Learner objectives** – this is what you want the students to be able to do by the end of the lesson.

**Procedure** – the method by which you will achieve these aims.

**Activities and approaches** – these will normally be included in your procedure.

**Teaching aids** – materials and other aids (cassette player etc) that you will need in the lesson. This will help you quickly check if you have everything at the start of a lesson.

**Anticipated problems (for the students and the teacher)** – it is very important to try and anticipate any particular problems that the students (or the teacher) may have with the lesson. Anticipated problems are of no use though unless you have thought of a solution for these problems if they arise!

**Personal aims** – what you as a teacher wish to achieve. This is usually an area of your teaching that you would like to improve.

**Class level** – the level of ability that the class has with the English language.

**Number of students** – you may wish to anticipate how many students will attend to make sure that your activities are suitable for the class size.

**Date/time** – this will allow you to keep a historical record of what you have done with a class and when.

**Context** – this shows the theme around which your lesson is based and also how it fits in with past and planned future lessons.

**Timing** – it is vital to plan how long each activity is expected to take. You should then be able to see if you have too much content or not enough. Be realistic and flexible with your timing. If not, you will have to either make up for lost time or fill in extra time. This is one of the most difficult areas for inexperienced teachers. How long will it take your students to read a text? Only experience and a sound knowledge of your students will tell you this.

**Interaction** – who will be interacting at each stage of the lesson. Will it be teacher – student (T-S), student – student (S-S) or students working alone?

**Teacher's and observer's names** – may be useful if the class is being monitored. An example of a standard lesson plan format is shown on the following page. One is completed and the other is blank for you to print and use should you wish.

## Lesson Plan

<b>Teacher:</b> Peter Smith	<b>Observer:</b> n/a	<b>Date and time:</b> 15/02/02
<b>Class level:</b> Beginner	<b>Room:</b> 8	<b>Expected number of students:</b> 12

**Context:** revision of animal vocab from previous lesson to bring out new grammar

**Teaching aids:** pictures of animals, drawing paper, board and pens, exercise sheets

<b>Learner objectives:</b> For the students to be able to accurately produce can and can't when talking about animals, and to use animal vocabulary appropriately	<b>Personal aims:</b> To improve my instructions by demonstrating rather than using verbal instructions
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<b>Anticipated problems for students:</b> Pronunciation of can't.	<b>Anticipated problems for teacher:</b> Getting students to participate actively.
<b>Solutions:</b> Drilling and mouth diagrams	<b>Solutions:</b> Fun activate phase activity

Procedure	Phase	Timing	Interaction
Quick review of animal vocab – using pictures and drawings	Engage	5 mins	T-S
Ask students questions eg where can you see these animals? Do you have these animals in your country? What are your favorite animals? Why? Etc.		10 mins	T-S
What can your favorite animal do? What can't it do? Use the answers on the board to show difference in meaning and spelling. Highlight contracted form of can not = can't.	Study	7 mins	T-S
Drill pronunciation.		3 mins	T-S
Fill in the blank activity (in pairs)		5 mins	S-S
Feedback from above activity.		3 mins	T-S
Look at typical verbs of movement for animals (e.g. fly/swim/jump, etc) that weren't known. Use mime and drill for pronunciation. Check comprehension by asking students to mime.		5 mins	T-S
Put students into groups of three. Hand out blank sheets.	Activate 1	2 mins	T-S
Ask students to create a fantasy animal (demonstrate with one I prepared earlier by asking students what it can and can't do). In groups students think of, draw and name fantasy animal.		15 mins	S-S
Students show the animal to the class and describe what it can/can't do.		5 mins	S-S
Back up activity if time allows:			
Students draw animal word from a container, they describe abilities of the animal to the class. The student who guesses it first gets a point (can be done in teams if time allows).	Activate 2	(back up)	S-S

## Lesson Plan

<b>Teacher:</b>	<b>Observer:</b>	<b>Date and time:</b>
<b>Class level:</b>	<b>Room:</b>	<b>Expected number of students:</b>
<b>Context:</b>		
<b>Teaching aids:</b>		
<b>Learner objectives:</b> <i>For the students to be able to</i>	<b>Personal aims:</b>	
<b>Anticipated problems for students:</b>	<b>Anticipated problems for teacher:</b>	
<b>Solutions:</b>	<b>Solutions:</b>	

Procedure	Phase	Timing	Interaction

Procedure (continued)	Phase	Timing	Interaction

### ***Monitoring your lessons***

A good teacher will want to monitor the quality of his/her own lessons. As teachers we are continually striving to improve our skills and make our classes as enjoyable as possible. An effective way of doing this is for the teacher to evaluate his/her own lessons and make notes of what went well and where the lesson could have been improved. By focussing on each lesson's strengths and weaknesses teachers will be helping themselves to develop.

Sample self-evaluation form:

<b>Self Evaluation Form</b>	
<b>Name:</b>	<b>Class level:</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Number of Students:</b>
<i>Extent to which the learner objectives and personal aims were met</i>	
<i>Accuracy of anticipated problems and solutions</i>	
<i>Modifications made to the lesson procedure; reasons for them and how effective were they?</i>	

***Effectiveness of Engage phases***

***Effectiveness of Study phases***

***Effectiveness of Activate phases***

***Strengths and Weaknesses of Lesson***

***In Retrospect / Areas for Improvement***



# Supplement

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## Common terminology

If you have been doing any research on English language teaching, you will have probably come across a variety of acronyms that are commonly used. A brief explanation follows:

TEFL – Teaching English as a Foreign Language. This term is predominantly used when English is being taught in a country where it isn't the native language (for example teaching English to Spanish people in Spain).

TESL – Teaching English as a Second Language. This is where English is being taught to non-native speakers of English in a country where it is the native language (for example teaching emigrants to the UK/USA).

TESOL - Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages. This term theoretically encompasses both of the above.

ELT – English Language Teaching. This is mainly used by institutions in the UK.

EYL – English for Young learners. A common term used for teaching children.

ESP- English for Specific Purposes. This refers to teaching specialist and specific areas of business English, for example English for International Banking and Finance.

These are the major terms used but expect to come across many more during your teaching career!

## Recommended reading

The following books have been found useful by many teachers, during both their TEFL course and teaching careers:

Practical English Grammar, by A.J. Thomson and A.V. Martinet (OUP).

English Grammar in Use, by Raymond Murphy (CUP).

Practical English Usage, by M. Swan (OUP).

Collins Cobuild English Dictionary (Collins).

How English Works, by Swan/Walter (OUP).

How to Teach English, by Jeremy Harmer (Longman).

More Grammar Games, by Rinvolutri and Davis (CUP).

Grammar Practice Activities, by Penny Ur (CUP).

Grammar Games and Activities, by Peter Watcyn-Jones (Penguin).

The Resourceful English Teacher, by Chandler/Stone (Delta).

It is certainly not essential to have all (or any) of the above. However we would particularly recommend the books by Swan and Harmer.

