

TEACHING TODAY

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A YEAR IN REVIEW

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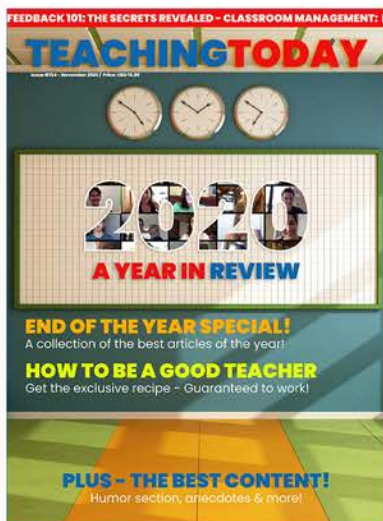
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TEACHING TODAY

Welcome, Everyone! Another year is wrapping up – but it certainly is a year like no other. Living and teaching during a lockdown has presented us with new challenges and it made us adapt to new situations like never before. From all of the Teaching Today team, this is a collection of the best content we made along the year. We hope that you enjoy it!

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HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHAT CAN BE DONE TO REACH A GOOD CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT?

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FACUNDO PIGNANELLI MINTED STUDIO

LET'S COOK!

What it takes to be a good teacher?

You are tired and the verge of giving up: You have tried EVERYTHING (and we do really mean everything) to be the best teacher but nothing seems to work out. Dispair no more! Here's the ultimate recipe to be a good teacher. Follow it carefully and you will become the best teacher* in the world!

Time: All of your life.

Difficulty: Quite High.

Ingredients (for a serving about the size of one person):

- Sympathy
- Humility
- Kindness
- Respect
- Knowledge,
- Patience
- Motivation
- Curiosity

Procedure:

Once the person is born, add one tbsp of Curiosity and mix it. Let it sit until the beginning of primary school.

Mix together the sympathy, humility, kindness, respect, motivation, and curiosity. You will get a soft dough, knead during primary and secondary school. Sprinkle the knowledge as you are mixing it.

Once your dough is in Teacher Training College, add patience (use a lot of it!) and add more knowledge. Mix it for about 4 years or until you get a teacher.

Once you get the teacher, add equal parts of motivation, knowledge and curiosity until the teacher is ready to retire.

You will also need to add motivation, add as much as you need it through the whole process.

HOT TIP

Don't be afraid to experiment! A key for a good teacher is to always think out of the box, so experiment as much as you want!

OUR READERS TRY!

We asked some readers in advance to try the recipe! Here's what they have to say:



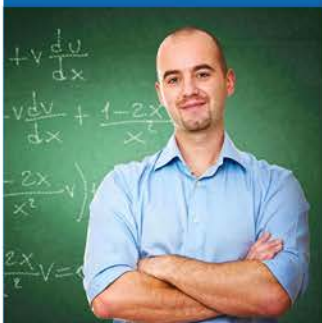
Tamara Davidson
Houston, TX.

"Best recipe ever!!! Changed my life. Thank you so much Teaching Today! I will be forever grateful. I cannot recommend it enough! All my teacher friends love it!"



Taylor Shift
Santa Monica, CA.

"I was getting so frustrated because nothing worked until I tried this recipe! Now my students are more engaged than ever and I even got a raise!! This recipe does magic, trust me!"



Brian Realperson
New York City, NY.

"I did the math and this recipe works. Trust me, I'm a real math teacher."

WANT TO GET FEATURED IN TEACHING TODAY? Today is your lucky day! You can try this recipe and send us the results along with your experience to teachingtoday@prismacorporation.com. Include your name, your state and a picture of you! You may get featured on our next issue.



Here is an unedited picture of our hamburgers.

Our last ad got pulled because they looked too good to be true.

Make your own conclusions.



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CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

Have you ever wondered what can be done to reach a good classroom management?



In this article you will explore different topics that will help you to manage your classroom, such as, reasons for grouping students, how to monitor students' works, different techniques for grouping students and finally a what-not-to-do section as regards managing and monitoring of pair and group work. But, first of all let's define what it refers to and its importance. Classroom management refers to the wide variety of skills and techniques that teachers use to keep

*"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
- Nelson Mandela*

students organized, orderly, focused, attentive on task, and academically productive during a class. It involves more than just discipline and rules; it extends to everything that teachers can do to facilitate or improve student learning, which would include factors such as behavior, environment (a welcoming), expectations (the ways that teachers expect students to behave toward other students), materials (learning resources that teachers

use), or activities (the kinds of learning experiences that teachers design to engage student interests). When classroom-management strategies are executed effectively, teachers minimize the behaviors that impede learning for both individual students and groups of students, while maximizing the behaviors that facilitate or enhance learning, and also students are likely to achieve improved academic results. Classroom management is important to the whole education process because it offers students an ideal learning environment,



helps prevent teacher burnout and makes students and teachers feel safer and happier. The routines of a well-managed classroom allow teachers to spend more time teaching and less time getting class started. Students are more easily engaged and less distracted in an organized classroom, so the learning environment is greatly enhanced. To sum up, when a good classroom management is clear and established since the beginning, teachers don't have to nag and discipline students as often, and it allows the teacher to have better, more positive rapport with the students. Therefore both students and teachers enjoy the educational process more.

REASONS FOR grouping students.

When planning a class, many things must be taken into account, but one of them is to consider which is the best way for our students to carry out the activity proposed by the teacher. There are 3 main methods to consider but, of course, each method has its advantages and disadvantages. The first one is individual work, this helps each student to carry out the activity at their own pace, it gives them time to carry out their own reasoning using their own methods and strategies.



*"All students can learn and succeed, but not in the same way and not in the same day."
— William G. Spady*

However, we should not abuse this strategy because although it can be very beneficial at times, it can often be more fruitful for students to share ideas with their peers. And having said this, I can mention the second method which is to work in pairs. Carrying out activities that allow students to work in pairs is a very good tool for their learning since it allows them to share and discuss their ideas and knowledge with their partner.

However, a bad choice in pairs can cause this tool not to be effective. That is, the teachers must know that it will be more positive for our students if we group them with another student with a different level, either higher or lower, since this will allow them to enhance each other from different points of view. On the other hand, if students were grouped by the same level all the time, knowledge would always be the same, there would be no progress.

That's why teachers must vary the way in which they pair their students in order to obtain good results in their classes. And Finally, we have the third method which is group work. This strategy is excellent to increase practice and participation in class, and this also benefits the debates that can be generated when students work in groups. However, as a disadvantage of this method, I can highlight that many times when group work is requested, not all members participate in the same way, so it is necessary to take into account the number of members and their level for the proposed activity to be successful.



TECHNIQUES FOR grouping students.



Regarding the techniques for grouping students, it is essential to know that the way that students are grouped is as important as the activities they carry out. Berkeley, a University of California, advocates that there are four ways in which groups can be formed which are randomly (which you should be careful with), teacher-selected, by seat proximity, or student-selected. The first two ways encourage interaction among students who may not be friends which can help develop communication skills. Of course, the teacher-selected way is effective when the teacher certainly knows the students, especially when grouping students with varying strengths and weaknesses.

This has proved to be useful since students with a lower level improve their English level just by hearing and talking to more advanced students. Furthermore, it is vital to analyze group size and duration. According to a Berkeley's article "Pairing is great for thirty-second or one-minute problem solving. Groups that work together for ten to 45 minutes might include four or five people." (Shannon McCurdy). When it comes to large groups, a practical idea is to assign a role to each member. In this way, they can organize their work properly. What's more, it is helpful to establish "some discussion guidelines with the class about respectful interaction before the first activity can foster positive and constructive communication." (Shannon McCurdy) not to mention that

they should be already organized in group before giving the instructions owing to the fact that “the physical movement in group formation tends to be distracting” (Shannon McCurdy). At the same time, according to a research carried out by Beatrice A. Ward (1987), there are three effective types of groups. Firstly, she mentions learning cycle groups in which students with similar learning needs are grouped for a short time. This type is usually applied when they need additional help to master particular contents or skills which have already been dealt with in the classroom. Secondly, she brings up cooperative groups. This kind of grouping is different from the other one as its purpose is that with diverse abilities and characteristics work together in order to accomplish a task and learn from each other during the process. Thirdly, she writes about long-term ability groups in which students are assigned to groups based on their academic ability. These are long lasting groups and they only change if a student’s academic performance changes. A key aspect to take into account is that, “More effective teachers use more than one type of group.” (Ward, 1987). On the whole, the technique for grouping students will vary depending on the objectives.



and a tense rather than relaxed, student-centered learning environment during less guided practice activities.

WHAT IS TO MONITOR STUDENTS’ WORK?

Monitoring students’ work is also a very important point to bear in mind in the classroom, because it will guide you in determining whether or not you need to spend more time on the concept with the class as a whole. In that way, you’ll know if you need to give more attention to certain students, or if it is okay to move on. Monitoring refers to the activities pursued by teachers to keep track of student learning for purposes of making instructional decisions and providing feedback to students on their progress. However, the most important thing is to do it effectively since there is a danger of over-monitoring, interference,

how can we achieve to monitor students’ work effectively?

Unobtrusive monitoring is the most effective way to do it, and is often best done from behind the learners, out of their field of vision, so that they are focused on



the task and each other rather than the teacher. Some useful tips to put into practice are:

- Move chairs away from walls.
- Arrange seating so that all students are visible from wherever the teacher is positioned.
- Monitor pairs or groups randomly.
- Don't spend too much time with one individual, pair or group, and make sure that all learners are monitored.
- Rather than standing or crouching, sit with pairs or groups.

All in all, the monitoring techniques above apply to all teaching and learning situations, but monitoring also achieves the purpose of providing discipline in certain circumstances. Sometimes the presence of the teacher in a supervisory role is enough, but careful monitoring guarantees the best performance from the learners and provides the most instructive feedback for the teacher.



A what-not-to-do section as regards the managing and monitoring of pair and group work.

Taking everything into account, we will give some tips about what not-to-do regarding this topic.

- **Group work** is one of the most asked approaches to work by students. However, you should remember that if you are not attentive enough, what could have been a great experience could turn into chaos.

- **Over monitoring:** In order to keep a good working environment and to check the student's progress, the teacher should be monitoring the class. But it is necessary to avoid the extremes. Over monitoring can easily cause discomfort or tension in the students. Nobody likes to feel over observed. This might cause the students to not fully open to the activity and to be less participative.

- **Under monitoring:** On the other hand, under monitoring can cause the sensation of lack of support and control.
- **Fixed monitoring:** Spending too much time monitoring one area and neglecting the other is the combination of under and over monitoring. Staying for too long in one place will make the observed students feel uncomfortable and to the other students feel that they are on their own. Both of them will be reluctant to make questions.
- **Lose the control of the class:** This might sound a little obvious, but it happens frequently. The disorder grows slowly and progressively, with the pass of the time, the class turns



into chaos. The noise will raise, the communication will be inefficient, the working environment will be distracting, and the teacher won't be able to follow the progress of the class.

- **Random group formation:** The moment when the groups are formed is fundamental to the success of the activity. Working with a group of people who have very different personalities and views can bring conflict. It is essential to have this in mind, especially if the teacher is the one forming the groups. Putting two students who had incompatible personalities or had had conflicts in the past could generate chaos within the group and the classroom.
- **Not intervening:** The teacher must be actively making changes in order to achieve the best working scenario. Sometimes this might mean intervening in the group. Situations such as conflicts between students, over working from some members or under working from others are situations in which the teacher must mediate. Of course, you should not over intervene.

All things considered, classroom management is a vital aspect which needs to be taken into account if you want a proper learning atmosphere where both children and the teacher can enjoy the learning process more. In this way, having good classroom management as a habit will allow us to have an organized environment and therefore, students will feel motivated to keep on working. By taking advantage of the different tips and considering this information, you will surely achieve it.

*Article written by Cao Camil,
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Galluzzo Juliana and Tadie Victoria.*



*"It's the teacher that makes
the difference, not the
classroom."
— Michael Morpurgo*



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GIVING INSTRUCTIONS



HOW TO GIVE INSTRUCTIONS AND NOT TO FAIL IN THE PROCESS?

Instructions can be a very useful tool if you know how to use it, otherwise, it can become your worst enemy. You may be wondering, then how do I use them properly? In this article, we will help you to improve the way in which you give instructions. Check out these techniques and see which one fits the best for your students!

FIRST OF ALL... WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT? HOW SHOULD THEY BE?



Instructions help students to understand what they need to do in order to complete a task and achieve a goal. They make the understanding of activities simpler since students can be aware of the teacher's expectations. However, instructions should be given clearly; if not, they can make the understanding of the activities even more complicated and difficult. When it comes to giving useful instructions, as a teacher, you should bear in mind that short sentences make the explanation simpler, and therefore, clearer. Moreover, body language and written commands support spoken instructions. Commands should be repeated more than once, it is key that you do not take for granted that students understood everything. It is also important to follow a chronological order and be consistent to avoid misunderstandings. Giving examples, demonstrations or a sample of the final product which students are expected to produce makes instructions clearer. Remember that if you do not give clear instructions they will not be useful, and students may get anxious or lose interest in the activity.





A LITTLE BIT OF HELP FOR YOU... TECHNIQUES FOR CHECKING THE UNDERSTANDING OF INSTRUCTIONS:

With respect to checking the understanding of instructions, it should first be understood that this is an ongoing process in which teachers and students make the necessary adjustments to what they are doing in the daily lessons. In the first cycle, it is difficult to catch students' attention before giving an instruction. Sometimes the classroom atmosphere is too noisy. For this reason, a catchy technique is to use a 'magic word', such as 'pepperoni', so students will know they do not have to move or talk in order to listen. It is essential to speak up and say exactly what you need students to do. Another useful technique is to ask them to repeat directions back to you. In that way, you can ensure that gaps in

understanding are addressed. You may also ask questions like 'what should you be doing right now?', 'what do you have to do first?'... 'and then?', instead of just asking if they have understood. By doing this, the teacher is overcoming any existing misunderstanding of instructions. What is more, playing any kind of game, or doing a quiz, is an interesting way to check for understanding apart from paraphrasing. Remember that you should allow students to use L1 to ask questions, especially at a beginner level.



In terms of techniques for checking the understanding of instructions **in the second cycle**, you should ask them specific questions about the requirements. Try to avoid yes/no questions, those will not show understanding. For instance, quizzes, games and multiple choices are entertaining techniques; use variety. Moreover, using peer instruction will engage the students since they will be able to examine their own and their classmates' reactions. To reinforce the understanding, confusing points should be clarified. In addition to this, providing feedback to the students can help them to comprehend and complete the task successfully. All in all, even though techniques may vary between the first and the second cycle, in both cases it is essential to make sure that the given instructions are significant for students.



WHAT-NOT-TO-DO:

A common mistake, as we have mentioned before, is to assume that students understood everything you said. Some students may have doubts but remain silent because of shyness. What is the result of giving bad instructions?

Unfortunately, the most common one is related to the final product that students produce of the task. They solve activities wrong or skip steps during a game. Then, it is evident that instructions were given wrongly when students start to talk to each other in their L1 about something that is not related to the activity. In contrast, it is a bad sign when there is a



dead silence at the start of an activity which is supposed to imply peer or group work. In order to avoid this, students should have time to ‘digest’ the instructions and information. For this reason, do not rush and do not complicate instructions unnecessarily; keep everything simple.



ALL IN ALL...

there can be no doubt that the wrong use of instructions can become a mess for your students as well as for you. Next time, before giving instructions, remember that ‘simpler is better’.

Written by Florencia Cáceres, Lía Díaz, Ángeles González del Otero, Sol Martelli and Agustina Santa Cruz.

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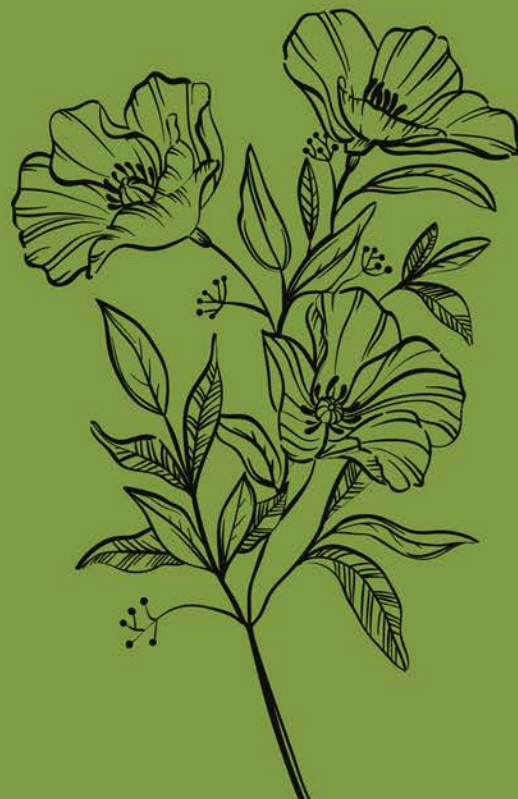
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LESSON: OPENINGS AND CLOSURES, TIMING AND PACING

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT ABOUT THESE 4 FACTORS FOR A LESSON?

Section by: Carrasco Melina, Gomez Matías, Infiesta Lucía, Meza Sofía, Villavicencio Estela

If you are a teacher or you want to be one, have you ever thought about Openings, Closures, Timing and Pacing for planning lessons? If not, stay with us for a minute and let's think about it together. What you choose as warm-up, meaning as openings, will be the key whereas your students will feel engaged, intrigued, even excited towards the topic or the other way around. The importance with Closures is likewise, with them you and your students will be able to determine what they truly learned in the lesson. What about Timing and Pacing then? Are they equally important? the answer is yes, they will be the determining factors of your lessons. Along this article we will define each of these concepts, give you useful techniques and tips to put them in practice inside the classroom, transforming you into the ultimate teacher!

WARMING UP

Why are opening activities often underestimated, even though they were proven to be of great assistance? Warming up activities have as main goal to create motivation towards the topic of the lesson. These kinds of activities should be short and the first ones to be delivered: the responsables for creating a positive attitude in regard to the learning that will be happening throughout the rest of the day. When you enter the class you don't know what is going on with your students ; This is why these activities are so important, they will help them to put aside previous thoughts and focus their attention on whatever is going to be next. They will be in charge of awakening students' curiosity and creating an attractive image of the coming lesson. Students will be more prone to get involved and because of that a better learning process will take place.

NOW THAT WE WARM UP, LET'S GET SOME CLOSURE!

Closure is very important right? Whatever you decide to do to finish the lesson will be the last impression your students will receive from everything they have been working on and learning. The closure of the lesson may be a determiner whereas your students leave the classroom with doubts, informational gaps, confusion or grounding everything they've learned, feeling that the class has actually taken place and left something on them. Closure activities are not just for the students, they are of big help to the teachers too, they can be a recount of a lesson, the merge of the current lesson with the previous one and even a teaser of what is going to be the future one. How beneficial do you think closure activities are? Well, proper implementation of these kinds of activities can establish and keep the course momentum. They can give students the opportunity to celebrate out their own achievements while at the same time reflect upon the lesson.

Bear in mind that these activities, warming up as well as closures, should be very well planned whereas if they are for younger students (primary level) or for teenager students (secondary level) .



TELL ME IN WHAT LEVEL YOU ARE TEACHING AND I'LL TELL YOU WHAT WARMING UP AND CLOSING ACTIVITIES YOU CAN USE

The little ones get easily excited over things, they can't wait to have fun and play but they also can get chatter, noisy and in crave for attention. Their concentration will not last long and they don't respond very well to explicit input but they have a great sense of humor. Younger students will be really willing to do tasks that are interesting and may involve games.

OPENING ACTIVITIES

YOU CAN ASK HOW THEY ARE FEELING TODAY. IN THAT WHAT WAY YOU'LL BE ENCOURAGING THEM TO USE THE LANGUAGE. BESIDES, THEY LOVE TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE WILL BE ENACTED

YOU CAN READ SONGS, NURSERY RHYMES OR POEMS TO INTRODUCE A TOPIC.

YOU CAN USE THE TRICK GAME. SET A BOUCH SENTENCES RELATED TO THE TOPIC AND A COUPLE COMPLETELY UNRELATED. READ THEM AND ASK THEM TO IDENTIFY THE ONES UNRELATED. IF THE SENTENCE IS RELATED THEY'LL HAVE TO GIVE YOU A THUMBS UP AND IF IS UNRELATED THEY WILL HAVE TO GIVE YOU A THUMB DOWN

CLOSURE ACTIVITIES

YOU CAN ASK THEM TO TELL YOU ABOUT SOMETHING NEW THEY HAVE LEARNED TODAY, SOMETHING THAT HAS SURPRISED THEM AND SOMETHING THEY'VE SEEN IN THE LESSON THAT THEY HAVE SEEN IN ANOTHER ONE.

YOU CAN GIVE THEM A SHORT AND FUN QUIZ OR MAYBE THINK OF A GAME.

MAKE THEM DRAMATIZE (WITH ASSISTANCE) A REAL-LIFE APPLICATION OF WHAT THEY'VE SEEN

Your **teenage students**, on the other hand, are going through a difficult period of life, they may feel insecure and let me assure you that they feel under a strong set of emotions. Teenagers get bored quickly and if what you're doing is not of their interest, they will probably stop paying attention. There is also the problem with discipline, answering back and rudeness. Don't despair though, because while interested they are really good at focusing and they respond really well to clearly organized tasks.

OPENING ACTIVITIES

IF YOUR STUDENTS HAVE BEEN IN THE CLASS FOR LONG, YOU CAN USE A WARMING UP ACTIVITY INVOLVING THEM TO STAND UP AND MOVE. FOR EXAMPLE **"THE PAPER ROLL"** ACTIVITY. THIS ACTIVITY WILL MAKE THEM FEEL INTRIGUED. IN A PAPER ROLL STICK WORDS IN HALF, MAKE EACH STUDENT TO CUT A PAPER OF THE ROLL AND THEN TELL THEM TO GO FIND HIS OTHER HALF AND THEN BRING TO YOUR DESK THE COMPLETE WORD. EACH WORD WILL BE RELATED TO THE TOPIC YOU ARE GOING TO TEACH.

IF YOUR CLASS IS AFTER A BREAK OR LUNCH TIME, MAYBE YOU CAN USE AN ACTIVITY THAT CAN HELP THEM SETTLE FOR THE CLASS. LIKE **"THE LAST ONE STANDING"** YOU'LL TELL THEM WHAT IS THE MAIN TOPIC OF THE LESSON. THE GAME WILL CONSIST OF THEM TELLING 5 WORDS ASSOCIATED WITH THE TOPIC IN 40S, YOU'LL ASK THIS TO EVERYONE, THE ONE WHO CAN'T ACHIEVE IT IS OUT OF THE GAME AND THEN YOU WILL BE INCREASING THE AMOUNT OF WORDS THEY HAVE TO GIVE TILL THE LAST STUDENT STANDS.

CLOSURE ACTIVITIES

IF YOU WANT TO CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING, PREPARE A BUNCH OF QUESTIONS AND CALL THEM **"THE TICKET OUT OF CLASS"**. FINISH THE CLASS A LITTLE EARLY, HAND OUT THE QUESTIONS AND TELL THEM THEY CAN LEAVE THE CLASS AS SOON AS THEY ANSWER THE QUESTION AND LEAVE IT ON YOUR DESK. IF WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR IS A SUMMARIZE, ASK THEM

IF WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR IS A SUMMARIZE, ASK THEM TO PUT EVERYTHING THEY HAVE SEEN IN THE CLASS INTO A **RAP SONG OR A SONG**. THE WHOLE GROUP WILL HAVE TO BE INVOLVED IN THE CREATION OF IT AND MAYBE YOU CAN EVEN LET THEM DO NOISE TO MAKE THE RHYTHM.

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A CLOSURE THAT CAN HELP THEM SET WHAT THEY'VE LEARNED, MAYBE YOU CAN TRY TO ASK THEM TO CREATE A QUESTION THEMSELVES REGARDING WHAT THEY'VE DONE IN THE LESSON AND TELL THEM THEY MAY BE USED AT A FUTURE EXAM.

FEELING CHALLENGED?

If you ask teachers what they feel is one of the most challenging aspects of teaching, "chunking" the lesson in order to break up the information/skills they want to present is a possible answer. It's not a hard thing to do per se, but doing it successfully is a whole different story, you will need to plan accordingly and have a good pacing in the classroom.

But What exactly is pacing ? It's the rhythm and timing of classroom activities or units, the way time is allocated to each classroom component and the process of deciding which is the right moment to change to another activity.

GOOD PACING IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE INSIDE THE CLASSROOM, IT ALLOWS FOR A DISTRIBUTION OF CLASSROOM TIME THAT FAVORS A DIVERSITY AND WEALTH OF ACTIVITIES;

Good timing will allow you either to keep to the course set out in your lesson plan or to follow side-tracks judiciously.

Now that we know how important timing and pacing are, we will share with you some techniques to change the pace of the class on the go and useful tips for you to make the most out of your time inside the classroom.

A If you want something random that will take your students for surprise, then use the Drill Technique, suddenly tell them to stop what they are doing and ask them some quick fire questions around; use as many as possible and maybe add visual prompts. If you want something regular maybe you are looking for the Chant Technique. You will need to select a weekly chant which rouses students. This can be a quotation for higher levels or a sentence construction covered by lower levels. Another great technique is to Play a game. Do a 10 minute revision game involving everyone pooling ideas, words or questions . Or you can also use a more traditional technique, Give a dictation. They will have to concentrate here! It might be just a short piece of text or a list of words.

Don't feel overwhelmed, let us give you some useful tips as well. The first one will be Planning, always plan well to avoid running out of time. Then we'll need to have Punctual behaviour, this means to be in the class before the bell rings, begin and end the class on time. Also, please be sure materials are ready, by doing this you will let the flow, prepare photocopies, use a projector screen, have handouts, etc. Always Check for understanding. It is really important to take time to see where your students are during the lesson and adjust accordingly with formative assessments. And last but not least don't forget to

TALK AT A BRISK PACE BECAUSE SLOW, MONOTONOUS SPEECH PUTS STUDENTS TO SLEEP.



WILL YOU...?

WITH ALL THIS INFORMATION, WE CAN SAY THAT TEACHING IS MUCH MORE THAN JUST GETTING TO THE CLASSROOM AND TALK FOR AN HOUR, OR AT LEAST GOOD TEACHING

is much more than that, it requires to take a lot into account, from the best decision on how to start your lesson, to the appropriate way of ending it. Furthermore, what decisions are there to make as to how fast you should go through with the lesson. Please, remember that teachers need to be spontaneous in order to be able to change the pace of the lesson, this way learners' best interest will be at mind. So, next time you plan a lesson or enter your classroom, we really hope you'll remember and even try out what you've read in Wonderland Teaching magazine. Will you?



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PACING AND TIME

ALLOCATION AT THE MICRO- AND MESO-LEVEL WITHIN THE CLASS HOUR BELLATERRA: JOURNAL OF TEACHING & LEARNING LANGUAGE & LITERATURE VOL. 1, NO. 1, NOVEMBER 2009, 30-48

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DIY: “YOUR PERFECT CLASSROOM”

Mostly teachers underestimate the importance of the learning atmosphere to trigger learning. For beginners, it is not easy to bear in mind the most essential items in order to create an effective and positive relationship between the educator and learner. In the following paragraphs we will discuss why creating a learning atmosphere must be a paramount and our part of departure when planning classes, and also will provide some tips to facilitate it.

Why is it important to build a good rapport?

Building a positive relationship with students is as essential for our teaching as well as it is to breathe. Not only does it reflect our performance as professional, but also promotes your students' confidence to ask questions, adds value to your class, and determines everybody to stay persuasive in their work. Therefore, there are many techniques that you can use to develop this rapport.

TIPS!

Be yourself: the best way to do it is to show your student who you really are, i.e., not afraid of putting yourself in an uncomfortable situation. This will make your student feel comfortable with you and their partners.

Learn student names as quickly as possible. It will show them that you are interested to know about them.

Smile! Show the students you are happy to be there and to see them.

Make eye contact – this shows a sense of openness, honesty and caring but be aware of student discomfort.

Laugh at your own mistakes! This will show your students that you are not perfect.

How to develop classroom etiquette?

Establishing classroom etiquette in the first lesson is crucial for creating a positive learning atmosphere. Setting goals and rules beforehand will let our students know what we expect from them. Being clear from the start prevents misbehaviors and less time wasted on disruptions and discipline. Nevertheless, this does not mean that we would not need to recall it or reinforce it during the year. Providing that children learn morality by living it, teachers must promote habits and activities to develop appropriate behavior in the classroom and outside it. In order to create a moral community, the following conditions are basic:



In the first place, students should know each other. If they know something about their peers, they are more likely to value and feel an attachment to them. For this reason, providing easy tasks to be dealt in small groups or in pairs during the first lessons is an efficient way to build bonds among students. This increases a feeling of friendliness in the classroom.

Then, students should respect, affirm and care about each other. An approach to promote this, is building self-esteem among students. We can do this by developing habits of affirming each other, in those activities or moments of the lesson students will be asked to share publicly something positive about a peer; in the same way, those activities promote further acts of helpfulness and caring.

Thirdly, students should feel membership in, and responsibility to the group. In this case, we must develop a group identity; consequently, rituals and traditions in the classroom are essential. They are visible expressions of the groups' communal life and reinforce the feeling of membership. Lastly, students' responsibility to the group is a consequence if they really feel comfortable and secure with it.

Do we have to avoid anything?

"It is true that each student is unique", this quote is repeated consecutively in educational textbooks and clearly shown in the classroom. Each one is a world, sometimes we have participative students, who like to talk and interact, and other times there are shy students who prefer being in silence the whole lesson or just making isolated comments. Sometimes, this last issue may be due to mistakes that teachers make in the classroom. Ideally, the goal of increasing participation is not to have every student take part in the same way or at the same rate. Instead, it is to create an environment in which all participants have the opportunity to learn and in which the class explores issues and ideas in depth, from a variety of viewpoints. To maintain an active role in our students it is necessary to take into account what we should avoid.

- Developing lessons at a level that is too difficult or confusing.
- Engaging all students actively. Not make the student feel that his or her participation in the classroom is useless. For example, while one student makes a presentation, other students take notes or use a rubric to assess the presentation.
- Making them feel that the material is impossible to understand. Demonstrate that you believe all students will learn.
- Making learning less interesting without relating lesson content to the students' life and local environment.
- Following the same lesson structure every class.
- Limiting lectures or presentations to 15 minutes before directing a student activity and breaking the class period into two or three different activities will be some good ideas to carry out during lessons.
- Pushing them to talk when they feel insecure about the topic. If a student isn't able to participate, he or she won't be able to clarify the material he or she is struggling with and will maintain a surface level understanding of the material. As a consequence, students will be afraid of having the wrong answer and other students will judge them.

How to create a feel of belonging?

Last but not least, a sense of belonging is a basic human need. This makes us feel like there is a community behind us and that makes us feel relaxed, receptive and motivated. This sense of belonging has a huge impact on the language classroom since it is the core to reach academic success. And that is why a teacher must have some specific characteristics to make students feel at ease in the classroom, such as:

- Listening to her/his students.
- Being patient and honest and inspire confidence.
- Being authoritative without being distant.
- Being enthusiastic and inspire enthusiasm.
- Creating a supportive and caring learning environment.
- Being sensitive to students' needs and emotions.
- Setting a high expectations for all students
- Having his/her own love of learning and inspires it.



When teaching the quality of our learning atmosphere will determine our performance as professionals. For this reason, building a good rapport, establishing a classroom etiquette, creating a feeling of belonging and promoting a relationship based on respect must be paramount to achieve the learning goals expected. Teaching our kids life skills is of great importance, the results will affect our classroom environment and our community.



SCHEDULE

9:00 PE
9:30 Library
10:00 Calendar
10:30 Recess
10:45 Snack
11:00 Reading Groups
11:50 Lunch
12:30 Best Work/Story
1:30 Recess
1:45 Science
2:25 Centers
2:40 Treasure Chest/Secret Scrap
3:00 Dismiss

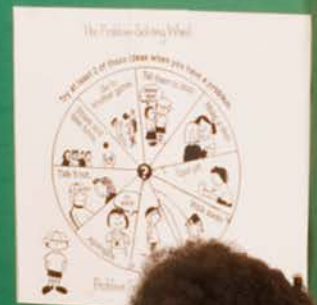
WORD ID

This week's Key Words:

let dig day will

Question of the Day

Do you know how to tour Saudi Arabia?



IN THE FIELD

A classroom in Houston, TX.

FEEDBACK 101: THE SECRETS REVEALED

BY FACUNDO PIGNANELLI, JAZMÍN ASÍS, LUCIA VILA, STEFANÍA LIZARRAGA AND ALEJO BENITEZ.
PHOTOS BY GETTYIMAGES.

What is meant by the expression giving feedback? Feedback can take place in different areas but by giving feedback we mean the assessment or review we give to our students according to their development. According to the British Council, *"Feedback is information a teacher or another speaker, including another learner, gives to learners on how well they are doing, either to help the learner improve specific points, or to help plan their learning. Feedback can be immediate, during an activity, or delayed, at the end of an activity or part of a learning programme, and can take various forms."* That is to say, that feedback can not only be given by the teacher, but also among peers. This can make the students feel more comfortable by receiving feedback from their peers than the teacher. However, we need to be careful about the way we assess our students. Marianne Stenger (2014) states that *"The downside, of course, is that not all feedback is equally effective, and it can even be counterproductive, especially if it's presented in a solely negative or corrective way."* For that reason, we need to consider a lot of things before giving feedback to be as specific as we can. We not only need to take care of the words we choose, but also, it is necessary to be clear in what we want to accomplish with it. Jeremy Harmer (2007) says that

"The way we assess and correct students will depend not only upon the kind of mistakes being made (and the reasons for them), but also on the type of activity the students are taking part in." For that reason, when giving feedback we need to take into account several points, for example, what we want to point out and what we want to achieve. We need to differentiate both, an error and a mistake. We need to know if we want to achieve fluency or accuracy to know when we are going to give our feedback and how to make it as positive as possible for it to be effective.

Positive feedback is the act of acknowledging and praising good performance and extra efforts made by students. The use of positive feedback in our classrooms is very important because it is a way of encouraging, stimulating, and motivating students to keep trying.

"NOT ALL FEEDBACK IS EQUALLY EFFECTIVE, AND IT CAN EVEN BE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE, ESPECIALLY IF IT'S PRESENTED IN A SOLELY NEGATIVE OR CORRECTIVE WAY".

That is why it is especially important to use them when students make a mistake. By giving them positive comments we can help them learn from this experience and, at the same time, we are encouraging them to keep working and feel confident in challenging themselves. We can also use feedback on mistakes to point them out what they are doing wrong, politely, so they can correct it. There are different things we can do in order to make positive feedback present in the classroom. One idea is to have some motivational phrases such as "Keep working, you are doing a great job" posted on one of the classroom walls so that every time a child does something right or makes a mistake and you want to encourage her/him, you can point to one of the phrases, showing them that they are making it well. Another possibility is that when a student comes to your desk for you to check and correct their work, you can write a motivational phrase on a post-it and then paste it in the student's notebook.

How many times have you, as a teacher, seen your students making mistakes and errors in the classroom? Even when they have been repeatedly pointed out to children, they go on making some of them. Thus, what should you do? First, define them: Even though some people think that they are the same, they are not, and the difference between the two concepts

DEMOGRAPHICS

Giving feedback to younger students can be specially difficult.



has to be clear to know how you should proceed. So, let's see what we can find: When we talk about mistakes, we are talking about something which is random, which is accidental. When children make it, they sometimes know that it's wrong, but the wrong word just slips out. For instance, after learning the rule that "must" does not take "to" after it and before the infinitive, the learner will use one form -he must do- and sometimes the other -he must to do-, quite inconsistently but it could happen.

Also, mistakes can be divided into three broad categories: *errors* are found in these categories. They, on the other hand, are something that children haven't learnt yet; errors give them the chance to learn something for the first time and gives you the chance to teach it for the first time too. An example of an error could be when your students try to say something but do not know the correct way of saying it; that's why the category of errors is the one which most concerns teachers.

When we have good fluency, it means that we can produce and engage with language smoothly and effortlessly. Sure, we may make mistakes, but we are able to communicate our ideas. It is the flow and efficiency with which you ex-

press your ideas and you can speak well, easily, reasonably quickly and with few pauses. You can understand what goes on around you and make yourself understood in turn.

Fluency is mostly associated with speaking, but of course, we use it when we write as well. We text our friends, write informal emails or chat online using our fluency skills! Besides, in an academic or even professional setting, this is one of the skills to focus on for an oral presentation or debate.

It is a way where a learner can speak and how well they can communicate without pauses or hesitations, without needing to search for words or phrases, without having to consider the language of what they are about to say.

In addition, outside of the classroom, fluency can help you socialize with native English speakers and avoid misunderstandings. It happens when you're able to speak comfortably, confidently, and fluidly on a topic. Also, when you are able to efficiently choose the words and grammar structures needed to express yourself.

Fluency generally increases as learners progress and become more comfort-

able using the language.

Accuracy, on the other hand, is often what we think about when we are learning a language. Accuracy is about using correct grammar in speaking and writing. It is about understanding the deeper meaning and usage of vocabulary (understanding what words actually mean and using them in the correct context) and also involves the proper pronunciation of words. It is the right use of tenses, verb forms, collocations and colloquialisms, among other things.

It takes lots of practice to be accurate, and it is something we must work towards little by little. Every week we can exercise a different aspect of our accuracy, whether it be vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation or punctuation correctly, such as verb forms (past tense, present tense, and so on), articles (a, an, the) and prepositions (in, on, from, at). What's more, this skill is particularly important for written assignments at university, such as essays and lab reports. If you speak English with a high level of accuracy it means you speak correctly, with very few mistakes.

When we communicate in English, we want to use correct language (and do it without thinking) in order to have a

meaningful conversation with others. So the truth is, both skills are equally as important, but this is a learning journey that takes time and dedication. They are important in the classroom and one should not be sacrificed for the other.

Accuracy and Fluency are two factors which can determine the success of English language students in the future. A good mixture is the ideal way to go.

In fact, a student who is more fluent than accurate can be more successful at communication than someone who is more accurate than fluent. This is because communication is a fluid concept which involves more than one participant, and the other participant may still be able to understand the communication even if the rate of accuracy of the speaker is not very high.

When more complex language is increasing, it may be unfair to interrupt or highlight true errors -after all, the learner does not necessarily know how or why they have produced something wrong-. However, errors should be addressed early, to move towards a more successful lesson. You have to give them the space to commit them freely, but do not allow them to fall behind those errors. So, take into account, listen carefully to how students' responses are structured, are pronounced, are written,

and focus on the problem. Maybe you are asking yourself "what kind of problems could be presented in the classroom related to the topic that we are talking about?" Where their first language and English come into contact with each other, there are often confusions which provoke errors in a learner's use of English, let's give some examples: first, the level of sound, there are many confusions. Also, the level of grammar too, where a student's first language has a subtly different system. Another one could be the level of word usage where similar sounding words have slightly different meanings. And the last one, when the rules that they learnt, and the new rules that they create subconsciously are mixed up.

Never forget that errors are part of a student's learning, they are a stage of their development. When responding to errors you should be seen as providing feedback, helping that reshaping process rather than telling students off because they are wrong!

There are a huge number of possibilities to address errors; you shouldn't avoid them, you have to take advantage of those errors because children are learning from them at the same time. Always take into account the fact that there are two distinct stages of a correction; in the first one, you show students that a mis-

take has been made, and in the second one, you help them to do something about it.

The set of techniques to deal with this are very beneficial. So, not to miss anything, we are going to go step by step:

First, how to show incorrectness during spoken work -during accuracy work-: by repeating: ask the student to repeat what they have said, with intonation and expression to make what we need them to do clearly; by echoing you can repeat what the student said emphasizing the part of the utterance that was wrong; by an statement or a question: you can say something like "Do people think that's correct?" to indicate that something has not quite worked; by expression: you can do a simple facial expression or a gesture to indicate that something does not quite work -always being respectful and warm-hearted-; by hinting: a quick way of helping students to activate rules they already know. For instance, say the word 'tense' to make them think that perhaps they get confused; by reformulation: you can repeat what the student has said correctly, reformulating the sentence, not making a big issue of it. If the student is unable to correct her/himself or respond to reformulation, you can say the correct version emphasizing the part where there is a



WHAT'S THE POINT?
Feedback should always encourage learns and not make them feel frustrated.

problem. And, if it's necessary, you can explain the grammar and then, ask them to repeat the utterance correctly. Moreover, you can ask students to correct each other - besides, it generates a cooperative atmosphere-. Inversely, we are going to see how to show incorrectness during fluency work by a gentle correction: if communication breaks down completely, you may well have to intervene. You can do it with tact and discretion, there is no reason why interventions should not be helpful; you can use several other accuracy techniques of showing incorrectness during a fluency work too - such as echoing and expression-; try to not overuse the gentle correction, the constant interruption could cut the flow of the activity and at the same time, try to be quick; by recording mistakes: a recorder of their presentations could be done to not forget what students have said; You can transcribe their errors; what's more, after the event you can make something like a debate about the presentations. You can write the errors on the blackboard, let them talk about what they have just done, let them talk about how they felt about it. You can ask them if they can recognize where the errors were; you can make some notes for each of the students, recording the errors that you heard and some suggestions to improve in that area. Now it's time to talk about techniques for addressing in written work:

by responding: you can write comments at the end of a piece of writing or, write them in note form in the margins; show them a marking scale, you have to be very clear; you can show them alternative ways of writing through reformulation; by coding: some teachers use codes and symbols, and can then put them either in the body of the writing itself or in a margin. It's a less threatening technique; the random marks could be more helpful too; you can help your students by telling them to concentrate on a particular feature of written English. It's called 'focusing'; use the report cards to let them know their weakness but mostly what strengths they have been able to demonstrate.

Teachers must be careful, sensitive, and must have empathy with who is making the error. It does not have to be intrusive or exposing for the students, it has to be a helpful and constructive experience for them, and you have to give them calm instead of anxiety for being corrected. After all, errors are part of the classroom, are part of all of us -not just the students-, and are the indication of them trying out new things with confidence ■

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NEVER FORGET

Errors are always part of the process. Don't get frustrated about them.

DISCIPLINE AT SECONDARY LEVEL



A period of changes

Adolescence is a time of change. It is a time where children grow and develop very fast physically, intellectually and emotionally. Adolescents suffer physical and biological changes such as ejaculation in boys and menstruation in girls. Those changes are the consequences of certain emotional states like bad-tempered, rash and egocentrism because they became obsessed with the idea of what others may be thinking of their appearance and behaviour. It is also a period when they are inclined to a number of hobbies. They go to gym, or a club. Some likes to compose poems or write stories, music or

dance. Others are very sporty and opt to be players in some sport.

According to their cognitive development, from the year eleven Piaget considers that they tend to think in a concrete way. They can be thoughtful about things they can describe or imagine experiencing here and now. Then, they start to develop their abstract thought. So, there is a transition from concrete to abstract thought during adolescence. It is a period when coordination grows between emotion, attention and behaviour.

Why is it important to know these changes?

Some of these adolescent characteristics brings discipline problems in secondary level. A study that was applied to totally 390 students at secondary education school in Amasya. The investigation compares the changes in disciplinary problems. Among them it has been concluded that the most frequent ones are that the students do not perform their duties and responsibilities, smoking, misconduct in the classroom, verbal and physical violence. There are hundred of reasons influencing their behaviour apart from adolescent's changes such as, for instance, lack of religion, poverty, racism and child abuse.

Techniques to handle discipline

The thing is to try to do the best as a teacher to deal with discipline. There are some techniques that teachers have to consider in order to prevent discipline problems.

Timing and pacing are important decisions that teachers must make when they are planning a lesson. They have to be capable to monitor the student's participation in a task and decide when is the correct moment to change the activity before they attention begins to fade. A good strategy is to select non-repetitive activities with a set goal. Also, creating an effective closure is another successfully tool. To manage that, it is important to take

into account strategies like summarizing and reviewing key points of the lesson.

It is important to relate lesson with the goals and points out links between it and the previous lessons and show how it relates to the student's real life. Openings and closure are fundamental in lessons class to cap adolescent's attention.

To manage discipline at secondary level, teachers must know about the changes of adolescent's own age as well as their context of life and put into operation the necessary techniques.

Surfing ~~Surviving~~

Professional Practice II

After a hard year of work, let's look back - with a bit of comedy!

THE FOCUS ACTIVITES
WHEN YOU FINISH THE READING
PLAN AND THINK YOU ARE DONE:



When you finally understand what a Content Oriented Activity is:



When you hand in the integration and you get a passing mark



When you get too carried away and include a lot of grammar in your focus on lexis



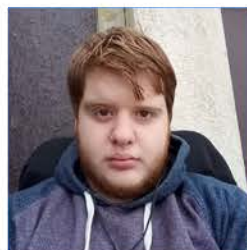


WORKING TOGETHER

They say that sometimes the destination it's not the only thing that matters, but that the journey is important as well. And having a great partner for the journey is the key. While we worked hard, we made sure to have fun along the way. Here, we asked each other to look back and reflect a bit on our work together.



Working with Facu was great! As we already know each other since 2018 I feel really comfortable. The only thing that I regret about working with him is that he made me listen to a song by Noelia Pompa. But apart from that he helped me when I was stuck, he made jokes and yes, he made me feel a bit nervous sometimes and I ended up shouting at him, but he knows that I couldn't ask for another partner that wasn't him, also because he is the best graphic designer that I ever know, the whole planning would be very boring without his handouts.



I couldn't have asked for a better partner than Flor - even if she sometimes shouts at me or leaves out the punctuation signs. But besides that, she was a really good partner to work with since she had a lot of experience on what actually happens during a lesson, something that I lack and she complemented very well. Plus, she let me include some references to pop culture, especially one from a video of Lali Esposito speaking in English (see if you can spot it on the integration!), and I will always be grateful for that.

THE MUSIC

While working on the planning together we listened to a lot of music. Here is a top 3 of what we listened to the most. Other notable artists are Selena Gomez, The Jonas Brothers and even Noelia Pompa (although that only happened once).



Future Nostalgia
Dua Lipa



High School Musical
Various Artists



folklore
Taylor Swift



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conventional assumptions to a jarring halt.

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Ask, why?



TEACHINGTODAY

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