

EFL methodology, mistakes and feedback

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 (commonly referred to as 'L1', or first 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 (when learning a second or foreign language, often referred to as 'L2'), 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.

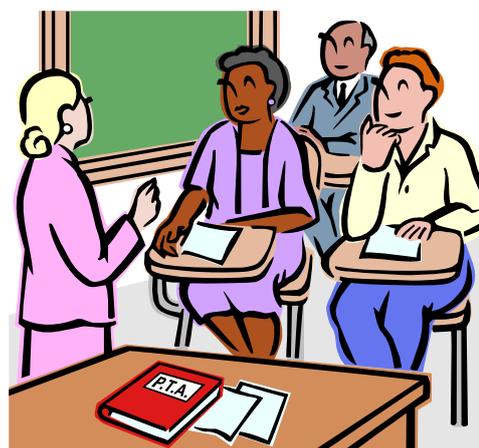
Engage

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.

Here are some ideas for engage phase and time-filling activities:

1. Simply write a prompt on the board and have students introduce themselves with their names and the information about themselves. For example ‘My name’s _____ and my favourite sport is_____’. You can then have a go at pronouncing their name by saying something like ‘Nice to meet you (name)’, encouraging ‘nice to meet you too’.

A nice extension to this is to ask students about what others had said. (So, what does Juan like to do, Sumi?). This encourages them to listen to each other! You can also have students mingle with prompts on board.

2. An easy way to keep student talk time high is to set them up in pairs and get them to find out some information about each other and then report back to the class about what they found out. It is often useful for the students if you put some prompts on the board for them. The extent of this depends on the level of the class. For example ‘What did you do yesterday?’ could be put up for a starter class which had already covered past simple. One benefit of using this in engage is that student talk time is kept high, and even if you only ask a few students to tell the class about their partner, they would all have spoken to each other in English.

3. Fizz- buzz is a simple numbers game which students enjoy, particularly if you devise some sort of ‘lose a life’ penalty system. In its simplest form, you tell students to count in relay around the class,, 1, 2, 3, 4...

Then you demonstrate that they must not say any numbers divisible by 3. Instead they must say ‘fizz’. 1,2, fizz, 4,5, fizz... This game can be made more complicated depending on the level of the class. You can count down from a number instead of up. You don’t have to simply relay around the room; you

control who has to say the next thing by gesturing to a specific student. You can add 'Buzz' for numbers divisible by 7. Students have to say 'fizz buzz' for numbers divisible by both 7 & 3 (21).

5. Relay the alphabet around the room forwards and backwards, then ask the students to give you a word beginning with each letter in a given category, such as countries, food, etc (make sure that it is possible to have a word beginning with each letter or pass on any that no word exists). Try to avoid simply getting the whole class to call out the words, as this can mean that only more vocal students contribute ideas.

You may not always have time to get through the whole alphabet, so try to think how you can stop the game naturally part way through. An alternative is to start with letters of the alphabet on the board and erase them as students call out words beginning with particular letters, thus reducing the choice each time.

6. Similar to the alphabet activity, you ask students to name (ten) things that (can fly). Other suitable categories are things you can fit in your pocket, things that can fit in to a circle (that you draw on the board), things you take on holiday, etc. As with the alphabet activity, make sure you set it up so that everyone contributes. Think of categories beforehand; perhaps put onto cards.

7. I spy. Put 'I can see something beginning with (...)' on the board and, after you have demonstrated with a couple of letters, have the student that guessed correctly choose something. This doesn't need to be limited to *things* in the classroom. Clothes and body parts are also ideal. Starters often get a little confused to start with if you play this, as they tend to say 'I can see something beginning with chair' instead of the letter 'C'. You need to make it clear to them that it is simply the first letter that they must say when they choose something.

8. Memory games are suitable for class sizes up to about 8 students. Above that they can get a bit too lengthy, and individual student talk time can become quite low. Something as simple as 'I went shopping and I bought (...)' on the board as a prompt is ideal, but you may need to write the first few things students say to highlight that they must remember the previous items. You can simply then relay around the room asking each



student to repeat each item and add one, or be unpredictable in the sequence of students you nominate to maintain attention. For example, the first student to speak often doesn't contribute further, so ask the student again part way round the room. Vary it, e.g. 'I went for a walk and I saw (...)'

9. Word linking can be fun. Students have to say one word and then the next student has to say a word starting with the last letter of the previous word. You could set this up as a team relay using the board. E.g. baG—GiraffE—EgG—GreY—YachT—T.... If you set up a team relay, make a rule that the longest word wins each time. At the end you can count each letter as a point and calculate the total for each team as a class.

10. Have students introduce themselves using the first letter of their name as a prompt for a piece of information. For example 'My name's Simon and I'm from Singapore' It doesn't have to be a true bit of information. You can use this with adjectives, things you like, jobs etc.. Even 'My name's (...) and I'm a (object/ animal + mime at same time)'

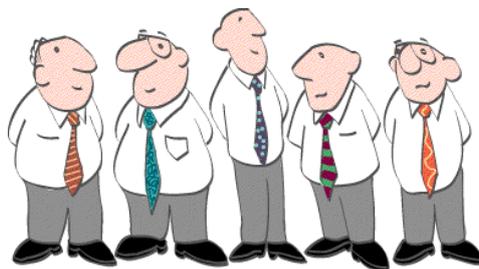
11. Similar to (10), you say something like 'I'm going on holiday and I'm going to take (...)'. You think of a category of things but don't tell the students what it is. For example it could be things that begin with a certain letter, animals, things that are soft, etc. Students then say 'I want to go on holiday and I want to take (...). Can I come too?'

If they say something within the category they can go if not they can't. It sometimes takes a while for them to grasp the idea but it doesn't matter if they don't guess what the category is as long as they speak!

12. Slow Pictionary ®. Draw something slowly on the board. After each stroke of the pen a student must guess what the thing is. This does work better the slower or worse your drawing is. You then get quite a bit of vocabulary from the students. It also helps if you can draw things as viewed from an unusual angle, so it isn't immediately obvious what it is.

13. Anagrams are always easy and fun for a time-fill. Set up teams of 2-4 students and make it competitive in some way. Get students to make anagrams if they are capable. E.g LADTHNIA >>>>> Thailand. Think of words challenging to pronounce and be strict. Perhaps pretend not to hear if they don't say the word correctly!

14. One word linking story or dialogue. Each student says one word and the next must say another that could continue a conversation or story.



15. List of information on the board, such as job, favourite sport, etc. Students stand up and have a mingle conversation to find one piece of information about each person in the room. Don't forget feedback!

16. An adaptation of Scattegories ®. Prepare a worksheet with categories, such as:

country thing fruit name colour animal

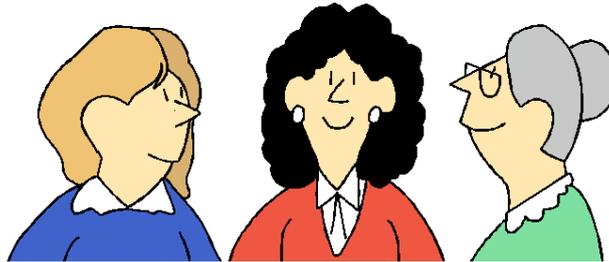
Students work in pairs or threes and you give a letter. Students have (one minute) to think of one thing in each category beginning with that letter. Award points, and repeat as time allows. Make sure students speak – have one person in each group as the scribe, and change each time you repeat the game. The longest word wins each time.

17. Similar to the 'I went shopping' game, you can have 'My marvellous machine has/ is (...)' students add features each time. (Has two big wheels, is very fast, etc). This is the sort of game you can use for pre-intermediates and above.

18. Similar to (10) and (11), the 'box game' is quite fun. Think of, but not give, a vocabulary rule (such as words with double letters, things that end with an 'e', etc). Say 'I can put a book in the box but I can't put a newspaper'. Students can ask 'Can I put a (...) in the box?' and keep going until they get the rule. Maybe set up teams. Once they've got the idea, students can think up their own rule.

19. Give each student a card or slip of paper with some prompts, even as simple as pronouns, and they must create a sentence to tell the class. E.g. 'We (...), but we don't (...)'. Vary each student's card. 'Saudi Arabia is (...) but England is (...)'

20. Get students to introduce the person next to them just from appearance. This is good when you are going to do a lesson about adjectives or clothes. Eg: This is Ning, she is tall and beautiful. She has a big nose and is wearing glasses.



21. Consequences. Each student is given an A4 sheet of paper with some fields to fill in. They only fill in ONE field in order (from the top to the bottom) and fold the sheet over to the next continuous line to hide what they have written. They then pass the paper on to the next student who fills in the next field and fold the paper over to the next line before handing the sheet to the third student. This continues until all the fields are hidden. The paper is then passed on once again. Each paper will contain an amusing story (sequence of events). This is read aloud by the student.

Name of a man famous or one in your class _____

met

Name of a woman famous or one in your class _____

at / in / on

Name of a Place _____

He said to her

“ _____ ”

She said to him

“ _____ ”

Consequence

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.

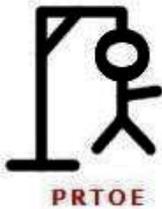
Specific examples of some of these Study activities are given on the next few pages. Bear in mind that each activity could probably be adapted for different language levels.



Tongue twisters (good for practicing pronunciation)

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.
Did Peter Piper pick a peck of pickled peppers?
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,
where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

Hangman



C _ A D



Hangman is one of the simplest and most versatile of all word games. As students of all ages and ability levels love it, it is an ideal way to start almost any class. Simply choose

a word or phrase that is central to the day's lesson, and convert it into the day's game. The example above uses 'countries' as a subject.

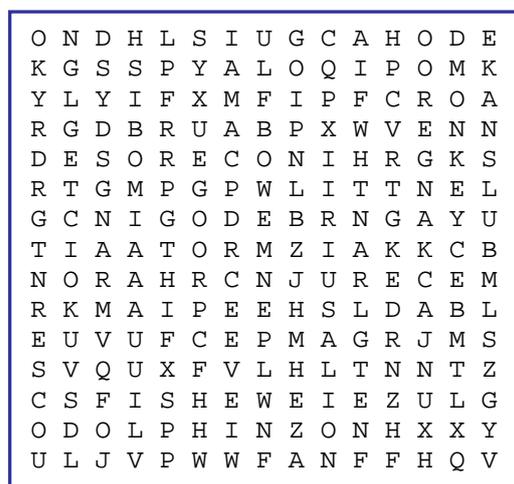
Here's how:

- Choose a word or phrase with which to work.
- Count its letters (include spaces as letters if using a phrase).
- On the board, draw a row of distinct underlines; one for each letter/space you counted.
- Review the rules.
- The student on whom you call (whether a volunteer or not) is to guess a letter that might belong to the word/phrase.
- If the guess is correct, write it on the appropriate underline(s). Then allow the student to guess again, or move on to allow a different student to try another letter.
- If the guess is not correct, you'll proceed to call on another student. Proceed as above until the word/phrase is revealed.

Word Searches

A word search is a word game that consists of letters arranged in a grid. The object of the game is to find and mark all of the words hidden in the grid. The words can be placed horizontally, vertically or diagonally.

Often a list of the hidden words is provided.



ANT
BEAR
BIRD
CAT
DOG
DOLPHIN
ELEPHANT
FISH
GIRAFFE
HIPPOPOTAMUS
KANGEROO
LION
MONKEY
RHINOCEROS
SHEEP
SNAKE
SPIDER
SQUIRREL
TIGER
WHALE

This example was created at <http://puzzlemaker.discoveryeducation.com/>; click on the 'wordsearch' option. There are many other EFL activities, such as crosswords and scrambled sentences that can be created at the same site.

Gap fill

Students fill in missing words in a sentence; the missing words are normally provided. In the example below, 10 words are provided where only 8 are needed.

1. I am _____ to the cinema this weekend.
2. He has _____ all of the cake.
3. Normally she _____ on Monday.
4. He is _____ on the phone right now.
5. They will _____ in the morning.
6. We _____ to the market on Saturday
7. That horse always _____ the race.
8. It is _____ again today.

eaten
arriving
works
talking
went
wins
raining
ate
going
arrive

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 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:

Code	Meaning
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.



Appendix:

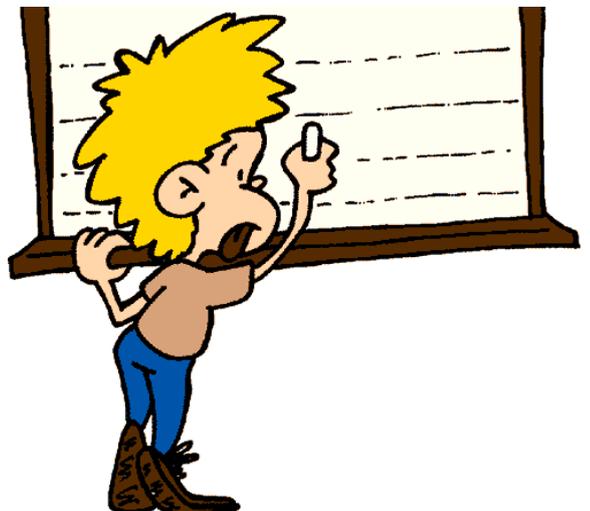
Lesson Planning General Guidance Notes

Engage Stage

- During this stage you want to ensure that every student speaks some English.
- Students should not be corrected during this stage. Repeated mistakes should be noted and dealt with during the study stage.
- If you can link the engage into study in some way, great, but it's not essential.
- The main aim is to have high student talk time with everyone contributing.
- When you want a student to speak use their name with an open hand gesture. Try to avoid 'finger pointing'

Study Stage

- During this stage students should be learning new English language concepts.
- Elicit as much as possible from the students. Try to avoid giving them too much or telling them things. For example, if you want to teach a question form, write the answer to the question on the board and ask what the question should be.
- Drilling should always be 3X3 – 3X chorally as a class followed by 3 individuals.
- When you come to an exercise, always do an example on the board, eliciting the correct answer from the students. Do this before handing out any material.



- Once the exercise is handed out to the students, do not interrupt them. Monitor to ensure that they are working as you require (in pairs, doing the exercise). Give a 1 minute warning prior to the end of the exercise. At the end of the exercise everyone should be listening for feedback, not finishing off their work.
- During feedback, if a mistake is made give other students an opportunity to correct it before you give it. Try to ask the question THEN name who you want to answer, e.g. "What have you got for number 5, Kenji?"
- Always bear in mind that you can cut exercises short to maintain the activate stage time period. If you do this, tell students before they start the exercise which parts you want them to do.

Activate Stage

- During this stage you are trying to encourage your students to be creative with the English language knowledge they already have and combine it with what they have just learnt. It is important to make sure that there is flexibility within the activities to allow individual creativity.
- A very clear demonstration is essential as is the elicitation of target language needed to complete the activity.
- During the briefing stage, involve the students in a demonstration and then get them to show you or tell you what they are going to do. Don't hand out the material until you are sure that everyone knows what to do.
- Once the activity starts monitor without interruption, unless you're joining in the activity!
- Feedback and correct as necessary making sure that you allocate enough time for all students to participate.
- Feedback helps you, as the teacher, know if the lesson has been understood and if further clarification is needed in future lessons.