

ESL Teaching Techniques

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Agenda

Intro and overview

Warm up

Language lesson and debrief

Transferrable teaching techniques:

- Visuals
- Question hierarchy
- Grids
- Dialogues and Role plays

Tips for communicating with ELL's

Resources

Adult learners need:

Relationship- Create a comfortable learning environment so that your student(s) interact with each other and with you

Relevance- The content of classes needs to be linked to the adult's real-life needs and interests. If not immediately obvious, then help make that connection for students.

Rigor- Adult learners need to see and know that they are learning and their time is used efficiently.

Curriculum (content of lessons) should be:

- Flexible and responsive to the needs and goals of the students
- Reviewed and recycled over time
- A balance of new material and practice
- Balance skills of learning to understand, speak, read and write

Learning activities should:

- Require students to produce language in a variety of ways
- Have a concrete hook
- Be connected to a real purpose
- Build from what is already known to new material
- Be demonstrated
- Be used more than once
- Challenge the student to stretch but not too much

Arabic Lesson Debrief (take notes)

Helped _____

Didn't help

Other Principles for Language Teaching

Techniques and Activities

ESL Question Hierarchy

The following structures for asking questions are arranged from easiest to most difficult in the range of language required to answer them.

1. Yes/No Questions

Do you live in Seattle?

Is this your son?

2. Either/Or Questions

Do you live in Seattle or Tacoma?

Is this yours or your daughter

3. Wh and H Questions

What is your name?

When is your birthday?





Where do you live?

How many children do you have?

4. Inference/ open-ended questions

Tell me about...

What do you think?

				
Mohamed	✓	✓	✗	✗
Hawa	✓	✓	✓	✓
Kadijah	✓	✗	✓	✓
Abdi	✓	✓	✗	✓

Grids

Procedure

- ◆ Introduce the topic or vocabulary set.
- ◆ Elicit and point to the picture or question on the grid.
- ◆ Model the new language. Grids most naturally lend themselves to questions/answer format

Do you like pizza?

Do you like tea?

Do you like ice cream?

Do you like crab?

- ◆ Mark the student's answers on the grid.
- ◆ Repeat for the next student.
- ◆ Whenever students are ready, they can take over the role of the questioner. Grids can also be handed out for students to complete in groups or as individual surveys, rotating the role of asking questions.

Do you like tea?

Do you like ice cream?

Do you like crab?

Follow up Activities

■ Line-up

If students need more practice with the target language in order to complete the grid, set up a line-up. Have students line up facing each other. Have students ask each other the questions. Move a student on one side of the line from one end of the line to the other. Students shuffle one partner to the right, facing a new partner. Repeat the process until everyone in the line has paired with everyone on the other side.

Once the information on the grid has been elicited, recorded, modeled, and practiced in this way, pick and choose from these optional practice and literacy activities:

■ True / False

Make statements about the information on the grid. *Mohamed likes pizza.* Point to the squares on the grid as you do so. Have students identify it as *true / false or right / wrong.* Repeat a number of times.

■ Point to squares silently and have students produce appropriate statements.

■ Practice various types of questions and answers:

Yes/no questions

Do you like pizza?

Does your daughter like pizza?

Either/or questions

Does Hawa like pizza or ice cream?

Who likes ice cream? Hawa or Mohamed?

“WH” questions

What does Mohamed like?

Who likes ice cream?

- **Students count, add, compare, contrast, analyze, summarize, generalize, or speculate about the information on the grid.**

What do most people in your family like?

How many people like crab?

Do many Somali students like coffee?

- **Learn words and phrases to make connections.**

*I like pizza, **but** my daughter doesn't.*

*Mohamed likes tea **and** coffee.*

- **The grid works as a great context to introduce new vocabulary and structures for summarizing.**

Everybody / nobody

Nobody likes tea and coffee. Somali students like coffee.

Negatives

My husband doesn't like rain.

Third person statements

She likes tea and crab.

- **Discuss the information in a general way to extend conversation**

How often did you eat it?

Where did you get it?

How did you cook it?

Did you eat it in ____ (country)?

- **Ask anything that the students can understand in this context that helps to extend the practice.**

Dialogues and Role-plays

When students have needs to communicate in specific situations, dialogues and role-plays are a natural way to practice speaking in a context for a specific purpose.

Dialogues

Dialogues are scripted conversations that respond to a clear purpose your students have for communicating. Your students may have told you that they want to interact at the post-office, call –in sick or speak to their doctor. They may consist of a few lines:

Hi, How are you?

Fine, thanks

or they may involve several exchanges:

Customer service: May I help you?

You: I need to return this shirt

Customer service: Is this exchange or refund?

You: Excuse me?

Customer service: Do you want to change it for another one or do you want your money back?

You: I want my money back

Procedure:

- Set the scene. Use pictures or drawings. Make it clear who is talking, where and about what.
- Model the dialogue. Play both parts or recruit someone to help
- Check Comprehension. What did they say? Why are they talking, etc.?
- Model again if necessary
- Teach the students' speaking part line by line. Drill for pronunciation and accuracy
- Practice the dialogue with the teacher
- Students practice in pairs
- Reading and writing activities (order the lines of the dialogue, fill in the blank, etc.)

Students may want a written copy of the dialogue if they read well. However, dialogues should be practiced and memorized not read. If students want to see the written form for security, ensure that they also practice without the script. An alternative is to write the dialogue on the board to begin with but erase whole lines and words as students become more accurate.

Role-plays

Role-plays are open-ended as students use any language at their disposal to meet the goal of the role-play. Students read about their role and problem on a role-card or situation card. There is no script. A role-play may include several people in a conversation. They are effective activities to teach some of the cultural rules of communication such as making eye contact and using a tone and volume appropriate to a given situation.

Example:

Look at the job announcement. Think of questions you want to ask about this job.

Ask the person at the front desk your questions

Procedure

- Set the scene. Include students world and personal experience
Has anyone looked for a job/ what happened? What did you do?
- Perform role-play. Teacher circulates and takes notes of good and bad responses
- Provide feedback on errors and communication style from your notes

Role-plays make a good assessment. See if students are able to produce the appropriate vocabulary and structures you have already practiced to meet the communication purpose without prompting from you. They can also be used to find out what language a student lacks in a specific situation. The role-play can then be repeated once teaching of content is completed.

Tips for Talking with English Language Learners

- Anything that helps communication "goes": pictures, drawings, and body language. Be creative and good spirited.
- Don't worry about errors - yours or theirs! Limit your correction to controlled lesson stages
- Laugh a lot. Humor eases tension and makes communication fun.
- Try to be quiet. Wait at least 5 seconds after asking a question.
- Speak at a normal volume. Try to speak at normal speed but slow down when you get a comprehension block
- When you get a comprehension block, try rephrasing. Use something else. Try writing it down or drawing a picture
- Ask person to tell you what they have understood.
- Don't be afraid to tell someone that you don't understand. Tell what you have understood and where you got lost.
- Go from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the complex.

Resources

Teacher resources: Places to find activities, games or how-tos

<http://bogglesworldesl.com>

<http://puzzlemaker.com>

<http://azagrammar.com>

<http://handouthub.com>

<http://englishclub.com>

www.caela.org An archive of useful short articles on ESL teaching topics.

www.apsva.us/reep **has lesson plans on common topics**

www.iteslj.com **Has a useful list of conversation questions**

www.eslcafe.com/ The "ideas cookbook" has lots of tasks and activities

