

ACTIVITIES FOR DIFFERENT STAGES IN THE LESSON

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ANNOTATION: Students are there to do the heavy-lifting during the class: to work through activities, exercises, discussions, peer learning, and practical work. Our job as teachers is to facilitate the learning, which means that our hard work is in constructing the learning activities before the class starts. Structuring a lesson is essential. There are a variety of learning activities to help keep students engaged over time that you can consider adding to your lesson plan.

KEY WORDS: teaching, learning process, interaction, interest, students perform, role-plays, dialogues, debates.

It is essential to always start a lesson with the engage phase. It is here where students start starting and thinking in English. Before learning new content, students need to prepare for learning English. Games, showing pictures, discussions, listening to music, brainstorming vocabulary and storytelling are some excellent activities to engage and immerse students in the class. It is paramount that all students participate and interact with the class during the engage phase. Teachers should focus on facilitating engagement and making sure that every student has at least spoken once before moving on. Once the engage phase has finished, students should be thoroughly warmed up and eager to begin the next part of the lesson.

The Study Phase – Learning New Things This phase is mainly the board work of the lesson. It is here where students will learn or review English language topics. Teachers can use textbooks, study materials, videos and drilling exercises to help students learn and use the English language accurately. Other activities include gap fill quizzes, matching exercises and word order arrangement.

After students learn the topic of the lesson, the teacher then checks their understanding. As a teacher, you must never ask the question “do you understand?” as

students are naturally inclined to answer yes despite not fully understanding. Instead, ask a question about what's been taught and see how they respond. If the student answers the question about the topic correctly, then they will have understood. In cases where students don't understand, the teacher will go over the text again and ask more questions.

In order to ensure that the teaching and learning process is effective, the classes have to be interesting, and the students must feel comfortable and that they are a part of the classroom. To make sure that students don't lose interest in the class, you have to incorporate activities for students so that there's enough interaction in the classroom. Fun activities for students will help you keep them engaged and as mentioned, the learning would be more effective. Today we will be looking at some group activities for students and activities for students in the classroom that will guarantee interaction and interest.

The final aspect of an ESL lesson is the activate phase, where students use what they have learned in activities such as role-plays, dialogues, debates and surveys. The purpose of the activate phase is to apply the topics learned in the study phase in a realistic situation. By doing this, students will begin to use the English language. As with the engage phase, it is vital that every student participates and speaks during the activities.

During this stage, teachers help students with their pronunciation, rhythm and fluency. Teachers can do this through elicitation and demonstration. Teachers must conduct the activate phase at the end of the lesson as the way students perform will be an indicator of how much they understood during the study phase. If there are gaps in the students' learning at this stage, then teachers will need to focus more on improving the study phase.

Warm-up tasks

Warm-up tasks at the beginning of your lesson helps to shift the focus to the students, encouraging active engagement from the start. It also gives latecomers an opportunity to hopefully arrive before you start new content.

Examples of warm-up or revision activities:

- Kahoot! quizzes (individually or in small teams)
- Old fashioned pop quiz (which could be done independently or verbally in teams)

- Stop the Bus
- Backs to the board
- Tic-tac-toe (Noughts and Crosses)
- Crosswords
- Bingo
- Lead-in tasks

If you've asked students to complete work before they come to class, it's best if the lead-in activities can directly reference tasks completed outside of the classroom. This helps the students to better understand the purpose of their take-home tasks.

Questioning

Asking effective questions is so crucial to learning. If we don't plan questions or think about the kind of thinking we want our students to engage in, we might end up with closed questions that don't tell us much about a student's level of understanding. You might even consider adding a column for 'Potential Questions' in your lesson plan template.

Try to stay away from asking questions like: Do you all understand? Instead, ask questions where you give them options for answers and they can select one to elaborate on. For example, they may simply provide a yes or no answer, and then explain why they have chosen that response. These kinds of questions can be used for checking concepts or instructions.

Examples of scenarios with effective questioning:

Stage 1 Accounting: Your students need to understand what the term 'franchise' means. Usually you try to have three questions and structure them in such a way that students can provide a yes or no answer.

- a. Is a franchise a type of business model?
- b. Is a franchise a one-of-a-kind type of business?
- c. Is McDonalds an example of a franchise?

Stage 1 Physics: Your students need to understand the concept of 'uniform circular motion'. You plan the following questions:

- a. Does an object need to be travelling at a constant speed or changing speed?
- b. What pattern should the object be moving in?
- c. Would a ball swinging on a string above your head be an example of this?

Cool-down activities

What did students learn in your class today? A simple open question like that can be the basis for knowing where to start the next class, and to let you know what might need revision or more careful planning the next time you teach it.

Post-it notes and a prompt. Get the students to write five new things they learnt today: What was the most difficult concept to understand in today's class?; What do you still not understand?

End of class pop quiz (perhaps following the test-teach-test model)

End of class Kahoot! (individual or teams)

Stop, start, continue

Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) test based on the class content for the day. These could be kept for the following week's revision tasks, or even included in mid and end of semester exams.

When including activities at the beginning and the end of the class, you particularly want to look at including activities that can demonstrate to students how their knowledge or application has improved in the time they've been with you in class. This helps to demonstrate a sense of mastery to the students, which can enhance motivation, especially when students encounter difficult concepts.

Here's a breakdown of activities for various stages in a general lesson:

1. Engagement/Warm-up:

- Icebreaker activity: A fun activity to energize students and create a positive atmosphere.

- Question of the day: Pose a thought-provoking question related to the lesson's topic to get students thinking.

2. Introduction/Instruction:

- Lecture or presentation: Deliver the main content of the lesson, introducing key concepts and providing necessary background information.

- Multimedia presentation: Use videos, images, or interactive slides to enhance understanding and engage students.

3. Practice/Application:

- Group discussion: Break students into small groups to discuss a prompt or problem related to the lesson's content.

- Hands-on activity: Provide materials for students to work with directly, applying what they've learned in a tangible way.

- Case study analysis: Present a real-life scenario or case study for students to analyze and apply their knowledge to.

4. Assessment/Feedback:

- Formative assessment: Use quizzes, polls, or short assignments to gauge students' understanding of the material.

- Peer review: Have students review and provide feedback on each other's work, promoting collaboration and critical thinking.

- Teacher feedback: Provide personalized feedback on students' performance, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement.

5. Extension/Enrichment:

- Extension activities: Offer additional challenges or tasks for students who finish early or want to delve deeper into the topic.

- Role-playing: Assign roles or characters related to the lesson's content and have students act out scenarios or debates.

- Creative projects: Allow students to demonstrate their understanding through creative projects such as posters, presentations, or skits.

6. Closure/Reflection:

- Summarizing activity: Ask students to summarize the main points of the lesson in their own words.

- Exit ticket: Have students answer a brief question or reflection prompt before leaving class to assess their understanding.

- Class discussion: Facilitate a discussion where students can reflect on what they've learned and ask any remaining questions.

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