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# Promoting Engaged Teaching and Developing Active Learning: Effective Strategies

Project Team  
Hazel Acosta  
Diego Cajas  
Elizabeth Minchala



# About the Project

This book is a product of the year-long project, “Building Inclusive EFL Teacher Training Networks”, a winning project of the Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) which was hosted by the United States Department of State in 2017. The Project was selected out of 1,014 submissions from 125 countries and was one of the two projects from Ecuador which was selected to promote inclusion, encourage professional mobility among teachers and mitigate the lack of English teachers in public schools in the provinces of Azuay, Cañar and Morona Santiago (Zone 6).









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## Foreword

The interest of the Ecuadorian government in teaching English as foreign language (EFL) in public schools is evident in the conceptualization of the 2016 English Curriculum of the Ministry of Education. The Curriculum outlines the language competencies for each year or level, and it has a clear sequence of contents in all levels of basic education. Further, a well-defined ELT methodology is stated in the teacher's manual and its accompanying student's textbooks. There is also a legal requirement that compels public schools to teach English up to five hours per week from second grade of basic education until the third the year of "Bachillerato". Despite this apparent interest from the standpoint of policy implementation, the reality in schools is different. Teaching English in most public schools has faced challenges in the implementation of the curriculum. Two challenges have confronted school administrations for the past three years. First, there is a shortage of English teachers working in the public-school system, and this has resulted in the appointment of non-English teachers to teach English classes. Second, there is the lack of a comprehensive continuous professional development for EFL in-service teachers.

To respond to the professional development training needs, the Project, "Building Inclusive EFL Teacher's Network", was conceptualized to design a set of teaching strategies that went through a two-level revision

and validation process. A total of 342 teachers used the modules in their classroom, and this resulted in the creation of tested strategies that can be used by all teachers particularly EFL teachers.

In order to construct the strategies presented in this book, the following elements were considered - contextualization through consideration of class size, differentiated instruction which puts the learners at the center of the learning process, and the promotion of active learning.

Diego Cajas

*Management Leader*

*Building Inclusive EFL Teacher Training Project*

## **Preface**

The book, “Promoting Engaged Teaching and Developing Active Learning: Effective Strategies” is a product of a year-long teacher training project in Zone 6 (Azuay, Cañar and Morona Santiago provinces). It is an offshoot output of the winning project, “Building Inclusive EFL Teacher Training Network”, which is a recipient of the 2017 Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) 2017, a project funded by the United States Department of State and facilitated by the US Embassy.

The twelve modules created through the Project is a mitigating response to pedagogical and professional development needs of EFL teachers and non-English teachers who are tasked to implement the English 2016 Curriculum of the Ministry of Education (MinEduc). From 2017-2018, the twelve modules went through the process of revision and modification through replication trainings in various parts of Zone 6 in order to adapt to the needs and context of public schools.

The desire to disseminate and expand the academic reach of the modules has led to the creation of this book. The book is divided into three chapters which correspond to three sets of teaching strategies that are aimed to develop three skills in learning a language namely – productive, receptive and pedagogical skills. Each set of teaching strategies has four sets of modules that are designed to develop teaching skills and competencies that respond to the context and needs of schools. The unique characteristics of the book include features such as differentiation strategies, utilization of information and communications technology (ICTs)

and the implementation of contextualized activities that facilitate active learning and engaged teaching.

The creation of this book is a result of extensive implementation of strategies in classrooms that teachers and trainers have revised and enriched to provide practical mechanisms and effective ways in teaching English as a foreign language in schools.

Hazel Acosta

*Project Leader*

*Building Inclusive EFL Teacher Training Network Project*

## **Acknowledgments**

Having a successful project and turning its ideas into a book reflects the vision and passion of people. On behalf of the Project Team – Hazel Acosta, Diego Cajas and Elizabeth Minchala, we are grateful to the Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund 2017 for giving us the opportunity to contribute to the development of quality education through a responsive and contextualized book that reflects the collective efforts of EFL teachers who participated in the Project – Building Inclusive EFL Teacher Training Network.

A special thanks to the United States Department of State and the US Embassy for launching the Alumni Engagement Innovation Fund (AEIF) project competition and supporting alumni initiatives that promote innovative practices to challenges in education.

Likewise, recognition is extended to the partner organizations - Universidad Nacional de Educación del Ecuador (UNAE), the lead institution in EFL teacher training; Universidad de las Fuerzas Armadas - ESPE, and the Ministerio de Educación (MinEduc) for their significant collaboration by opening their doors, and providing access to facilities and resources throughout the development of the Project.

Our deepest gratitude to the twelve writers – Agnes Orosz, Andrea Tatiana Ávila, Maricela Cajamarca, Uvaldo Recino, Alicia Sola, Juan

Pablo Contreras, Julia Sevy, Diego Ortega, Tania Cajamarca, Hazel Acosta, Luis Andrés Peralta, and Mónica Tamayo who offered love, care, passion, enthusiasm and commitment from the training phase until the concretization of the book. Through their writing and authorship, the passion for the teaching profession and eagerness to contribute to the progress of the educational community is reflected in every page of this book.

Finally, we are eternally grateful to the 340 English teachers who participated in the training program, and who represented the districts of Zone 6: Azuay, Cañar and Morona Santiago. They all were willing to be agents of change, innovators and providers of knowledge in their respective learning communities.

Through this book, we add our voice to the collective call for innovative and effective teaching practices.

Elizabeth Minchala

*Logistics Leader*

*Building Inclusive EFL Teacher's Network Project*

# CHAPTER 1

Teaching Strategies to Develop Productive Skills







## Productive Skills Overview

Productive skills are writing and speaking. These are arguably more difficult to master for language learners than receptive skills, so it is very important that teachers give their students plenty of opportunities to practice their productive skills in class.

This chapter provides detailed practical descriptions of simple and effective teaching strategies to develop speaking and writing skills. These creative, enjoyable and easy strategies aim to help English teachers of learners of all ages, from young children to teenagers in the EFL classroom maximize the learning experience.

The activities are contextualized to the Ecuadorian reality that many public-school teachers face, namely, large class sizes, lack of availability of technology and lack of space.

Some of the strategies for developing speaking skills for young children include “Happy Rhymes”, “Story Bag”, and “Read, Look up and Say”. Each one of them is aligned to the curricular thread of oral communication with a detailed list of actions and materials to achieve the speaking production goals.

Some of the strategies for developing productive skills for teenagers are “Personalized Storytelling”, “Find Someone Who”, “Writing Codes for Peer-correction”, “Speed-dating”, “Back to the Board” and the “Color

Vowel Chart for pronunciation”. These strategies appeal to teenagers as they involve movement, personalization and choice. The pronunciation activities also build students’ confidence when speaking, so they don’t need to be afraid of pronouncing words wrong.

These strategies have been designed to help teachers plan their lessons in a more engaging, creative, and dynamic way that aims to improve EFL students’ productive skills. They are simple, but effective activities that can be applied in Ecuadorian public schools even with limited resources.

# Strategies for Practicing Writing and Speaking

Agnes Orosz

<b>Type of Productive Skill:</b> Teaching Writing skills	<b>Topic:</b> Giving constructive feedback on written work
<b>Curricular Thread:</b> Writing	<b>Sub thread:</b> Text Production

## ***Strategy 1: Coding system for correcting written work to encourage self and peer-correction***

### **Description**

The aim of this strategy is firstly, to raise students' awareness of the rules that govern effective writing, and to really learn from their mistakes and improve through self- and peer-marking. Secondly, to encourage students to pay close attention to the teacher's correction of their written work so that they make progress in their writing skills by learning from their mistakes.

Traditionally, feedback on students' written work meant the teacher correcting the writing by crossing out mistakes and writing a correct version on the student work and then grading the piece. The trouble with this is that students tend to learn very little from their teachers' corrections, and continue to make the same mistakes each time they

write. Often, students take no notice of the corrections at all; they take one look at their grade and stuff the writing into their bag, never to be looked at again. This is particularly disheartening when one has spent long hours over evenings and weekends correcting their work. An alternative to this approach is to give feedback that enables the students themselves to self-correct and peer-correct using a coding system which identifies the type of error made and underlining to locate the error. This is a much more effective strategy which forces the students to think hard about the mistakes they made and how best to correct them.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

In order to use this strategy, you'll first need to set a writing task for homework specifying a topic and the number of words expected (around 150 words is ideal). Tell students they must write by hand and write only on every second line and leave a margin on both sides of their paper. Tell students that using Google Translate is not allowed. They should use a real dictionary to look up words. If they don't have a printed dictionary they may refer to the website [www.wordreference.com](http://www.wordreference.com) which is a reliable free online dictionary.

Collect the writings next lesson. After class, go through each one underlining errors and specifying what type of error it is in the margin applying the coding system below using a pen that is highly visible and stands out against the pen color used by the student. Ensure your handwriting is always exceptionally clear.

sp.	spelling
gr.	grammar
w.w.	wrong word
w.o.	wrong order

w.t.	wrong tense
w.f.	wrong form
h.	handwriting
p.	punctuation

*Table 1. Writing Codes. (Adapted from Hedge, 2000)*

If this is the first time you are using writing codes with your class, note down specific errors from the students’ writing which exemplify the different types of errors.

In class, write some of these errors on the board, (without saying who made the errors) and ask students to work in pairs to correct the mistakes. Then elicit from the students what corrections need to be made and model the use of writing codes as you go along. For example, if the incorrect sentence includes a spelling mistake, write the code “sp.” next to the sentence in a different color board marker and underline the word in the sentence that was spelled incorrectly. Repeat until you have covered examples of all the codes, keep track of the meaning of the codes for the students, as they need to copy them down and keep them safe for future reference. You may suggest they write them on the inside cover of their English notebook for easier future reference.

If your students are already familiar with the codes, then the demonstration can be skipped.

Give each pair one of the two pieces of writing that belong to them, (ones the teacher has already marked using the codes) and make very clear that students should work as a pair together on each piece of writing. This is very important in order to make full use of the input peers can give and to encourage a dialogue about the language points in question. The students’ task is to make the appropriate corrections using a different colored pen on their writings using the codes as their guide. Monitor

closely and “conference” with pairs leading them and guiding them if they don’t know how to correct something, keep checking that students are correcting appropriately, and check final corrections as and when students finish a piece. When pairs have finished correcting one of their writing pieces, you may give them the second one.

This is an effective technique I have been using for many years now. It really encourages students to become conscious of and learn from their mistakes, thereby improving their writing each time they write. It is easily adaptable to any group size as students work in pairs. No ICT tools are necessary and flipchart paper can be used to display the codes as an alternative to a whiteboard, which can stay in the classroom and serve as a reminder for the future. If the classroom shape and size allow it, it is best if students can sit in a horseshoe shape in pairs, so that the teacher can give guidance to each pair from the inside of the horseshoe.

## **Reference**

Hedge, T. (2000). *Teaching and Learning in the Language Classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<b>Type of Productive Skill:</b> Speaking	<b>Topic:</b> How to get them speaking
<b>Curricular Thread:</b> Oral Communication	<b>Sub thread:</b> Spoken Production, Spoken Interaction

## **Strategy 2: Speed-dating**

### **Description**

Many students find speaking the most difficult skill to master and it is also a skill that is neglected in many English classrooms around Ecuador. Students need lots of practice speaking English to each other during English lessons if they are ever to acquire this skill. Speed-dating is a really fun way to have students speaking to each other and repeating key phrases without it becoming boring or mechanical. It can be adapted to any target language that is being taught.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

Ask students to form two lines facing each other, either standing or sitting. Give students 4 minutes to do a speaking activity with their partner, e.g. ask and answer questions in the simple past, e.g. “What did you do last night?” “What did you do last weekend?” etc. Then, one line moves down one space, so that everybody has a new partner. Then, students have the same conversation with their new partner, but now only give them 3 minutes, this should be enough since they practiced it and are now more fluent. Now the same line moves down one space again and students have the same conversation in an even more concise form: only 2 minutes.

The teacher’s role during these conversations is to monitor carefully and listen out for common mistakes, but not to correct the mistakes while students are talking as this will interrupt their flow. Rather, make a note

of the common mistakes and write them up on the board as the activity is in progress, then stop the activity, get everyone's attention and point out the common mistakes and drill the correct forms. Then, students should repeat the activity with new partners at least 2 more times. This means students are not only practicing their English, but also improving their speaking skills, as each time they do it, they will get more fluent and with your help more accurate.

No resources are necessary for this activity, but if your students are at lower levels, they may find it helpful to have the questions they need to ask written down. If your classroom space is small, you can ask students to stand in front of each other, and the line can snake around the sides of the room or take your students outside if you need more space. Changing the environment occasionally can make an activity (and therefore the language practiced) more memorable for students. A variation on speed-dating is a "carousel discussion". In a carousel discussion, half the students form a standing circle and face outwards, then the other half of the students stand in front of one of the students in the inner circle. The outer circle moves clockwise to change partners. If there is no space inside to do this, this works well outside.

Speed-dating and carousel discussions are particularly effective because they give students controlled practice of the same linguistic point, but the fact that their partners keep changing makes it interesting. There is also a kinaesthetic element (movement) to the activity, which many students appreciate.

### ***Strategy 3: Back to the Board***

#### **Description**

Back to the board is an activity that never fails to get students speaking English. Even in classes where students are generally shy or reluctant to speak under normal circumstances, back to the board will have them



talking. It is a game that can be played to review vocabulary at any level (except complete beginners).

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

Split the class into 2 teams. Have one member of each team sit with their back to the board, and the rest of their team sit in front of them, fairly close to them, facing the board. The students with their back to the board are not allowed to turn to look at the board during the game.

The teacher writes a recently learned vocabulary term on the board, for example “shy”. The team members who can see the word try to explain the word to their team member who has their back to the board. They must explain in English, without using any gestures or Spanish. The first back to the board student who says the word correctly wins a point for their team. Switch the students with their back to the board with another member of the teams and repeat the game with a different vocabulary item. Repeat until all team members have had a go being back to the board if possible.

If you have a very large group, you can have more than two teams. No resources are needed, if you don't have a board, you can have the vocabulary items ready on card, and stick them on the wall.

<b>Type of Productive Skill:</b> Speaking	<b>Topic:</b> Improving Pronunciation
<b>Curricular Thread:</b> Oral Communication	<b>Sub thread:</b> Oral Production

### Strategy 4: Minimal Pairs Map Pair Speaking

#### Description

One of the trickiest things about the English language is that the pronunciation of the words does not correspond exactly to their spelling. One way to help students with their pronunciation is to use pronunciation activities using “minimal pairs”. Minimal pairs are words that are pronounced exactly the same way, except for one sound. E.g. “ship” and “sheep” are a minimal pair.

#### Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

In order to use the minimal pair map activity, firstly, teach students the difference between the short /i/ and the long /i:/ in English pronunciation, by drilling the difference with familiar minimal pairs e.g. “eat” and “it” or “feet” and “fit” etc. Show students that the long /i:/ requires them to stretch their mouth to the two sides, whereas the short /i/ can be pronounced in the same way as the “i” in Spanish.

Then, hand out copies of the map below, one per student.

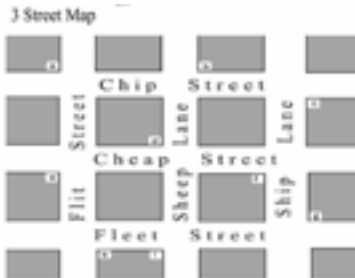


Figure 4 Minimal Pairs Map (adapted from [Byz Teacher.org](http://Byz Teacher.org))

Using a blue pen, students individually write the names of 3-5 town buildings into their maps at the spots marked a-i. For example, they might write “bank” at spot “a”, “pharmacy” at spot “h” and restaurant at spot “f”. Then, students work with a partner but must not look at each other’s maps. Student A listens to their partner describing their map and marks their partner’s buildings in black pen on their map. For example:

**Student B:** At the corner of Ship Lane and Cheap Street there is a restaurant.

**Student A:** “d”?

**Student B:** No, at the corner of Ship Lane and Cheap Street.

**Student A:** Oh, ok, “f”?

**Student B:** Yes.

Then partners swap roles, and student A describes their map to student B, and student B adds those building to his/her map. At the end, when both have finished, student A and B compare their maps.

If pairs’ pronunciation and listening was good, they should have identical maps.

This activity can be adapted to any pairs of sounds that students are mispronouncing, for example, for many Spanish speakers, the difference between the “v” and the “b” in English is difficult to pronounce, so you could make maps using streets that are pronounced the same except that one sound, e.g. “Veer Street” and “Beer Street”, or “Vowel Lane” and “Bowel Lane”.

## Reference

Busy Teacher.org Available from: <https://busyteacher.org/>

## **Strategy 5: Contrastive Analysis to improve pronunciation**

### **Description**

Contrastive Analysis refers to making students aware of features of their first language (L1) in order to gain insight into the workings of a second or foreign language. When it comes to pronunciation, there are some tricks for Spanish learners that can help them tremendously. For example, students may think that the sounds the letters “th” correspond to in English, don’t exist in Spanish, when actually they do, they are just spelled differently. The Spanish letter “d” is actually pronounced exactly like the soft “th” (/ð/) in English, e.g. the Spanish word “**Navidad**” contains the same sound as “**this**”, “**that**”, and “**other**” in English. Another example is the strong “**th**” (/θ/) which, although not part of Latin American Spanish, does exist in Spanish from Spain, and most students in Ecuador have heard enough Spanish from Spain to be able to produce the sound quite easily. So, the way a Spanish person would say the first sound in “**zapato**” is the same as the English sound at the beginning of “**think**”, “**three**” and “**thank you**”.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

Contrastive analysis can be built into any lesson, for example, the next time your students say “tree” when they mean “three”, ask them to say “**zapato**” in a Spanish accent first, and maybe say a few more words using /θ/ in a Spanish accent, e.g. “**cerveza**”, “**cuidad**” and then ask them to use the same sound to say “**three**”. Ask them to notice what their mouth is doing when they say “**zapato**” and then to form the same shape with their mouth (tongue protruding between teeth and blow air) when they say “**three**”. This can often be an “aha” moment for students who had previously thought that the pronunciation of the “th” in English is an unsolvable mystery.

## **Strategy 6: Color Vowel Chart for pronunciation**

### **Description**

Ask students how many vowels there are in English. The answer is of course that there are 5 letters which are vowels. Then ask students how many different ways there are to pronounce those 5 vowel letters. Let them take a few guesses. The answer is 20 according to the British International Phonetic Alphabet. The color vowel chart can help students make sense of 15 of these vowel sounds, which are most common in American English pronunciation.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

Firstly, show students the Color Vowel Chart (Taylor & Thompson, 2009) Freely available from:

*<https://americanenglish.state.gov/resources/color-vowel-chart>*

Then go through the examples of words that rhyme with each color that represents a vowel sound. The examples are in the chart already, e.g. the word “tie” has the same vowel sound as “white”, so belongs in the “white” segment of the chart.

Then, give each group of 4–5 students a pack of vocabulary cards, which students should be familiar with, to sort into the corresponding colours by vowel sound. It is best to include cards with words like “busy” and “women” which include vowels that are pronounced differently to how they are spelled. Students have to lay the cards out on their tables according to the chart, e.g. if they have the word “eat” it should be placed in the top left hand corner of their table, because in the chart, the /i:/ sound is on the top left.

Once most groups have finished, check the answers together. Emphasize to students that English is not pronounced how it’s written, so they need to pay special attention to how they are pronouncing words.

This activity can greatly enhance students' awareness of the pronunciation of English, and once students have learned the colors that correspond to each vowel, the class teacher can continuously refer to those colors when students need pronunciation guidance about vowels in new words. For example, if the teacher is teaching the new word "cut" and students pronounce it according to Spanish spelling-pronunciation rules (/θ/), then the teacher can say: "No, it's not "wooden" it's "muustard".

If you have a projector, the color vowel chart can be projected during the activity. If not, you could consider printing a color copy for each group. This could be laminated for future use. Alternatively, the class teacher could reproduce the chart by hand on a large sheet of flipchart paper using the corresponding colored markers. Or, if none of the above is possible, the teacher could ask the students to look up the chart on the internet, and copy it into their notebooks using colored pencils for homework before the lesson where s/he will use this activity.

## Reference

Taylor, K., & Thompson, S. (2009). The Color Vowel Chart. Retrieved from <https://americanenglish.state.gov/resources/color-vowel-chart>

# Writing Strategies for Effective Learning

Andrea Tatiana Avila

<b>Type of Productive Skill:</b> My Friendly Sentence Maker	<b>Topic:</b> Lifestyle ( Writing simple sentences)
<b>Curricular Thread:</b> Writing	<b>Sub thread:</b> Text Production

## Strategy 1 My Friendly Sentence

### Description

When pre-basic users are asked to write down simple sentences, most of the times, they forget the relevant parts of the sentence. One convenient way to help them place their ideas in a visible and appropriate way is the use of a visible aid called “My Friendly Sentence”.

Beginners can also use this strategy; more structured sentences can be written down following a specific order modeled by the teacher. The order of the sentences can change depending on the level of the student and type of sentences.

## Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

Teachers can use a color coding system to facilitate students’ learning. For instance, the teacher can assign a color for each WH questions and a color for the target language. In this way, students will learn the order immediately just by focusing on the color. Teachers can use cardboard cards, markers or sticky notes. For instance, the yellow color stands for **who** “the subject”; the red color stands for **what** “the verb”; the green color stands for **to whom, for whom, to what or for what** “the object”, the blue color stands for **when** “the time”, and the orange color stands for **where** “the place”. Taking into account the color coding system, the teacher can design their own yellow, green, red, blue and orange word cards, so students can use them to make their own sentences.

Figure 1. Colour coding scheme in constructing sentences

Who	What	To whom, for whom, to what, for what	When	Where
Tom	Plays	Basketball	every day	at school.

Through the use of “My Friendly Sentence” the students will be able to write a variety of sentences (simple or more structured ones) about familiar topics. Also, they will develop their creativity while structuring their own sentences. Finally, as this activity can be done in groups, they will be able to respect their ideas through negotiations and value their participation.

This strategy can be used from beginners to intermediate students. The materials that the teacher needs in advance is “My Friendly Sentence” template that is attached in Figure 2. This template can be drawn either in paper chart or on the board. As a first step, the teacher writes down the title “Lifestyle” in the circle and show a picture. The teacher asks students to describe the picture and writes down all the students’ ideas on the board. After, the teacher writes down the following questions



in the bubble speeches; 1. Who 2. What 3. To whom – for whom ; to what -for what - 4. where, 5. when. Using students' previous ideas, the teacher answers the Wh questions and writes down the corresponding word (subject, verb, object, place, time) in each speech bubble. After that, the teacher uses the words in the bubble speeches one more time and write them down in order in “My Friendly Sentence” box (figure 3). As a result, the teacher ends up with a complete sentence. It is advisable to make students learn each Wh question and its matching color for the students to understand better how a sentence is formed. To continue practicing, the teacher displays another picture and motivates the students to answer the Wh questions. When all parts are complete, the answers are put together to make a complete sentence, and students are encouraged to do this task to enhance their ability to construct sentence.

When the students are used to the new strategy, the teacher can ask students to work in groups of three or four and using the attached template. Two or three pictures to each group can be given to students. Students have to paste the pictures in the circle and answer the questions related to the picture. As the students work, the teacher monitors the activity and helps if necessary. When students have finished answering the questions, they have to write down the final sentence in “My friendly Sentence” box (figure 3). To check students' work, the teacher can use the attached checklist.

Figure 2. “My Friendly Sentence” Template

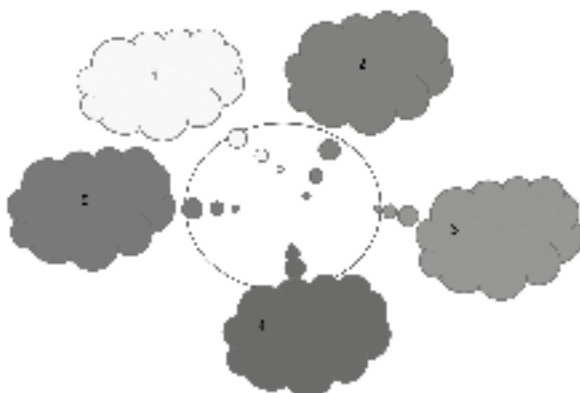


Figure 3.

MY FRIENDLY SENTENCE

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Figure 4. “My Friendly Sentence” Checklist

	Yes	No	Observation
Do I follow the word order of a sentence?			
Do I use capitals and periods?			
Do I use all of the words from the bubbles?			
Does the sentence make sense?			
Does the sentence have no spelling mistakes?			

**Differentiation**

This strategy can be performed in a typical classroom where the class size ranges from 30 to 45 students. At the beginning of the activity, the teacher can work with the whole class asking for ideas and modelling the activity as well. It can be done several times. After that, students work in small groups and write down their own ideas and sentences. The teacher walks around the class scaffolding his/her students and giving them feedback. With regard to the materials, copies of the template is

necessary. However, if it is not possible, students can use a piece of paper of their own notebooks and draw the template by themselves. Also, the teacher can draw the template on big pieces of paper; so they can work together and share ideas.

## Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

To perform the activity, the teacher needs markers, pens, pencils, sticky notes or cardboard cards. It all depends on the materials the teacher would like to use and the materials they have at hand. In addition, if necessary, the teacher can use pictures or flashcards of the target words in order to check students' previous knowledge and then start to work on new vocabulary. This is especially important for younger or beginner students. Considering that in most public school, technology like internet access, projectors, and computers are not available in each classroom, the teacher can use the board, markers and pictures to explain what the activity is about and how to accomplish it.

Type of Productive Skill: MY IDEAS ORGANIZER	Topic: Writing paragraphs (Describing my Likes)
Curricular Thread: Writing	Sub thread: Text Production

## Strategy 2 “ My Ideas Organizer”

### Description

This strategy is used in the pre-writing stage. It helps students put their ideas together in a more organized and clearer way. They have the opportunity to split up a paragraph into smaller sections and focus on them to write a paragraph. Thus, students will not feel anxious or confused while writing paragraphs. The teacher should monitor the

activity from the beginning to avoid misunderstanding or committing errors in spelling. Also, teachers can use a color coding system to facilitate students' learning. For instance, the teacher should assign one specific color for the main idea, another color for the supporting details and another for the conclusion. This method can be modified to meet students' needs and levels. For example, for true beginners, the teacher can use pictures with words to make the strategy comprehensible. For beginners, the students can add a detail and a connector, so they end up writing down short paragraphs. For intermediate students, they can add transitional words and more details in order to obtain a long paragraph. Using this organizer, students will be able to communicate and organize their ideas in a clear and comprehensible way. Later, they will be able to write a simple short paragraph about familiar topics (interests, likes, dislikes, and so on). Finally, it will reduce students' affective filter toward the writing process.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

The teacher familiarizes students with the strategy, "My Ideas Organizer", by asking them to design their own template. They use their imagination and creativity to obtain the best one (Refer Figure 4). They can use white paper, coloured paper, or a manila envelope to make the organizer. The teacher asks students to fold the paper or manila envelope into four parts and draw a square at the center. They write number 1 in the square at the center, and numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5 are written in the other squares. After labelling the parts with numbers, the teacher writes down the name of the strategy on the board and asks students to guess what it is about. The teacher writes down their ideas and introduces the advantages and importance of the strategy. Later, the teacher hands out two yellow sticky notes to each student and asks them to place the sticky notes in squares 1 and 5.

The teacher may give out three more sticky notes of another color and ask the students to place them on the squares numbered 2,3, and 4. Using sticky notes will allow students to reuse the template. In square number 1, the students have to write the topic sentence of the paragraph

which is given by the teacher. Later, based on the topic, the students write one supporting sentence in square number 2, 3, and 4. Depending on the level of the students, they will write down either words or simple sentences. Finally, in the fourth square, the students have to write a summary sentence that becomes the conclusion. They can describe their feelings related to the topic they have in square 1. As the students write down the details and concluding sentence, the teacher walks around the class checking and scaffolding students' work. As soon as the students finish, their work can be reviewed based on the below attached checklist. This review can be done by the teacher if the group is small or by the students if the group is big. If the review is done by the students, the teacher can hand out the checklist to each student or project it for the whole class. The students exchange their work "My Ideas Organizer", and as a result, each student will be in charge of reviewing one of their classmate's work using the checklist. After that, students receive back their work and the checklist; they review their work and correct it if necessary. Finally, the students write their final version on lined paper or a small notebook. If the students are using manila envelope, they can keep their writing in the envelope.

Figure 5. "My Ideas Organizer" Template

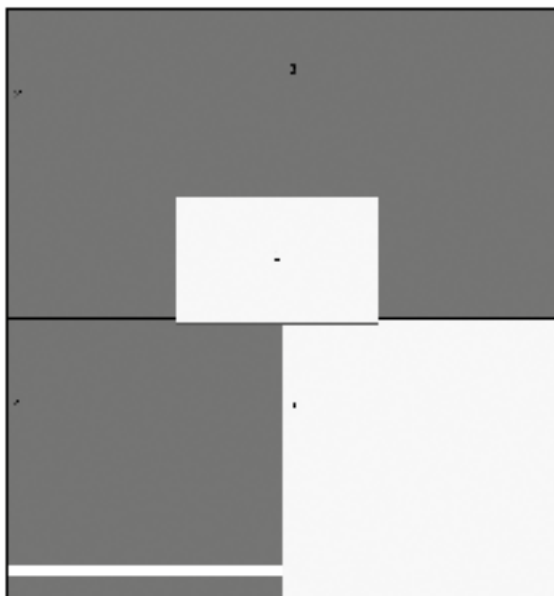


Figure 6. “My Ideas Organizer” Checklist

NAME:	YES	NO
Are the reasons related to the topic sentence? Does each one respond the question WHY?		
Are the supporting sentences (reasons) repeated?		
Does it have a concluding sentence?		
Is the concluding paragraph linked to the topic sentence? Does it express students’ feelings?		
Are there any mechanical errors (spelling, capitalization, punctuation) in the whole content?		

Modified from <https://docs.google.com/file/d/0B9Sqcvc8QfUV0bjVhdF9WdXpHd0E/edit>

### Differentiation

Strategy 2 can be used in any classroom setting since the number of students does not affect the planned activities. The students can work individually, in groups of four or five or in bigger groups in a cooperative approach. It all depends on the teacher’s preference and the class size. Regarding the materials, the students are the ones who design their own template; they need a piece of paper, colored paper or manila envelope and some sticky notes. Also, the students need a notebook or extra pieces of paper to write down the paragraphs.

Type of Productive Skill: Tongue Twister	Topic: Improving pronunciation – Working with my Tongue
Curricular Thread: Oral Communication	Sub thread: Spoken Production

### **Strategy 3: Working with my Tongue**

#### **Description**

High school students are reluctant to use L2 in their English classes because they feel afraid to commit pronunciation mistakes. One way to overcome this problem is to include tongue twisters in English lessons. By using them, students will be able to differentiate English sounds and they will be able to pronounce them correctly.

To start this strategy, the teacher invites students to say some tongue twisters in their native language. The student who says the tongue twister in a fast way receives a prize. After that, the teacher explains the importance of learning tongue twisters in English. Later, the teacher chooses a tongue twister based on his / her students' level. Tongue twisters can be downloaded from YouTube and other ESL websites.

The key to effective use of tongue twisters is repetition. The teacher has to write down the tongue twister on the board and repeats it several times emphasizing the pronunciation of the taught sounds. The teacher can use pictures or pantomime to help students internalize the tongue twister. To practice it, the teacher removes or deletes gradually a part of the tongue twister, so students are challenged to say the tongue twister by heart in the end.

When students have learned how to pronounce the tongue twisters, students are grouped and they need to write down the tongue twister on a chart paper and illustrate it in a silly way. After repeated practice,

students present their works on the wall, and the teacher can choose the best picture. To keep on practicing, the class is divided into two groups. A member of each group receives a ball and is asked to pass it on around the group. The student who has the ball has to say the tongue twister either in a slow or a fast way depending on what the teacher shouts. The teacher uses two magical words “fast or slow”. For instance, if the teacher says slow, each student of the groups says the tongue twister slowly, but if the teacher says fast, each student says it in a fast way. Finally, the teacher divides the class in groups of 10 and distributes a ball to each group. The teacher uses a chronometer to check the time. The group that says the tongue twister in a fast and well pronounced way in a short time is the winner. Each time that one student of the group gets confused or mispronounces a word the group will restart until all of the members of the group can make it. The chronometer will never be stopped.

## **Differentiation**

To have students internalize their tongue twister and overcome pronunciation problems, it would be ideal for EFL teachers to introduce a tongue twister on the first day of the week; thus, students can practice it the succeeding days. It will become an engaging warm-up at the beginning of each lesson. The teachers can choose the most appropriate tongue twister that can be found in the links provided before taking into account the students’ level. If a tongue twister does not meet their expectations, the teachers can create their own tongue twister. This activity can be carried out in pairs, small groups, and large classes without any difficulty. They are powerful tools that do not need any additional preparation; the only materials that teachers need are their own voice, markers, a board, chart paper, small plastic balls and a chronometer. If there are no plastic balls or chronometer, the teachers can replace them for paper balls or a watch.



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# Engaging Strategies to Develop Oral and Writing Skills

Maricela Cajamarca

<b>Pedagogical skill:</b> Speaking skills	Teaching	<b>Topic:</b> Happy Rhymes
<b>Curricular Thread:</b> Communication	Oral	<b>Sub thread:</b> Spoken production

## Strategy 1: Happy rhymes

### Description

Children enjoy listening to music and reproducing a rhythm repeatedly when they like the sounds. It is common to see children sing and reproduce the lyrics they hear. Introducing rhymes into the language learning of children is beneficial for them based on the learning process they are subjected to and the fun they experience while doing the activities such as vocabulary building, generation of expression and constructions of phrases, among others.

Through happy rhymes, children can develop speaking abilities because of vocabulary input, the exposure to activities that focus on rhythm and sound production. These activities increase motivation through rhymes,

which raise confidence and lower the affective filter when they imitate rhythm and intonation by singing.

## **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

To implement rhymes in your lessons you will need to use your creativity to let students imagine and learn. You will require a cloth bag, the worksheet of the two dicky birds, a flashcard of the sky, and a feather. First, you need to take one object at a time from the cloth bag to introduce the two characters of the rhyme. The characters are the two little dicky birds, two famous birds from European folktales. As you show the vocabulary related to the characters, let students guess what is coming out next from the bag by eliciting ideas. For example, take the sky flashcard. Say: “These animals fly in the sky.” “What animals fly in the sky?” Then, show them a feather or a picture of one. Tell them that Pedro and Paul, the dicky birds, have colorful feathers. Elicit the colors while you show them the feathers. Students guess the animal that is coming out. They can say words in Spanish, and you reinforce what they say in English. This technique is a way to pre-teach vocabulary related to the characters.

In the second stage, you need to draw a wall on the board. Make sure you let your children guess what you are drawing. Elicit possibilities as you draw. Another option is to have the wall done on a big paper before class. You can use markers of different colors to motivate your students.

Place the pictures of the birds on the wall. Introduce them and ask your students to say “hello dicky birds”. A good idea to introduce the characters of the story is by pointing at Pedro and saying, “one named Pedro”, then point at Paul and say “one named Paul”. Take Pedro out and say, “Fly away Pedro”, and then take Paul out and say, “Fly away Paul”. As you do it, make sure you act in an unhappy way because they are gone. Students get into the story if you act it out, and even more if you include them in it. Use your hands to call them back. Invite them to be part of the story by saying together “Come back Pedro, Come back Paul”.

Show them a happy face and paste them back on the wall that was drawn on the board to show that they came back.

Once the kids are familiar with the characters, tell them that the two little dicky birds came into the classroom to visit, and they want to go to their homes to meet their families. Therefore, they need to decorate them with colors and feathers. Hand out the copy with the puppets (See Appendix 1) and have your students work on the decoration as you help them.

Present vocabulary with simple instructions (Paul is a yellow bird. Pedro is a blue bird). It is a good idea to teach them how to use the scissors to cut the puppets, but help them if they cannot do it. After the puppet is decorated, they need to glue it to a Popsicle stick. Kids love to do it! Make sure you practice the vocabulary: scissors, glue, paper, cut, share as you lead the activity.

When the puppets are ready, sing the “two little dicky birds sitting on the wall” using the audio. If you do not have access to a stereo or a computer, you can always memorize the song and sing it at any time. Actually, singing the song along with students is the best way for them to learn.

If you have access to a projector and a computer, you can play the story “two little dicky birds” through a video retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C-IR1cgpX8c>. Remember that children enjoy repetition, which is very good for learning a language, so take advantage of it, and sing as many times as you can during the following lessons.

## **Differentiation**

Rhymes and songs can be used with both, small and large groups because of the active nature of singing. This strategy is great with or without extra resources. You can use the video and the audio if you have access to technology, but if not, just use photocopies and memorize the rhymes to convey the same objectives. If the school does not have a radio or

projector that you can borrow, print out the pictures of the birds on a big paper or just draw them in advance. The great thing about singing is that it does not require you to have lots of materials and resources.

Your students and you can sing rhymes everywhere. Enjoy its advantages in indoor and outdoor spaces. You can sing in the patio, the ground, the classroom floor or simply on the regular classroom chairs and tables.

Remember that you are teaching English to children, therefore, you ought to be aware that they need to move and enjoy learning. It is important to think outside the box and take advantage of all possible spaces that are available at your school. It is important to consider the nature of activities and the lesson aims to organize the spaces. For instance, singing can happen anywhere at school, but cutting and pasting with your students will require a more controlled space such as with the chairs and tables in an organized manner. You need to be sensible about when to encourage free and fun activities while learning a language, and when to develop organizational skills as well.

**Reference**

Dooley, J., & Evans, V. (2013). Hello happy rhymes nursery Rhymes and songs. Express publishing.

<b>Pedagogical skill:</b> Speaking and Writing	<b>Topic:</b> Story retelling
<b>Curricular Thread:</b> Oral Communication	<b>Sub thread:</b> Speaking production

**Strategy 2: Story bag**

**Description**

Story bag is a comprehension strategy that helps students develop and improve their oral language skill while reporting events from a story. It

is a retelling strategy, which not only lets students analyze and practice literacy and cognitive skills, but it also improves students' listening skill. Moreover, they can practice grammar, increase vocabulary, and develop complex utterances.

This strategy aims to raise students' confidence when speaking in English by sequencing the events of a story and retelling it; as well as, developing speaking abilities and building vocabulary.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

In order to implement this strategy in your classroom; first, divide the class in small groups. There are many ways to form groups, for example, using puzzle pieces, Popsicle sticks, coins, numbers, etc. With puzzles, students need to look around and join the groups with the people who have the missing pieces to complete the picture. You can also use scrap paper with the name of animals, colors, places, fruits or any other option to form the groups.

Once the groups are organized, hand out one paper bag per group with the sequencing cards of the daily routines story (See Appendix 2 as an example). Ask students to display the pictures on their tables to get used to the nature of the images. Elicit their ideas about the story by asking them simple questions like: What is the person in the picture doing?

Next, ask learners to organize the events as they listen to you. Make sure you use an appropriate intonation and voice to set the scene. After listening to the story, they need to glue the pictures on one side of the paper bag and recall the main events to rewrite the story using colored pencils, pens or markers.

Students retell the story to their peers in small groups first. In this stage of the lesson, the aim is to develop students' speaking skills in a stress-free setting. After they have practiced retelling the story to their peers, they can report the events to the whole class or to another group using

their own words to express their understanding of it. This is a great way to develop their listening, writing, reading and speaking skills.

### **Differentiation**

This strategy is a good way to integrate all your students in the classroom because it is organized in teams. Your role as a teacher is to be a facilitator and a monitor during this strategy. Make sure you give clear instructions with graded language and monitor group work efficiently.

The Story Bag strategy requires you to have the copies of the sequencing cards, the story, paper bag, and school supplies like markers or coloured pencils. However, if you are into using recycled materials in your teaching, you could even be more creative and change the bag for used plastic bottles, old jeans, or many other things to achieve the same language goals. Do not be afraid of trying different materials.

<b>Pedagogical skill:</b> Teaching Speaking skills	Teaching	<b>Topic:</b> Read, Look Up and Say
<b>Curricular Thread:</b> Communication	Oral	<b>Sub thread:</b> Spoken production

### ***Strategy 3: Read, look up and say***

#### **Description**

Reading allows students to retell and echo what they have learned to someone else. Sometimes, when we ask students to read aloud to the whole class, the result might not be what we expect. In fact, the stress level that reading aloud produces might not help students overcome their fear to speak. Therefore, using the activity, Read, look up and say



is a good way to help children develop self-confidence to speak in a less stressful situation.

This strategy aims to raise students' confidence when speaking in English by reporting small portions of written text. It helps develop speaking abilities and vocabulary building through exposure to activities that focus on sight-reading. It also, improves social skills and listening abilities with teamwork; due to the fact that, learners practice the language in an organized way respecting the turns and paying attention to the production of each participant.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

To start, divide the class into small groups. Having four or five children in a group is highly encouraged. Having more than this number may not be as effective as it is originally envisioned. Once students are in a group, ask them to have a pencil. Then, hand out a short and meaningful text from the Internet or a book (See appendix 3 as an example). Make sure the text is not too difficult for them, but not too simple either. Remember that the text should be challenging and encouraging at the same time.

Model the activity first before asking them to do it. They need to read a portion of the text, and then cover it with one hand to look up and say what they remember. The parts of the sentence are broken down in such a way that each child can read a word or two; after which, they are asked to form the sentence under the guidance of the teacher. Therefore, the next student repeats the sequence: read, cover to look up and say what s/ he can remember. Let students read to each other in small groups as you monitor their production.

### **Differentiation**

This works with small size classes preferably. Photocopies of the text will be required, as well as flashcards, board and markers. For the purpose of the activity, tables and chairs are necessary, too. Teachers need to post

big pictures with key words that exemplify the steps of the activity in addition to modelling all the steps.

## References

Williams, M. (2014). *The Elephant's Friend and Other Tales from Ancient India*. Candlewick.

## Teacher Support Material 1

### *The two little dicky birds*



Source: *Self-created*

## Teacher-Support Material 2

### *Story bag: Daily routines*



Source: *Self-created*

## Teacher-Support Material 3

### Story: *The Andean Condor and Friends*

#### **The Andean Condor and Friends:**

One day a young condor was flying in the sky looking for friends.

He saw an armadillo down in the ground.

"Will you be my friend?" asked the condor.

"You're too big. You can't hide in the ground like me," replied the armadillo.

Next, the condor met a naughty monkey. He asked him to be his friend.

But, the monkey said, "You are too big to play with me!"

Then the condor met a toucan.

"Will you be my friend?" He asked. "How can I?" asked the toucan.

"You are not as colourful as I am."

The condor was sad. He met an Andean wolf next.

"Will you be my friend?" he asked the wolf.

The wolf said, "Sorry, sir, you're too big." The condor was sad and lonely.

The next day, the condor saw all the animals in the mountain tired and sad.



The condor asked them "What's wrong?"

The **Andean wolf** replied, "There is a big truck and people with machines taking down all the trees, and we're homeless and hungry."

The condor wondered what he could do to help everyone.

Meanwhile, the people kept cutting all the trees.

The condor then had a great idea! He would scare the people away. So, he flew close to the truck, flew above it, and around it, and scared the people in it so badly.

The frightened people drove their truck away and never came back.

The condor flew back to the other animals to announce the good news to everyone.

All the animals thanked the condor.

They said, "You are just the right size and colour to be our friend."



*Source: Self-created story adapted from Williams, M. (2014).*

## References

- Dooley, J., & Evans, V. (2013). *Hello happy rhymes nursery Rhymes and songs*. Express publishing.
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# Strategies for Practicing Writing and Speaking

*Uvaldo Recino*

<b>Pedagogical skill:</b> Teaching Speaking skills	Teaching	<b>Topic:</b> Storytelling to narrate a personal experience.
<b>Curricular Thread 2:</b> Communication	Oral	<b>Sub thread:</b> Spoken production and interaction.

## **Strategy 1: Personalized Storytelling**

### **Description**

Storytelling is a useful strategy to narrate past experience. With this strategy, the students will narrate a story based on a model provided by the teacher. This a strategy that students from Year 8 until 10 of general basic education can learn to develop A2.1 level of communicative competence based on the Common European Framework of Referenced (CEFR).

When foreign stories dominate the teaching of reading to Ecuadorian learners, they occasionally complain because the workbooks reflect either British or American culture that they are not familiar with; thus, they find it difficult to talk about things they do not have prior knowledge of.

This strategy will help students tell personal stories about their experience. This is a highly motivating activity for students who are learning a foreign language because they always like to talk about their lives. There is information gap, as the listener does not know what the speaker is going to tell him/her. The students have the option to choose the language register they want to use in their story. It can be formal, colloquial or they can just use standard English. The listener may react to what they are listening to as a manner of feedback. The speaker may also ask for repetition if they do not understand well and they can give their opinion, and agree and disagree with the speaker. These principles of communicative language teaching theoretically support the use of this strategy.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

In order to use this strategy, you will first need to ask your students to take time to think about the story they will tell. For, example, what happened? When did it happen? Who are the main characters of the story?

A personal story will be narrated by the teacher using narrative tenses – past simple, past continuous and past perfect for the students to use as a model to narrate theirs. Students can use adjectives and adverbs to make the story interesting, and sequencing words such as first of all, then, after that, later on, and finally to give it a logical sequence. This will help the students tell a coherent and comprehensible story. A personal story can also be shared with students and then invite them to tell stories about themselves in small groups. There will be a lot of interaction when they tell their stories to their classmates.

To ensure that storytelling is effective and engaging, there are seven (3) easy steps to follow. First, give the story an introduction. Say briefly, what your story is about. Give the background to your story. Say when and where it took place and what you were doing at that time.

Second, say what happened step by step. Use words as *so*, *because* and *although* to connect the actions until you reach the end of the story. And, third, finish your story or anecdote by saying why it is important to you or why you remember it.

After you have told your story as a model, the students will tell their personal stories to their classmates in small groups. The students will take turns telling their stories and the teachers' role will be to pop in the different groups, listen to parts of their stories, and give feedback on content, not on grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation errors at this time. Rather, take notes of the most common mistakes basically with the past tense and past participles of regular and irregular verbs and give feedback to the whole class after the activity has been completed.

This strategy works with all class sizes, as most of the time students will be working in groups, and the number of groups will depend on the class size. For large classes, let us say for 40 students, you can ask your students to form eight groups of five students each. For a small classroom you would form less groups.

You will not need ICTs nor any other materials for this activity. Seats have to be arranged for group work although it may also work well outside the classroom, in the school garden or somewhere else students can sit and talk in small groups.

<b>Pedagogical Skill:</b> Teaching Writing skills	<b>Topic:</b> Project writing
<b>Curricular Thread 4:</b> Writing	<b>Sub thread:</b> Text production

## **Strategy 2: Project writing**

### **Description**

This is a process and product writing strategy that promotes teamwork activity and enhances fluency in writing. Its focus is more on the process of learning and learner-peer-content interaction than in the product itself. The students work in small groups in order to identify a phenomenon or a situation and they will work out a plan to solve it. This is a very complex process for the *Educación General Básica* and high school Ecuadorian students but as it is mandated in the 2016 curriculum project, teachers might find these tips useful to work with it, so it will be simplified as follows.

The project is assigned at the beginning of the unit so the students will work on it during a couple of weeks and they will have regular scaffolding from the teacher and peers during class work and e-mail feedback from the teacher during this time. It is very important to give the students enough time to complete this task and precise instructions and deadlines for completing each activity.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

In order to develop this strategy, you should first, select a topic for the project from the list of contents in the unit. For example, Unit 5. Level A2.1. Student's Book. Décimo Grado EGB. The content and language integrated learning (CLIL) topics for that unit are: **Odd Jobs and occupations, Career Choices of the Future, Career Choices in the Job**



**Market and Creative thinking**, and the project they have to develop is a Poster presentation.

The students work in small groups brainstorming what their projects will be about. They can use sheets of paper to take down notes. Then, they identify a simple problem to solve or a phenomenon to describe. This discussion is very important, as all the opinions may be valid so they have to decide as a group what they will definitely do. This strategy enhances cooperative learning and decision making so it helps students develop their high order thinking skills.

In order to help students with the paragraph structure for writing their projects, it might be helpful to give them some support. For example, you can conduct a short discussion focusing on the topic sentence-detail mode. You can ask for a topic sentence stating the main point of each paragraph, and then emphasize on the paragraph model. Ask your students to look for the topic sentence, concrete details and examples in the supporting sentences, and see in this piece of writing how the writer sums up the point of the paragraph with a concluding sentence. This example can be written on the board.

Then, as another step of the project writing, provide scaffolding, helping the students write concept maps in class and give them regular feedback when they give you the sheets of paper with their concept maps or when they email you their first drafts.

Have the students write their projects and exchange their progress with you by email so that you can give them feedback as they edit and re-edit their docs until they get to a refined draft (process writing). At the end, have the students submit a written report of the project (product writing). If your students do not have access to emails, you will have to arrange a certain time, out of class time, to check their work and give them feedback. Feedback on language and content is very effective in project writing as it contributes greatly to formative evaluation.

This strategy may work with classes of all sizes as students will be working in small groups. Then the number of groups will depend on the class

size. For a large class you may form more groups and you may form less groups for a smaller class.

In order to develop the project, each student can choose the classmates he/she wants to work with. However, it is advisable to suggest that all teams include students with different language proficiency levels so that the ones with higher and levels of English can help those with a lower level while writing the projects.

Just a few resources are needed for these activities. A white or black board can be useful to illustrate the paragraph structure mentioned before and then, manila papers are needed for the students to write the posters if they choose this mode of presentation. If they prefer to use a power point presentation, then they will need projectors and laptops or desktops.

Access to email services are also necessary for you to give feedback to the students during the process-writing period but if ICT technology is not available, the students can make drafts of their projects progress on Manila paper and share them with you for feedback out of class time.

Seats must be arranged so that the students can work in small groups. Students can sit in teams to develop the project and prepare the posters, and then they will stick posters on the wall and present them to their classmates as they move from poster to poster. The classroom environment is enough for this activity, although the posters can also be pasted on the hall walls to have more space for presentations.

## **Reference**

TeachThought. (2012, December 3). The Difference Between Projects and Project-Based Learning.

<b>Pedagogical Skill:</b> Teaching Speaking skills	<b>Topic:</b> Oral poster presentations
<b>Curricular Thread 2:</b> Oral Communication.	<b>Sub thread:</b> Spoken Production and Interaction.

### **Strategy 3: Oral Poster Presentations**

#### **Description**

Once the students have written their projects, they will have to present them orally. Mnemonics can be used to help them during the presentations. You can write some phrases on the blackboard to help them remember a list of facts in a certain order, for example, the use of adverbial phrases as: at the beginning, then, after that, finally.

The students present their projects orally with the help of a printed poster or a PowerPoint presentation.

#### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

Have the different team members take turns presenting the findings and results of their project. Each team member should report part of the project so that all the students are engaged in the presentation. This part of the strategy is very important because as the students had different roles when writing the project, now each one will present the part that s/he did the research on.

Have the rest of the class ask questions about what the team is presenting. This is another important part of the presentation because it guarantees that the students do not memorize and recite by heart without knowing what they are talking about as they have to be ready to answer questions. The students can also give opinions, agree or disagree with what is being presented.

This activity works well in various class sizes. As it is an oral presentation, the class size does not affect the quality of the activity.

A Manila paper for the poster is highly recommended in contexts where the infrastructure of the school does not include projectors in each classroom. The presentation can be organized in the form of an open house. The students display their posters on different places of the classroom and the audience moves around listening as the speakers present.

However, the students can use a MS PowerPoint presentation if they feel more comfortable using it. When using this presentation mode, the speaker presents only once for the whole audience.

No other ICT is necessary. Seating the students in a horseshoe shape will help communication during the project presentation and discussion. The classroom environment is enough for this activity. This is a good strategy to help students develop competencies for preparing oral presentations in congresses when they become professionals.

<b>Pedagogical Skill:</b> Teaching Speaking skills	<b>Topic:</b> Short dialogues to stimulate spoken production
<b>Curricular Thread 2:</b> Oral Communication.	<b>Sub thread:</b> Spoken Production and Interaction.

#### ***Strategy 4: Short Dialogues to stimulate Spoken Production***

##### **Description**

Dialogues play an important role to develop oral interaction in communicative language teaching and learning. So short dialogues in the form of role-plays with information gaps are useful to stimulate spoken production. In this activity, the students will practice the oral language and develop speaking skills in authentic communicative situations.

## Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

In order to develop this strategy, first divide the class so that everyone will work in pairs. One will play the role of a **tourist** and the other one of an **Ecuadorian tourist guide**. Give the students cards with names of different places: La Mitad del Mundo, Montañita beach, Galapagos Island, among others.

Present a model conversation with an advanced student for the rest of the class to see what they are expected to do. Write these prompts on the blackboard or whiteboard for the students to develop the dialogue:

**Tourist:**

Where is...?

What can I see/do there?

What is X like?

**Tourist guide:**

It is in...

There you can see/do..

It is ....

Give the students time to prepare and practice a conversation talking about pros and cons of visiting these places. After they have had enough practice, have them perform the dialogues for the whole class (no written support allowed) Then, have your students exchange roles and practice the dialogue again. This time, the ones who played the tourist will take the role of the tourist guide and vice versa. In this activity, the students are not only practicing their English, but also improving their speaking skills, as each time they do it, they will get more fluent and with your help more accurate.

The think, pair and share (TPS) technique may be very useful while the students are preparing for the pair work activity, as it is always good to give the students enough time to practice before they engage in language production. This practice time will help them feel more confident when they speak.

As this is a fluency speaking activity, the teacher should not interrupt the students when they are speaking. Correct language mistakes is key in constructive feedback when it does not hamper students from communicating. Instead, the teacher can take down notes of those mistakes and plan a “Trouble Spots” session for future class. After the identification of these mistakes, students need to write some sentences with these mistakes on the board and have them correct and mention the mistakes made. When a student reacts and says, “That was my mistake”, it signifies that there is consciousness in learning the language.

In this strategy, only the blackboard or whiteboard is necessary for the teacher to write the instructions and students may use their cell phones to record the dialogues for practice and self-correction.

This strategy works well with all class sizes as the students will be working in pairs and they can practice outside the classroom to avoid interfering with their peers. The students may be allowed to do the pair work practice outside the classroom and then come in when they are ready for their performances. No ICT is necessary.

## **Reference**

Simulating an interview adapted from Role Playing and Simulations (page 48), Productive Group Work. How to Engage Students, Build Team Work, and Promote Understanding  
Nancy Frey, Douglasw Fisher, Sandy Everlove.

<b>Pedagogical Skill:</b> Teaching Writing skills	<b>Topic:</b> Elements of flipped classroom to develop literacy skills
<b>Curricular Thread 2:</b> Writing	<b>Sub thread:</b> Literacy building

**Strategy 5: Elements of Flipped Classroom to Develop Literacy Skills**

**Description**

Teachers can occasionally implement elements of the flipped classroom in a lesson or unit (English as a Foreign Language. Educación General Básica. Subnivel Superior. Teacher’s Guide. page 18). As it may be tough to implement this strategy due to the school’s context where it is difficult to have access to the Internet, lack of time for teachers to make their own videos and lectures, etc. However, as an alternative to this little problem, and in order to be able to do what is suggested in the Teacher’s Guide, you can find videos available online. You just have to download them and give them to the students on a pen drive, upload them to the virtual classroom, if you have one in your school, or just give the students the link where they can watch the video at home or in any other place, like in an Internet café, at a friend’s house, etc. This is an example of a link where students can view a video on verbal tenses in order to review the simple past, past progressive, and there was/were that appear in the Grammar section of Unit 2 “Travel and adventure” 10<sup>th</sup> grade book. Level A 2.1. This is the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84jVz0D-KkY>. This link may also be useful to review the past tense in order to use it in writing the vacation narrative that the students have to present as the project for that unit.

## Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

Essence of the three flips

★Flipped classroom I- Before the lesson (out of class)

Students prepare to participate in the activity. The teacher records a lecture or downloads a video with the material s/he wants to work with, and the students tune in and watch videos any time before they come to class.

★Flipped classroom II- During the lesson (in class)

Students arrive to class ready to engage and participate in active learning activities by applying key concepts and receiving feedback.

★Flipped classroom III- After the lesson (out of class)

Students check their understanding and extend their learning. It is necessary to consider the previously three mentioned moments: (Before the lesson (out of class), during the lesson (in class) and after the lesson (out of class) in order to develop this strategy.

*Before class time (at home)*

The students watch the video available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84jVz0D-KkY>. In this video, they can watch a review of all the English verb tenses. They can watch the video as many times as they need to understand it. They will have the chance of viewing the subtitles while they watch the video once and again until they understand it and can identify the verbal tenses assigned in the pre viewing task before coming to class. This will prepare the students to complete the task in the textbook.

Then, they will be asked to find the verbs in **simple past** in the text “Adventure Tales”, page 26, 10<sup>th</sup> grade book.



The time devoted to this activity will largely depend on the students' skills. Each student can work at his/her own pace. The students will need their textbooks, and a laptop or any other type of computer to watch the video.

### *During Class*

The teacher will check for completion of work at home by checking the identification of the verbal tenses in the text "Adventure Tales", page 26, 10th grade book. Students will then be placed into cooperative learning groups to answer study guide questions (this is another set of more specific "intelligent questions" about the simple past structure and usage explained in the video so that they have to use their high order thinking skills (HOTS): analysing, evaluating and creating in order to answer them).

To provide the development of these HOTS, the teacher will discuss how to use this structure in communicative situations expressing past experience. For example, asking intelligent questions, such as: How did you feel when this/that happened? How do you evaluate what X (the main character of a story) did? What steps did you follow to get to..? For the students to answer the questions they do not only need to remember or recall facts, they need to make analysis, evaluations etc. And this demands the use of HOTS

The teacher can then provide students in small groups with this list of topics and questions for group work discussion and report: When did you do yesterday? What did you do in your last vacations? Discuss an interesting experience with your classmates.

Finally, they will do exercise six, page 27. Write a personal narration. In this stage, the students will integrate what they watched and listened to as a previous task at home, with the new knowledge they are acquiring in class.

### *After class-follow up*

As homework, students will be required to prepare a report of what they did in their previous school year. This strategy works well with all class sizes. If videos on the topic are not available on the web, the teacher could record a video of him/herself giving a lecture on the topic or use a text on the topic.

The technology that they will need is access to the Internet, either at home or in any other place and in cases where students do not have access to the Internet, you may allot a schedule during free time to access these videos in the ICT laboratory. It requires a normal seating arrangement and rearrangement of seats for group work and discussions. Other types of learning environments can be at home, friend's house with Internet access, internet cafés, etc.

This strategy is highly recommended as the students can work at their own pace. The most advanced students might have to watch the video only one time, while the slow learner might have to watch it many times and might even have to use the subtitles, but the important thing is that they all come to class ready to discuss and apply what they learned in order to develop their high order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation and making proposals, etc.

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<b>Pedagogical Skill:</b> Teaching Writing skills	<b>Topic:</b> Find someone who
<b>Curricular Thread 2:</b> Oral communication.	<b>Sub thread:</b> Spoken production and interaction.

### **Strategy 6: Find someone who**

#### **Description**

This strategy is very useful as it engages the students in authentic communication.

After presenting any language structure, for instance, , present simple, past simple, be going to amongst others, the students need to practice asking and answering questions, and reporting back to the whole class.

Spanish-speaking students usually find it difficult to use the auxiliaries *do* and *does* to ask questions and then to add the *-s* and *-es* to the verb when they report their findings. The *Find someone who...* strategy can help teachers solve this problem.

#### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

In order to work with this strategy you have to prepare a set of prompts in a hand out and give it to each student.

Example of hand out:

Find someone who:

... lives around the university.

... drives a car to come to school.

... likes listening to music in his/her free time

Give the students some time to prepare their questions. They can use the TPS technique to consult the questions with their peers in order

to check that they have used the correct question structure before they actually ask them to their classmates.

Examples of questions:

- Do you live around the university?
- Do you drive a car to come to school?
- Do you like listening to music in your free time?

After the students have prepared the questions, they go around the classroom asking them to different classmates until they find someone who does what they ask. Then, they write the name of the students on the sheet of paper, and when they have found answers to all questions they report back to the class.

Example: X lives around the university. Y drives a car to come to school. Z likes to listen to music in his free time.

This strategy may be very useful for large and small classrooms as the students first work in pairs preparing the questions and then move around the classroom finding the information and the more students, they ask the questions to, the more they practice the language.

When using the Presentation, Practice and Production methodology. First, the students can practice the structure of questions in the controlled practice stage. This helps them be more accurate and then they ask the questions to their classmates getting authentic information and reporting it back to the whole class.

This strategy combines pair and group work practice while finding the people who do the actions. This strategy can be used with any class size as pair and group works are the essential activities, and the number of students reporting individually will depend on the available time. This

“report stage” is very important because the teacher can give individual feedback when the students finish reporting their findings.

No ICT tools are necessary. The students will be sitting in pairs first and then they will just stand up and move around the classroom, so no seats arrangement is necessary for this part of the activity.



# CHAPTER 2

Teaching Strategies to Develop Productive Skills







## Receptive Skills Overview

Receptive skills in English as a foreign language (EFL) focus on reading and listening skills. This chapter describes various strategies that can increase reading and listening in EFL at different levels in the classroom in public schools in Ecuador.

Reading is one of the most important language skills when people attempt to learn a second or foreign language. Therefore, facilitating and fostering the development of this crucial language skill has a central role in the language learning classroom. With these notions in mind, this chapter was brought to light, so that English language instructors can be equipped with the knowledge and tools necessary to help their language learners develop reading skills within an interactive and cooperative classroom context.

The first skill that is focused on is reading. The strategies discussed in this chapter are Reading circles, Concept Maps, Jigsaw Reading, The Inquiry Chart (or also known as the I-chart), Story Maps and Retelling. These strategies are for reading comprehension, vocabulary learning, classroom management, increasing motivation and implementing key ideas on how to differentiate the application of each strategy in the classroom setting. These strategies can be used with different ages at different levels depending on the materials the teacher chooses to use in the classroom according to the students' needs. It is advisable for language

teachers to make the appropriate adaptations of modifications when they implement the targeted instructional strategies into the classroom. Such modifications should be carried out based on language learners' (school) grade, as well as their language proficiency level, needs and interests.

The second skill that is emphasized is listening. The three different active listening strategies are *Listen in Action*, *Situational Role Enacting* and *Collaborative Drawing* that are exemplified and conducted through corresponding classroom activities.

# Active Listening Strategies to Boost Language Acquisition

Alicia Sola

<b>Pedagogical skill:</b> Teaching Listening Skills	Teaching	<b>Topic:</b> Active Listening Strategies
<b>Curricular Thread:</b> Oral Communication & Speaking	Oral (Listening & Speaking)	<b>Sub thread:</b> Listening Skills

## Strategy 1: Listen and Act

### Description

This strategy develops student's understanding of content or input through oral language which can be achieved through active practice and participation. Through this strategy, active listening is promoted through Total Physical Response (TPR). Further, this strategy necessitates response to specific oral information from the learners by using hands or body movement to develop active listening skills through an adaptation of the TPR approach. The learners actively participate in the activity and not only listen, but they interact, acquiring the ability to transfer the knowledge gained translated into a semiotic modality,

in a form of mediation. We will aim at improving the learners listening competence through their active participation in group dynamics.

In order to avoid potential interferences in the practice of the listening skill, we will not use any form of written language when conducting this strategy. In other words, learners will associate the sounds of language to body movement or signals that could be aleatory or have a cultural or semiotic meaning, whereas no reading or writing is included or mediating this activity. Thus, only the listening and comprehension is practiced as an independent ability.

The spoken information (input) or the contents in each activity can vary when using this strategy: for instance, we could tell a tale where students have to mimic as they identify certain words each time they hear them, or to a higher level of acquisition, some students could narrate a story while others improvise its enacting. Also, different subjects or transversal concepts can be included (by application of CLIL), thus, this strategy can be implemented at all levels, and can be applied at a wide range of activities. A single example of how to develop this strategy within an activity designed for early stages of language acquisition is described below.

For pre-basic user such as children in Year 2-3, the ASL (American Sign Language) song for the alphabet can be conducted to encourage active listening.

Through this activity, learners will do more than just listen. They will be engaged in the activity by learning not only the sounds of the English alphabet, but also the official sign language that is used among the deaf community.

As indicated above, we will not use any form of written language, but instead, sounds will be associated to the hand signs, that will be displayed by the teacher either on a screen, by the use of flashcards or manually.

The content of this activity will then include the alphabet in its oral form, the ASL, and some transversal content such as inclusive and cooperative values and motor skills.

This content represents a form of genuine not graded material or *realia*, and the acquisition of this knowledge aims at being meaningful to students in their real lives as an extension to their communicative competences, by adding the ability to speak a basic sign language in English.

The Companion Volume of the CEFR (2018), extends the concept of mediation and emphasizes the idea of the second language learner as a social agent and as an “intermediary between interlocutors who are unable for whatever reason, to communicate with each other directly” (p.33) and to “act as an intermediary between interlocutors who are unable to understand each other directly, normally (but not exclusively) speakers of different languages” (p.33). By using this strategy, learners translate the oral message into a different language and modality, and if there is a receptor, this activity constitutes a great example of the practice of mediation as a skill itself.

One of the advantages of using this strategy is that the teacher can visually evaluate the acquisition of the listening skill by the students, by monitoring the body responses of learners to the input. Also, since motor abilities, musical content and visual skills are involved, a range of learning styles are put into practice.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

In order to carry out this activity, in the preparation phase, the teacher must find the materials that are going to be used to display the ASL in a way that is easily seen by students, and in its case, some rehearsal is advised beforehand to become familiar with the song and the ASL. We recommend the song of the *ABC Song of the Alphabet* available in the link referenced on this section, but any song selected by the teacher could fulfill this aim.

The implementation of the activity otherwise is simple and generally enjoyable and motivational.

Errors will not be penalized, to reduce learners' anxiety, and we will offer positive feedback to all students. Training to understand the sounds of the foreign language takes a different amount of time to each learner depending on the previous knowledge of the second language and of the mother tongue itself (and the interlanguage), the physiological and cognitive aspects, the motivational factor, etc.

Before the activity, a brief introduction in the mother tongue about the use of this language as a form of communication by the deaf community is paramount to contextualize the aim pursued. Students will, by this point, be familiar with the Spanish alphabet, so acquiring the inner language structure of it and its correspondence will not entail a difficulty, thus the emphasis is placed in the integrated content (CLIL) that corresponds to learning this other language and this song in order to be able to communicate with American English sign language speakers, but the vehicle we use is the English spoken language, that should be acquired naturally.

Once the learners have understood that they are going to listen to the ASL song for the alphabet and learn it at the same time, we can play the song and display the signs at the same time for the first time. Learners should be allowed to just look and listen for the first time.

In the following rounds this song is played and displayed, learners should be encouraged to perform the hand signs themselves in a group dynamic, as they listen and watch their teacher or the screen for guidance.

In a next step, once some of the signs and sounds have been learnt by students, they can be grouped in small teams of four or five students. Once the learners are arranged in small groups, the song will be played again, but students will only be able to look at each other in order to perform the signs, helping each other in a collaborative way, so in case one forgets the sign that corresponds to the phoneme, maybe another student will remember and so it can be copied.

The amount of times we repeat this sequence in a single lesson will depend on the learners' response to the activity. The teacher should assess if students are engaged and learning, or if the activity should be repeated in other lessons.

## **Differentiation**

Class size does not necessarily entail a major determinant to carry out this specific activity, whereas if more movement is required from an adapted form of this strategy into another activity, class size should be taken into consideration to permit movement of all participants.

If possible, the *YouTube* video of the song could be displayed on a screen using a computer with a set of speakers and a projector.

With the use of technology, signs or movements can be acted upon any English song, tale or set of vocabulary that the teacher can perform in case ICTs are not available. A poster or flashcards can also be used instead of the audiovisual resource. The song can also be sung by the teacher.

In terms of space, students can act from their positions in the classroom, though access to ample space is advisable; a big classroom would be ideal, but not necessary.

If the projector is available, the ideal environment is the classroom, though it can also be realized at home with a regular computer. In case ICTs are not available, this strategy can be performed anywhere (pitch, yard, park, etc.).

## **Suggestions**

Consider using content vocabulary and concepts from other subjects of the same school year (CLIL). This would allow students to relate their

1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> languages and have the required previous knowledge. In case new vocabulary is being used, consider displaying it visually beforehand.

A variety of resources like tales, flashcards, real objects, etc., can be used to display the new vocabulary without having to use written words. Once students master some of the body or hand signals demonstrated, a variety of guessing (speaking and interacting) games can be developed. Depending on the activity, collaboration or cooperation can be encouraged through the formation of groups.

If a series of related activities prove to be effective, a public presentation would be a good way of turning this strategy into a project-based activity. For instance, a specific song can be played in front of an audience in the school or at a celebration, we can do video recordings and upload them to our website, social network or blog, etc.

There is no need for specific materials, though, the use of speakers, costumes, make up, drawings, videos, recordings, etc., could be used in any case.

Asking students what they have learnt and if they have enjoyed the activity will give the teacher valuable feedback.

## ***Strategy 2: Situational Role Enacting***

### **Description**

This strategy aims to develop active oral skills by performing situations, daily vocabulary, by conducting situational role play strategies to help students acquire communicative competence, sociocultural oral competence and practice active listening.



This strategy stems from the Open-ended scenario approach to SLA (second language acquisition) by Di Pietro (1982), where an artificial context (scenario) fosters a strategic language exchange between reciprocal roles (costumer/grocer; host/guest, etc.) with common goals (completing a sale; booking a room, etc.). It is also inspired in a dynamic study of *A Didactic Experience: Learning by Doing*, published in 2016 by Piquer, I. Sola, A., where TPR and the Oral Approach (Giralt, M. 2012; Cantero, F. J. y Giralt, M. 2019) are put into practice.

By these performances, learners will practice active listening and interactional skills, and by doing so, they will acquire the strategic competence of negotiating meaning, sociocultural and linguistic competence in the second language, as well as the specific vocabulary and protocols in each given situation.

In order to prevent written language interferences in the practice of oral abilities, the materials used when conducting this strategy will avoid the use of this language modality, and images and *realia* will be used instead.

For basic users of the language, the activity, “The Restaurant” can be a good opportunity for students to immerse themselves in a situational role-play.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

To put this strategy into practice, a scenario of a restaurant will be designed by the teacher, turning the classroom into the contextual environment needed for students to enact their assigned roles: cooks, chef, waiters/waitress, and costumers.

Materials such as menus, tables, cutlery, fake food, money, etc. Need to be provided and arranged to create this scenario. Also, the disguises of the different roles will be prepared (a cap for waiters and waitresses, an apron for the kitchen staff, casual complements for clients, etc.)

First of all, students' previous knowledge about the protocols that need to be put into practice should be ensured. The specific vocabulary can be displayed by showing students the items in our scenario and the main protocols (I would like to have..., Can I get the check..., etc.) could be made available to students in previous lessons by different means (video play and repeat, order the conversation activity, matching text and images, etc.).

It is important to make sure that students understand the nature of the activity before they start. Students have to freely play the roles assigned by the teacher (cook, waiter or waitress, and client) and fulfil the common goal: clients will have dinner (or not), cooks will provide the dishes ordered and the waiting staff will serve.

## **Differentiation**

This activity can be carried out with any class size, though, the bigger the class size the easier to conduct the activity. Materials that can be used as substitutes: instead of disguises, and flashcards instead of the real objects

The recommended classroom space is from medium to big size spaces. Every classroom can be arranged so that a few tables function as restaurant tables and a corner of the classroom is reserved for the kitchen section. Further, this activity can be carried out outdoors or at a different setting as far as the materials are appropriate.

## ***Strategy 3: Collaborative drawing***

### **Description**

Collaborative drawing is a strategy that develops competence through the negotiation of meaning. Collaboration is developed through drawing and visual related activities. It also facilitates the development of inter-

pretative skills through activities that promote construction of meanings and associations.

This strategy entails exercising active listening through collaborative drawing in accordance to what the teacher, a classmate or a recording indicates orally. In this fashion, we facilitate the development of interpretative skills through activities that promote collaborative construction of meaning and associations. The instructions should be appropriate to the students' competency level and should be based on the curriculum described for each stage. CLIL related concepts may be incorporated to contextualize learning.

Written words should not be used when practicing this skill, as listening and reading are two different and independent abilities that need to be practiced independently (Oral Approach), instead, students will listen and draw the story as they perceive it to be.

The practice of this strategy will develop oral communicative competence through the negotiation of meaning that takes place among the group of students.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

Independent users of the language can capitalize on the use of Collaborative Drawing to develop their communicative skills particularly their listening abilities. The activity, "Traditional Tale Collaborative Drawing" is a good example. This activity consists of a collaborative drawing or sketching of an Ecuadorian folk tale.

By including this content, we are working on the cultural mediation skill of our students. They will translate their ancestral knowledge into a different language in order to convey these traditions to a foreign person or group.

Through collaborative work, students are given the opportunity to participate in sharing their perceptions and interpretations of a literary material, as well as having the chance to participate based on their own level of comprehension and to benefit from each other's performance. Students need to be aware that this is not a competitive activity. The common goal is to draw a sketch or simple storyboard of the story to then be shared to the rest of the big group.

For the materials, we will provide students with paper to draw on, and other drawing materials. The 'funkier the materials' (stickers, glitter, collage material, etc.) the more attractive the activity may result. For this sample activity, we have selected the tale: *Etsa and the demon Iwia?* referenced below. As in every activity, it is advisable to check students' previous knowledge and relation to this content.

This activity has to be performed in teams, in a way that each member of the team has the opportunity to collaborate. Thus, teams of more than four members are not advised. Once the materials are distributed, students are advised to listen carefully, as they will have to draw a storyboard of what they understand. The first time the story is read, students can be allowed to simply concentrate and listen, so that they understand the length of the tale and can adapt it to the drawing space they have got.

The second time the story is played, the recording can be stopped after each scene for students to discuss what they are going to depict, or it can be left to the end of the tale so that students need to recall and negotiate the whole story. The teacher can decide the number of times the tale is played depending on the learners' progress.

Once the drawing part of the activity is considered concluded by the group, each group must show their results to the rest of the group, explaining what they understood about the story.

## **Differentiation**

This activity can be carried out with any class size. Materials that can be used as substitutes: If the materials indicated above are not available, plain paper and pencil can be used. Further, this activity can be carried out at any place. The indications can simply adjust to the environment and play with these possibilities offered by the world outside the classroom walls.

## **Suggestions**

Depending on the contents, this activity can develop the acquisition of a specific type of vocabulary which can be related to sciences, math, and other subjects or areas of knowledge.

Groups can be formed in different ways. For example, visual cards that contain different colors, numbers, animals may serve as grouping schemes. The ending of stories can be open-ended, and students can be requested to finish them and then share their own versions to the rest of the class.

This strategy has several versions: For instance, students may be asked to draw the same pictures by following the same instructions and then compare the drawings with their peers. They can also do cooperative drawing where they draw the same picture in pairs negotiating what they have understood. The teacher can also group the class in teams of 3 or 4 students giving each student a piece of information, for him or her to create different pictures and try to build his or her knowledge from it; or for them to construct one picture reflecting their understanding of the instructions given. If students use a language portfolio, these pictures would be susceptible to be used as part of their dossier; otherwise, the teacher may display them in the classroom or in bulletin boards for the rest of the school to see. In this way, the strategy would turn meaning-

ful to them. The same strategy can be used to other creative expression techniques, like modelling, cutting and pasting, etc.

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# Developing Listening Strategies for Effective Communication

Juan Pablo Contreras

<b>Type of productive skill:</b> Teaching Listening skill	<b>Topic:</b> Developing listening strategies through main idea, details, and metacognitive strategies.
<b>Curricular Thread:</b> Listening	<b>Sub Thread:</b> Listening understanding.

## ***Strategy 1: Listening for main ideas and details.***

### **Description**

This strategy intends to develop the capacity to teach and direct students' attention to the main idea and details. The main idea can be identified in the introduction section of a story, text, song or any material, and can be found traditionally in the conclusion section too. On the other hand, details usually consist of key words or specific information asked by the teacher before listening; it is usually located at the body section.

Students always need to have a purpose for listening. Having a purpose helps students listen more efficiently. Students try to comprehend what is happening even if they are not able to understand every word, expression or sentence. All students need is to try to pick up key words, tone, or any clues which can help them to predict the meaning while listening

to the audio material. Here the role of the teacher is important because the students have to be motivated before developing the exercise.

The students have to envision the whole picture about what they are going to listen to. Students may be encouraged to imagine they are a superhero flying in the sky. From that height, it is possible to see what the entire area is like, how densely populated it is or the kind of houses in each area. When listening, it is also possible to get the ‘whole picture’ but with one crucial difference: information comes in a sequence. And in that sequence of information, there are content words (the nouns, adjectives and verbs) that can help you form that picture and this is a strategy that calls for active listening for details (Ahmed, 2015).

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

The following steps are necessary in order to develop listening comprehension in the EFL classroom. These steps can be adapted depending on the listening material that the teacher decides to use. This is a sample activity for Pre Basic Users. The topic is the animals in the zoo and the audio material is a song. The song is available on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OwRmivbNgQk>. Any topic and any level can be adapted to this process.

First of all, the English teacher has to introduce some new vocabulary about animals. It is important to get students thinking about the topic. Then it is a good idea to review the title of the listening activity, in this case, “The Zoo”, in order to make sure learners identify the place and what they can see in this place; also, other places can be taught, like a farm so students can contrast the places. Later, the language teacher brainstorms with students about animals they know. Here students can use their first language in order to identify and contrast domestic to zoo animals.

Next, it is time to watch the video and listen to the song about the zoo. There are plenty of videos about animals on YouTube; however, there is a link of a video available above. After that, the language teacher asks



the following question: what kind of place is described? This question is oriented to practice listening for the main idea, because students just identify the place in general. They will notice the difference between farm and zoo animals. Then the students watch the video again and need to answer the following questions: what was the name of the animal that you first heard or saw? What was the name of the last animal that you heard? What was the second animal that showed up in the song? And the teacher keeps asking questions like these. From now on, students are practicing listening for details. They will need to identify just the details asked by the teacher. Besides, the language teacher can keep playing the song and asking more detailed questions like “What is your favorite animal in the song?” “What color is the elephant?” “What color is the kangaroo?” etc. Here learners keep practicing listening for details and reinforcing vocabulary about colors. Finally, it is time to sing the song aloud. As everyone has heard the song many times, it is easier to sing the song as everybody watches the video. There are some extra activities in order to reinforce vocabulary. For example, based on the song, teachers can ask students to draw, color, and say aloud the animals

## **Differentiation**

This activity can use Internet and videos accessible on YouTube or on the web, but if none are available and there is no video or audio, the teacher can bring some flashcards and sing the song as well. As this is an individual activity, the space needed is not a problem; however, this activity can be done in groups depending on the available space and the topic. The directions are the same. The teacher is the facilitator of the listening strategy. The role of the teacher is to give appropriate materials specific to students’ interests and needs, provide materials that would assist students in completing the task, and help develop learning in groups or individually. The class size is not a problem either; the activity can be developed in small classes or large ones. On the other hand, depending on the available material, some extra activities can be done such as coloring, painting and cutting. These extra activities can be also sent as homework.

## **Strategy 2: Metacognitive sequence listening**

### **Description**

This strategy intends to develop the capacity to teach, plan, monitor, and evaluate with a metacognitive sequence. The metacognitive sequence helps students to predict, talk, discuss, and work in pairs or groups on ideas about the listening activity as the teacher leads the discussion and sees if students have understood. While carrying out these pedagogical sequences, it is important to create an environment where students do not feel tested. Since students do this activity to learn how to listen, it is very important to encourage students to discuss.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

The following steps constitute a sample activity for basic users of the language. It is necessary to develop listening comprehension in the EFL classroom. These steps can be adapted depending on the listening material the teacher decides to use. They were taken from the pedagogical sequence that promotes this kind of activity (Isaacs, 2012).

First, the teacher informs the topic and text type that the students are about to listen. Then, s/he asks the students to predict words and phrases that they might hear. For example, if the listening activity is about shopping, the learners have to predict words, verbs, adjectives, etc. referring to shopping. They are allowed to write some words in their first language too. Then the teacher plays the track (first verification stage) and asks students to verify their initial guesses including first-language equivalents.

After that, the students are divided into different groups (4 or 5) and asked to discuss and compare their initial guesses; here the teacher can help translating some words. Next, the language teacher plays the track again (second verification stage) and asks the groups to verify points of disagreement and write down new information; the class is set in a discussion where all members contribute to the reconstruction of the

text. For instance, if they hear words like “wear”, “put on”, or articles of clothing; the students will write a new list of words and delete the ones that are not in the track. The track is played one more time (final verification stage) and the students are asked to listen specifically for information they have not heard yet. Commonly these are new words. For example, the track can include words like “take off”, or “high heels”. Then, the teacher has to write the words on the board and ask his/her students to listen again and check if they can hear this new vocabulary; If possible, the listening may be accompanied by a transcript in this stage. The teacher leads the discussion to confirm comprehension before discussing the strategies that they reported using with students.

Finally, students have to write goals for the next listening activity based on earlier discussions. With this, they will try to identify places, prices, people, ages, colors, etc. according to the listening material.

## **Differentiation**

This activity can be done in groups depending on the available space and groups of four or five students can be form. The directions are the same. The teacher is the facilitator of the listening strategy. The role of the teacher is to give appropriate materials specific to students’ interests and needs, give materials that would assist students in completing the task, and aid in developing learning in groups or individually according to the level. If the students are using a book, any listening exercise from the book can follow the instructions.

### ***Strategy 3: Listening strategy with kinesthetic activities.***

#### **Description**

Flashcards and posters are very effective tools for listening skills. Young children find flashcards and posters interesting and they pay special attention to what they see and hear. Also, flashcards and posters can be

useful at every stage of the class; they can help children at reading age because word cards can be introduced after pictorial cards. Also, children always find kinesthetic activities fun. They love going around the classroom, pointing, saying words, etc. while learning.

Teachers must encourage students to be interested in listening by using flashcards and posters and they must reinforce vocabulary by having students look at pictures. Also, teachers help students to improve their listening comprehension through visual objects.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

This is a sample activity for the pre-basic user. These steps are necessary to develop listening comprehension in the EFL classroom. These steps can be adapted depending on the listening material the teacher decides to use.

If there are some posters or flashcards available, the language teacher has to put up a poster of the topic around the class as s/he pronounces the new vocabulary. The teacher asks the students to repeat the new words as s/he points at the pictures. The teacher asks for volunteers and explains that they will hear a word and will have to run and point at the word that they hear. The winner will take the place of the teacher. Therefore, the student now asks for more volunteers and says a word while his classmates run and point to the picture that they heard, and the winner will take the leader's place and so on. Some students will not point to the correct picture, so the teacher will help to reinforce the vocabulary asking them to repeat the vocabulary again.

Depending on the topic, the teacher may stick posters on the wall of everything from numbers to phrasal verbs. Below, one can see an example dealing with animal names. The teacher must be sure that all students participate in the activity by taking turns. Also, the students can form groups of four or five and have a competition following the same steps. All the members of the group have to participate. After this activity, the teacher can add another similar activity. Working in the same groups,

students will have a competition called “Simon says”, which is very popular. For example, Simon says to touch the tiger. If they hear the word “Simon says”, they have to race but if the teacher says only “touch the tiger”, they cannot move because the teacher did not say “Simon says”. In this situation, the one that runs loses. The teacher gives points every time a group reaches the correct flashcard.

A final kinesthetic activity can be done with the students. In this activity, the teacher places new flashcards of extra vocabulary on the floor in a circle and pronounces the words at least three times or as needed. The students are asked to repeat the animals in order to memorize the cards. Then, when the students hear a word, they must stand in a line behind the correct flashcard. Finally, the flashcards are collected and covered with a piece of another card and the teacher slowly reveals it. The students have to guess which animal it is as fast as possible. Once the animal is shown, chorally, the teacher drills the word with the students varying the volume, whispering, or shouting the name of the animals. Students will copy the teacher’s voice and have fun. The teacher can flip the card over very quickly, so the students just get a quick glimpse of the picture.

## **Differentiation**

The role of the teacher is to give appropriate materials specific to students’ interests and needs, provide materials that would assist students in completing the task, and help develop learning in groups or individually. The class size is not a problem; the activity can be developed in small classes or large ones and the students can take turns when participating. The different activities can be done in any order. For instance, the teacher can start by putting the flashcards on the floor or on the wall, but the teacher has to be sure students practice the vocabulary first before playing “Simon says” or doing the competitions.

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# EFL Reading Strategies for Different Ages, levels and Class sizes in Educational Institutions

*Julia Sevy*

<p><b>Pedagogical skill:</b> Training Teachers to Teach and Use Different Reading Strategies with various age groups</p>	<p><b>Topic:</b> Teaching Teachers How to Utilize Reading Circles, Concept Mapping in the Classroom at the Pre-basic, basic, and Independent levels</p>
<p>Curricular Thread 3: Training Teachers in Reading for Comprehension, Vocabulary, Classroom Management while Reading and Creating a Literary Rich Environment</p> <p>Source: Curriculos, 2016</p>	<p>Sub thread: Teacher Training for specific reading strategies such as Reading Circles or understanding the details or jist of a short simple text (2.3.2/2.3.3) , Concept Mapping or understanding a simple graphic organizer (2.3.6)</p>

## **Strategy 1: Reading Circle**

### **Description**

The objectives of this strategy are to construct literary environments in the classroom using reading circles. Another objective is to define roles of reading groups, so each student gains more knowledge while working together. The last objective is to demonstrate their understanding of

how to utilize reading circles in the classroom with differentiated levels to promote vocabulary learning and reading comprehension.

This is a strategy that can be used throughout different age levels of EFL learners. Students at all levels work in small groups and have various roles to help understand the reading. Depending on the age level of the students, different types of roles are given out. The lesson plan prepared below is for basic learners. The roles of the students are made a little simpler at this level. This strategy can help at basic and independent levels when the roles of the students are more complex since students have a higher level of reading in their L1 language. This strategy works best when students are given various leveled readers to choose from. This means students are given the autonomy and independence to choose which book they would like to read if the book is at the correct level of the student.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

The first step is to introduce levelled EFL readers, which are short stories specifically directed to a student's level of English. The teacher can explain that these types of readers are developed specifically for EFL learners to support reading comprehension and other reading skills. These readers are available for all ages and levels from adult A1.1 to C2.2 levels. These books can be found in Cambridge readers or other publishers online.

When working with leveled readers in the classroom students are broken into small groups of 4-5 students. As a warmer activity once students have the leveled reader is students can read the title and brainstorm ideas of what the book is about. Then have a short discussion. If the technology is available, you can watch a short video from YouTube about the topic the reader is about to introduce the theme of the book to the students. If no technology is then students can share their ideas of the topic of the book on poster papers and share in an "open house" format with the rest of the class. During this time the teacher can move through the class and observe and support the students where needed.



Once students have been introduced to the books, they will read each student will be assigned different roles that learners will play (example. Student 1 is the painter, student 2 word finder students 3 connector student 4 director student 5 storyteller). These worksheets can have pictures that explain each role if you have lower level learners. Once each student has a role, check that they understand their specific role.

Reading of the book can be a weekly or monthly task. Reading and completion of tasks assigned to each role is completed autonomously outside of class. When the groups meet each participant of the group can use their assigned roles to explain specific ideas of the assigned reading.

Finally, when the leveled reader is finished a project-based group assignment can be given to culminate the reading. This project could include a video about the book they just read, a blog including important information from the book, the creation of short book about a topic or them being discussed in class etc....

Materials needed to complete this reading strategy are a laptop, projector, leveled readers, poster paper, specific role worksheets, markers, a whiteboard and white board markers.

## **Differentiation**

This strategy can be completed with classes between 20 – 30 students. Students need space to be able to work in small groups within the classroom. It is important that pre-basic levels have access to pictures of all new vocabulary since their level of reading is very low. The reading material for this level should consist of pictures and simple texts. The role worksheets also need to be adapted depending on the age and level of the students. For pre-basic level, the activity should consist of mostly images and a few words. For basic and independent age levels, the reading material can have be more advanced, but graded or leveled readers are advised to be used in this context. These types of readers allow students to read at their level. Materials for this strategy can include paper, copies, colors, scissors, glue, tables, chairs, projector, internet, colored pens and

pencils, erases, laptop, white board markers, and whiteboard and level readers, stories, copies or texts depending on the age level of the students. This strategy also works well if you have access to technology but it is not absolutely necessary. It can function well without any technology in the classroom. Finally, the teacher is the facilitator of the reading strategy. The role of the teacher is to give levelled material specific to students' interests and needs. Further, teacher should provide materials students need to complete the task, help them understand new vocabulary, aid in the students group and autonomous learning process. It is important to note that the times are for the trainees and not the time it would take in a real class.

## ***Strategy 2: Concept Mapping***

### **Description**

This strategy can be used for understanding the main ideas and organizing long texts, books, fairy tales or short stories depending on the age or the level of the students.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

As a warmer, students can be paired to discuss what they think the reading or text will be about. Then they can share their ideas with the class in the form of a debate or question answer session. If technology is available a short video can be shown to introduce the topic being discussed in the reading or text. This strategy is used at the end of the reading activity. Therefore, once the students have finished the reading the teacher can review an example of a concept map and the various structures that can be followed depending on the teacher and needed learning outcome. Once an example has been shared with the students, they should be broken up into pairs to discuss the reading, text or short they completed. After the discussion they can begin to create the concept map. This can

be created with key words, short phrases or images depending on the age and level of the students.

Once the concept maps have been completed in pairs the teacher can ask two different pairs to work together. During this work session the different pairs will share what information was included in the concept map. The discussion can be based on guided questions provided by the teacher. Those questions could be:

What did you put in the concept map? Why?

What was the main idea?

What are the details?

What characters are included?

What do you think was important in the story? Why?

Describe your map?

After the discussion the pairs can then share important information they learned from the other pairs and turn in the concept map.

This activity can be repeated with different reading material that is chosen according to the level and age of the students. Concept maps work best with 20-34 students in a classroom where there is space for students to work in small groups and move around comfortably. Technology makes this easier to introduce, especially if students are low levels, but it is not necessary to complete the tasks and use the strategy in the classroom. The teachers' role is to guide students on the creation of a concept map. The teacher is available to answer any questions, but the students are working autonomously, while the teacher aids in the learning process. Trainees will be reminded that there are no wrong answers when it comes to concept mapping, so students can individually come up with interpretations of how they can create these maps. It is important to note that the time for the activities is specific for the trainees and not the actual students. The time for the activities would be longer when done in the classroom.

## Differentiation

This activity can be repeated with different reading material that is chosen according to the level and age of the students. Concept maps work best with 20–34 students in a classroom where there is space for students to work in small groups and move around comfortably. Technology makes this easier to introduce, especially if students have low levels, but it is not necessary to complete the tasks and use the strategy in the classroom. The teachers' role is to guide students on the creation of a concept map. The teacher is available to answer any questions, but the students are working autonomously, while the teacher aids in the learning process. Trainees will be reminded that there are no wrong answers when it comes to concept mapping, so students can individually come up with interpretations of how they can create these maps.

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# Reading Strategies for Effective English Language Instruction

*Diego Ortega*

Type of Receptive Skill: Teaching Reading Skills	Topic: Different Sources of Reading Texts in the Communicative Classroom
Curricular Thread: Reading	Sub thread: Development of Reading Through Interactive Reading Comprehension

## ***Strategy 1: Jigsaw Reading***

### **Description**

The objectives behind this strategy are as follows: it increases reading comprehension through collaborative learning and understanding of new words and main ideas in an interactive manner; promotes accountability in the classroom, as students need to be responsible about assigned tasks to reach a common goal; and improves listening, communication, problem-solving skills, and interpersonal skills. That is to say, the jigsaw reading strategy helps language students create learning in a meaningful way by being accountable of their own learning as well as by learning from their peers.

“Home” and “expert” groups need to be created within this strategy. It should be noted that the strategy enables each student of a “home” group to specialize in one part of a reading text. Students then meet with members from other “home” groups and form “expert” groups. In the expert groups, students are assigned the same part of a reading text to read and analyze in a collaborative manner. After the students, in the expert groups, master the assigned part of the reading text, they return to their “home” groups and share with their group members the most important ideas and essential details they have learned previously. In this regard, Reading Rockets (2019) observed that students act like a puzzle piece in the expert groups. Then when they return to their home groups, they need to work hard in order to put together the entire jigsaw puzzle. This means that when students go back to their home groups, they need to create together a clear picture of the entire reading text under examination. In short, by taking part in this strategy, students are able to build reading comprehension, work cooperatively, enhance language skills and increase problem solving abilities.

## **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

These are the suggested steps for the implementation of the Jigsaw Reading strategy, and they should be modified (as needed) based on your students’ English proficiency level.

First of all, language teachers need to have their students form “home” groups; these groups may vary of size, preferably between 3 to 5 members. Also, it will be a good idea to have students with differentiated reading abilities in each group. Therefore, groups should be formed based on heterogeneous grouping. Once the students are in their “home” groups, teachers may go ahead and preview new, unfamiliar vocabulary words from the reading text.

Afterwards, “expert” groups need to be created with the members of the “home” groups. The number of expert groups will depend on how many sections or parts you decide to split the reading text. For instance, if the reading text is divided into 5 parts, 5 expert groups will then be needed.

Each expert group will be assigned one specific part of the reading. It is advisable to ask the group members to do the reading individually and in silence. After that, each group is expected to share and discuss the most important ideas and essential details extracted from the assigned part of the reading. In doing so, the members/students, in each expert group, are expected to gain a good understanding of the specific reading part.

Later on, “home” groups will be rejoined, so the language students can share their learnings of each section or part of the reading with the other home group members. In the “home” groups, students can use their notes in order to let their peers know about the main and secondary ideas of the assigned reading section. The entire strategy implementation may last between 55 and 60 minutes.

## **Differentiation**

*Class Size.* The class size may range from 35 to 45 students, as public schools have large classrooms. It is important to keep in mind that groups need to be formed on the basis of heterogeneous grouping. Hence, cooperative learning can be maximized.

*Availability of Materials.* The implementation of the jigsaw reading strategy does not require the use of a lot of teaching materials. However, it will be a good idea to have the following things at your disposal: chairs, tables, concept map example, copies of book or copies of reading texts, poster paper or paper chart, whiteboard, whiteboard markers, colored pens/pencils, pencils, crayons, erasers, and rulers.

*Technology.* If technological devices and equipment are not available in the classroom, you can implement the jigsaw reading strategy without any difficulty.

*Classroom space.* A spacious classroom will be ideal for the implementation of this strategy, as the teacher needs to walk around, monitor students’ work and provide as much assistance as possible.

*Types of learning environments.* English language teachers may want their language students to read a specific part of the reading (or even the whole the reading text) before the Jigsaw Reading strategy is implemented in the classroom during a face-to-face phase of the reading lesson. In this regard, copies of the reading text can be handed in, or the reading text may be uploaded to and shared through a free-of-charge virtual learning environment, such as Edmodo.

## **Strategy 2: The Inquiry Chart (I-chart)**

### **Description**

The Inquiry Chart (I-chart) is a strategy that can be used at different educational levels in order to help language students get the most of the reading act by consulting and learning from different sources of written texts. Therefore, this strategy enables students to gather valuable information about the same topic by reading several, different sources. It is then imperative for teachers to design the I-chart around several questions about one single topic. In addition to that, as stated by Assaf, Ash, Saunders and Johnson (2011) the I-Chart strategy “can be used as a scaffold for whole- or small-group learning and an organizing tool for the research process” (p. 33).

The objectives behind this strategy are as follows: it strengthens reading skills by exposing learners to different sources of reading texts, builds upon prior knowledge or thoughts about a targeted topic, fosters critical thinking and improves reading comprehension.

Then students are asked to read several sources on the topic, and they need to record their answers to the posed questions in the I-chart. At the end, depending on the students’ proficiency level of the target language, they may generate a written summary of the topic as a whole, or come up with sentences that outline the most important information for each posed inquiry. Additionally, students, at lower proficiency levels, may



be asked to draw pictures that represent the main ideas of the topic under analysis. It should be noted that different answers for the posed questions can be explored as a whole class by the end of the strategy implementation.

## **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

To begin with, a list of topics may be provided to the language students. Afterwards, the students will go ahead and choose the topic they like the most as a whole class; the selected topic will be examined in class by means of the I-Chart strategy. Secondly, language teachers will need to activate their students' prior knowledge about the selected topic of the lesson by using a variety of techniques, such as the sticky-note storm technique, listing ideas, think-pair-share, among others. Next, a chart with rows and columns needs to be elaborated. It is a good idea to create the chart along with the language students. In consequence, they can a more active role throughout the strategy implementation. It should be pointed out that language learners, with their teachers' guidance, may create different versions of the I-Chart, or teachers can look for and use available I-Charts.

Afterwards, language teachers will have their English students create questions about the selected topic; the generated questions are to be written within the self-elaborated chart from the previous step. Then teachers may provide their students with reading texts where answers for the created questions could be found. In addition, students could be encouraged to look for more reading sources on their own in order to find the needed information to answer the posed questions. It is crucial for language teachers to keep in mind that their students must be allowed to answer the questions in the chart by consulting and reading different reading texts. It is also important to allow the language students to read each text source as many times as they need to.

Furthermore, language teachers should keep the questions within the I-Chart simple for beginning learners of English, whereas questions that require higher-order thinking will be more suitable for advanced learners.

Additionally, more rows could be added to the I-chart; for instance, a row called *summary* (as it is explained below). Moreover, teachers should encourage advanced learners of English to consult online sources or surf the internet and find more in-depth answers for the posed questions in the chart.

As the students consult and read the varied sources of reading texts, they need to document the key ideas that have helped them answer the questions in the chart. Then the language students need to be given time to come up with two or three statements (based on the identified key information) that best answer each posed question. This means that students will be required to summarize the most important information with regard to each posed question. After that, the English students may first report orally their “summary sentences” about each question to their groups and then to the whole class. The entire strategy implementation may last two class sessions of 40/45 minutes each.

## **Differentiation**

*Class Size.* The class size for this strategy may range from 35 to 45 learners of English. Most of the time, this reading strategy requires independent work; however, it is important to keep in mind that when groups need to be created, they should be formed based on heterogeneous grouping.

*Availability of Materials.* As regards the use of printed reading materials, or reading texts from textbooks, and non-authentic reading sources in English will be needed to implement this strategy successfully. In addition, it will be a good idea to ask students for the following items: colored pencils, crayons, markers, and/or highlighters. By using these, the students can highlight or underline information that can then be used to answer the questions within the chart. Also, chart papers and construction papers should be provided to the students.

*Technology.* The I-Chart strategy does not necessarily entail the use ICT tools. If students have access to electronic devices, they could read the electronic or online versions of the different sources of reading to find

the needed information to answer the questions in the chart. Therefore, this will prevent a lot of printing on the teachers' part and students will not need to pay for the copies.

*Classroom space.* To maximize learning, the average class size can be used to implement this strategy, since a lot of space is not needed for students to walk around and work collaboratively. However, a larger classroom rather than a smaller classroom will be more ideal.

*Types of learning environments.* A face-to-face lesson will be mostly needed to implement the I-Chart strategy. However, a virtual component may be added to the lesson through the use of flipped learning. For instance, if the topic of the reading lesson is selected in a previous class, different sources of reading texts (and even links to videos) can then be uploaded to a free-of-charge virtual platform or to the Drive administered by one's Gmail account. This will allow the language students to go over the sources of reading and come prepared for the strategy implementation that will take place within the classroom context.

### **Strategy 3: Story Maps**

#### **Objectives**

Story maps can be implemented into the language learning classroom before, during or after doing a reading text. If it is done before reading a story, language students' previous knowledge can be effectively activated, and they can feel better prepared and motivated for sharing and discussing ideas later in the lesson. If it is done during a reading story, this will help students recall meaningful and relevant information about the main parts of the story. If it is done after reading the story, learners will have a greater chance to review key information and assess their understanding of the story as a whole (Boulineau, Fore, Hagan & Burke, 2004). With regard to when it is the best time to implement story maps into the classroom, Özmen (2011) stated that having language learners

work on a story map after reading a story is more effective than having them fill the map before.

The objectives behind this strategy are as follows: it improves language learners' reading comprehension through visualization and understanding of various narrative elements, equips language learners with a framework for finding out the main components of a story and helps students synthesize and organize information and ideas in a systematic way. Concerning the conceptualization of story maps, they are regarded as visual representations of the major elements that compose a story. When language learners work on a story map, they focus on the important components or phases of a narrative, its major theme, characters, settings and plot events.

If language teachers implement story maps in a classroom of beginning students of English, they should keep these kinds of maps very simple with one single element or few elements only. For instance, these maps can focus on one element only, such as the sequence and development of the plot of the story. With more advanced learners of English, the maps can focus on several different components, which can be as follows: the main characters, the varied settings where the story takes place, the theme, the plot, the problems or conflicts and even the relationship among these elements. In order to explain how story maps work, teachers need to use explicit instruction with the aim of introducing and modeling the procedure (consisting of the below steps) and giving language learners opportunities to practice in a meaningful and collaborative manner.

## **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

To start with, it is imperative to find out a story that is suitable for your students' English proficiency level. Then language teachers need to determine the main components of the story. It will be a wise idea to preview complex or unknown vocabulary words with the students before the discussion phase is organized. Next, teachers can briefly go on discussing and analyzing the main components of the chosen story, such as characters, setting, plot, theme, problems or conflicts and resolutions.

In this way, language students will have an overall idea of the aforementioned components of the story before they read the entire story in-depth when attempting to complete the assigned story map template.

Afterwards, each student needs to be provided with a blank story map organizer. This phase of the strategy implementation can also be carried out in pairs. In doing so, a struggling student can be paired up with an advanced student of English. Later on, teachers need to model how to complete the story map organizer. As there is no one single map organizer template, teachers may provide their language students with the template they think it is the most suitable for their English level.

As students read the selected story and learn about its details individually or in pairs, teachers will have them complete the story map organizer. After completing the map organizers, teachers should help their students to check if all the major ideas of the story were identified and included. Lastly, students should be encouraged to share the information on their story maps to the whole class. The entire strategy implementation may last two class sessions of 40/45 minutes each.

## **Differentiation**

*Class Size.* The class size may be of 35 to 45 students, as this is the average number of students in public school classrooms. However, this strategy works well with any class size.

*Availability of Materials.* The implementation of the story map strategy does not require a lot of teaching materials. However, it will be a good idea to make use of the following things: copies of the selected story, whiteboard markers, crayons, colored pens/pencils, pencils, erasers, scissors, glue and rulers.

*Technology.* No technological equipment is needed for the implementation of the story map strategy. If you want to introduce the components or elements of the story and preview its unfamiliar vocabulary words, you can do so through a Power Point presentation or any other technol-

ogy-based presentation tool, such as Emaze or Prezi. However, this can also be done on the whiteboard or by using poster paper.

*Classroom space.* A medium-size classroom will be appropriate for the implementation of this strategy, as the teacher needs to walk around the classroom, provide assistance and monitor their students' work.

*Types of learning environments.* The implementation of the strategy mostly requires face-to-face interaction within the classroom context. The reading lesson, directed by the story map, may be flipped, so the story will need to be selected in advance and sent to the language students. In this way, students can read it before they come to class and even work on learning activities based on the content of the story.

## **Strategy 4: Retelling**

### **Description**

The objectives behind this strategy are as follows: it helps language learners reconstruct a written text; facilitates the development of cognitive skills, such as remembering, synthesizing, ordering and summarizing; and engages language students in genuine and authentic oral communication.

Retelling is an oral activity in which readers explain the main ideas of a written text, and it is a powerful classroom tool for building comprehension (Kissner, 2006). Basically, retelling involves having language learners reconstruct a story they have read before or in class in oral manner. When students retell stories, they are expected to order and summarize information as well as make predictions and inferences.

Moreover, it should be noted that language learners need to be encouraged to retell the story by using their own words.

In addition to an instructional strategy, retelling can be employed as a way to assess in a formative way how well language learners are able to comprehend a story. Then based on the results of this type of assessment, English teachers can help their learners gain a better understanding of the story under study. That is to say that retelling can be viewed as a useful strategy for checking students' understanding in a non-traditional, authentic manner. Therefore, teachers can check their students' language learning and progress more effectively, as they are required to organize information and explain it in a chronological order to their peers.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

First of all, language teachers need to choose a reading text that is appropriate for their language students' English proficiency level. In one class session, teachers can briefly explain relevant information of the story without providing too many specific details. And it will be also important to go over unfamiliar and difficult vocabulary words with the students in the same class session. Next, students will be required to read the entire (short or long) story at home and look for the main ideas and essential details in each part or section of the story.

English students will need to get prepared under their language teachers' guidance and assistance in order to do the following tasks in the classroom: identify the settings of the story; find out its major events; look for key information with regard to the three phases of a story, namely the beginning, the middle and the end of the story; elaborate an appropriate sequence of events; and offer an evaluation of the story.

In order to have students successfully retell the stories, teachers will need to provide them with explicit, direct instruction on the use of connectors, linking words and phrases (e.g., first of all, in the beginning, then, next, after that, afterwards, finally, etc.). In doing so, students will be equipped with the knowledge and tools to retell the above-mentioned

three phases of the story in the correct sequence with meaningful details. In a language learning classroom with advanced students, teachers may have them make inferences in order to fill in missing information as well as find out and retell causes of actions and their consequences. The entire strategy implementation may last two class sessions of 40/45 minutes each.

## **Differentiation**

*Class Size.* The class size for this strategy may be of between 35 and 45 language learners. This reading strategy requires independent, individual work. However, when groups need to be formed, it should be done based on heterogeneous grouping.

*Availability of Materials.* Printed copies of stories in English will be needed to implement this strategy effectively. In addition, it will be a good idea to ask students for colored pencils and highlighters, so that they can mark, underline and highlight important parts of the story.

*Technology.* The retelling strategy does not entail the use of technological equipment in the classroom. However, if students have access to technological devices, they could read the electronic version of the selected story.

*Classroom space.* A medium-size classroom will be ideal to implement the retelling strategy. Within this type of classroom size language students can work collaboratively and the language teacher can walk around, provide help as it is needed and monitor student language learning.

*Types of learning environments.* The steps that make up the implementation of the strategy will be conducted through a face-to-face lesson. If language teachers do not want to get copies of the story for their students, they may want to upload the story to a free-of-charge virtual platform, such as Edmodo or Easy class.



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# CHAPTER 3

Teaching Strategies to Develop Productive Skills



## **Pedagogical Skill Overview**

The chapter on pedagogical skills presents practical and effective strategies that every teacher needs to master to ensure engaging and effective student learning in EFL classes. Four sets of strategies on group configuration, assessment, classroom management and cooperative learning strategies are meticulously presented and discussed to help teachers incorporate timely techniques in their classes.

The first set of strategies consist of different grouping configuration strategies for small and large classes and the use of positive classroom environment through rules. Teachers will learn how to apply the various grouping configuration strategies and classroom procedures in their classes and adapt them depending on their context and needs.

Assessing for effective learning using performance and product-based tools comprise the second set of strategies. These strategies are aimed at developing formative assessment in the class to privilege continuous track of student's performance on a daily basis over summative measures of their attainment towards the end of schooling. Practical resources such as the use of the K-W-L matrix and the Think-Aloud Protocol Sheets aid teachers in evaluating students' achievement using authentic activities.

Another key aspect in an EFL class is the classroom atmosphere. The third set of strategies is designed to equip teachers with strategies and techniques to facilitate students' behavior in different contexts and levels of instruction. All the strategies and techniques described in the chapter can be applied and adapted depending on the teacher's situation, students' age and language level.

The last set of strategies focus on the use of cooperative language learning strategies to maximize learning through well-designed techniques that promote positive environments. Strategies and activities are developed to increase achievement, build positive interactions, and provide learners with experiences for social and cognitive development.

# Strategies for Effective Grouping Configuration for Small or Large Classes

Tania Cajamarca

Pedagogical skill: Classroom Management	Topic: Teacher Material for Grouping Configuration
Curricular Thread: All threads are targeted	Sub thread: All threads are targeted

## **Strategy 1: Building Groups through Vocabulary Cards**

### **Description**

Working with different grouping configuration with small children could be challenging for English teachers who should make the most of their time in the classroom. According to the New English Curriculum, students from first to seventh year have three class periods of 40 to 45 minutes each one. Thus, looking for grouping configuration strategies for first and second grades is essential in order to foster students' interaction in class and giving them the opportunity to receive help from their classmates during the class time.



Vocabulary cards strategy will give teachers the chance to form groups and review learned vocabulary at the same time; thus they will take advantage of the grouping time to reinforce and review vocabulary that students have learned before. Teachers will be able to work with different grouping configurations through this strategy such as pairs, trios or groups of four. This strategy consists on creating vocabulary cards according to the different units' contents from their text book. For instance, if you are teaching vocabulary about pets, you can create cards with the pictures of pets and their names.

This strategy will help teachers to form different grouping configurations fast and easily taking advantage of the time at the beginning of each class. Furthermore, they will be able to review and practice learned vocabulary in previous units and to foster cooperative learning within their classes.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

First, teachers should choose a vocabulary category they want to use in their cards. Then, they should draw items related to that category or print them on a cardboard piece (If they draw the vocabulary, they can make their students color them). After that, teachers need to write the names of the drawings or pictures under each one. They can use different sets of vocabulary cards for each unit. Before working with the groups in their class, they have to encourage



students to call out the names of each item and then give each student a card in order to form the groups. They can group them by different items (pencil, pen, eraser and ruler), or they can group them by the same item. (4 pens, 4 pencils, 4 erasers and 4 rulers). Teachers can adapt the groups depending on their own situation.

## **Differentiation**

This strategy could be easily adapted to a variety of contexts and situations within different classrooms. It could be applied in classes with few students or big-size classes. Vocabulary Cards could be also substituted with other materials such as flashcards or maybe playing cards. If teachers like to use technology, they can create and design their own cards, and then print them out. In order to optimize class time, if teachers have access to a projector; they can project the cards on the board and help students recall the vocabulary before starting to use the cards in class. Regarding the reduction of classroom space, working with grouping configuration at the beginning could be difficult and messy, rules and routines could be very helpful. You can bring big pictures of the vocabulary items and place them in the assigned space to each group item, thus students will know exactly where to sit and form their groups. For large classes with limited space for movement, teachers can plan activities that students can do in the playground.

### ***Strategy 2: Building Grouping Schemes through Craft Materials***

#### **Description**

Sometimes teachers spend a lot of valuable time asking their students to group in different ways. As teachers, we know that setting groups is important and that group's dynamics help us foster an engaging classroom atmosphere. Using different grouping configurations will benefit students since they will scaffold each other and share their knowledge in order to fulfil a project or assignment.

Popsicle sticks are versatile and easy to use; however, it will depend on teachers on how they adapt this material to the reality of their classroom. If you are planning on working with pre-determined groups, this material will be very useful because you group students according to their needs and the kind of activity you have prepared for them in advance.

Teachers can group students according to different criteria such as same proficiency level, same skills, varied skills, or same learning styles.

In Ecuador, it is very common for teachers to work with 4 or 5 classes – each of them with 35 to 40 students; thus, it is hard for teachers to remember their students' names. This is a good method to learn their names that will make them feel appreciated and connected with the teacher. Based on my experience, when students' names are called, they feel more comfortable and motivated in class. I have realized that disrupted behaviour is also easier to control and reduce.

During the implementation of this strategy, teachers will be able to use craft material to create teachers' resources to form different group schemes, and also to facilitate classroom and time management. They will be able to help teachers to get to know better their students.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

First of all, teachers should make sure they have enough popsicles for the number of students they have in each of their classes. They can paint them in different colors or ask their students to decorate them. Then, they have to write their students' names in each popsicle stick, and form the groups based on their expectations and plans. It is important to select one student from each group to be the leader. Before teachers start their class, they should give each leader the set of Popsicle sticks. The leader will be in charge to organize his or her group. The groups could be form according to their English level in order to differentiate tasks. They could also be made based on learning styles. Finally, teachers have to collect the popsicle sticks to use them to call on a student to participate in class.

They would not have to think what student to pick or having just one student participating, but they would be able to have different students in different classes participate with the same opportunities



## **Differentiation**

Popsicle stick is a suggested material. Teachers can use other materials they think would be more appropriate in their class context and needs. Thus, if teachers have learned how to design didactic material using a software, they can create very fancy resources and print them out. This allows teachers to be creative and original. When classroom space is limited, routines are effective in order to avoid disruption and misbehaviour. Using this strategy, teachers can assign a space in the classroom to each team. First, the teacher should assign a number to a specific space in the classroom, and this number should be kept throughout the year. Then, each time the teacher works with groups, they gave a number to each group, and the students will know exactly where to sit.

### ***Strategy 3: Building Grouping Schemes through Craft Materials Variation from 1***

#### **Description**

Working with predetermined groups is crucial for students' success in projects or assignments; however, teachers may group students without taking into account their characteristics or skills. They can pair or group their students randomly through the popsicle sticks strategy. Forming random pairs or groups will help teachers identify possible future group configurations that could work and be effective at the moment of developing other planned activities.

Social relationships between students could improve and grow at the moment they are grouped with new partners that could be different from them and that could contribute to the group with something extra rather than knowledge and skills. Thus, students could learn from other students about things that could be done in unconventional ways. Setting up new social connections is vital for the correct and optimal

functioning of the class that I consider a “living being”. It’s like the human body; the class needs all its components to work in harmony.

On the other hand, teachers can also realize where social relationships between students are not going very well. This is where teachers should think of the possible strategies they could use in order to help their students minimize discrepancies. In addition, using different grouping configurations during class time could result to having students who are more active and motivated.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

Initially, it is vital for teachers to make sure they have plenty of popsicle sticks and then color them using different colors. Next, they have to write a number in each popsicle. (from 1 to 4). Afterwards, they need to show the popsicle sticks to their students and call out the colors. It is convenient to make students listen and repeat. Now they should show the numbers on the sticks to their students and call out the number in each popsicle stick. After this, teachers need to take 4 popsicle sticks and count them with their pupils. Subsequently, they could use their popsicles to form pairs or groups of 4 according to the characteristic they will use (colors or numbers). Therefore; if they form pairs at the beginning, then they could ask them to form groups according to what characteristic they choose.

### **Differentiation**

Teachers can adapt this strategy to their context and use existing material such as cards, or printed cards. One of the benefits when creating their own material is that they can take into account the number of students they have in each class and build enough material. Teachers can create their material using a computer and print it. They can use different designs and colors.

Most classrooms in Ecuadorian schools are overcrowded; thus, teachers should establish routines that students need to follow during activity

time with different grouping configurations. For instance, if a teacher is using pair work, he or she could choose the students that could move around the class looking for their pairs by telling them that only certain colors or numbers are allowed to move around. Consequently, in a class with 40 students we will have 20 students who are moving around through the narrow spaces between columns of desks.

### **Strategy 4: Building Groups through matching cards**

#### **Description**

Grouping configuration for independent students could be easier and faster. As they are older, they are able to understand more complex instructions and follow them without much difficulty. Independent users need more dynamic activities which would motivate them to use the language in class and share their ideas with other students. Therefore, teachers need to plan activities that require individual work, pair work and group work in one lesson.



Matching cards could help teachers group their students fast and in an organized way. This kind of cards is ideal when working with different group configurations in one lesson or if you want your students to work in two different groups during a lesson. Since matching cards are made out of cardboard of different colors and they have different numbers and symbols on them, grouping students would not be difficult. This way, teachers can ask students to pair or group according to a number, color or symbol.

Teachers can think of different grouping types using this strategy. It all depends on how they use and adapt them to their lessons and class. Matching cards is just a suggestion of how basic material can be used for educators in class for grouping configuration. Teachers have the last word and they can use other materials that they consider more convenient.

## **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

First of all, teachers need to choose the colors, numbers and symbols that they are going to use for their cards. Then, they have to get 10 different color A4 cardboards pieces. Afterwards, they should cut out 3 cards (7cm x 5cm) from each cardboard piece. Next, they need to write a number on each one of the card (from 1 to 10), and draw a symbol in each card. (e.g. hearts, diamonds, cloves, stars and others). Once their cards are ready, they can give one card to each one of their students. Depending on what group configuration they want to use, they will need to ask students to pair or form groups by numbers, colors or symbols.

## **Differentiation & Accommodation**

Teachers can create their own version of the matching cards or they can use playing cards. In order to save time in class, if teachers have access to technology, they can project the cards on the board and show students how they are going to group. For example, they can ask students to pair up by colors. (eg. reds and blues, yellows and greens, etc.). In the case, they do not have a projector; teachers can stick the cards on the board and show students the group configuration that is needed.

Considering that there is an average of 40 students per classroom, teacher should think about all the possible difficulties in asking their students to work in groups. One of the things that really work is setting a specific space for group work. This means students should know in advance how the seats must be arranged when they are working in pairs or in groups.

## **Strategy 5: Building Positive Classroom Environment through Rules**

### **Description**

Setting clear and simple classroom rules since the first day of class is essential in order to create a positive classroom environment. Children need to know that rules are important in society for living in harmony and order. Teachers can encourage children to think that they follow rules even in their own homes, therefore they will be required to obey rules at school too. Classroom teachers and English teachers can have a consensus about what rules they consider children should be able to follow in the first years of school.

Using clear symbols is an excellent way to introduce rules knowing that most of young children have not learned to read in English yet. Teachers should also use simple and basic vocabulary and expressions when they write classroom rules. Another factor that teachers should take into account is that rules need to be reinforced every class. Students could learn a lot from rules such as vocabulary, pronunciation as well as respect and kindness.

Rewards must be also part of classroom behaviour management. Students love rewards and most of the time, it is enough to obtain good behaviour from them. Rewards do not have to be something very big or expensive. For instance, stickers could be an attractive prize for pupils. They are cheap and easy to get. Teachers can also design their own stickers on the computer and print them out. Another good prize for children is sweets. However, if teachers want to make their students feel super good about their accomplishments, they can elaborate good behaviour certificates or medals made of EVA foam. It is easy, cheap and cool.

## Implementation of the Teaching Strategy



First, teachers must discuss with other teachers and get into an agreement about the rules they are going to follow in class. After they have decided on the rules to be followed, they need to look for symbols or pictures that reflect the rules. Afterwards, they should make flashcards of each one of the symbols using cardboard, posters or a foldable. Then, they present the rules to their students one by one and explain to their student the rule related to the symbol on the cards. Teachers need to review the classroom rules every class just by showing their students the flashcards and making them say the rule.

It is important that teachers reward their students when they have been successful at following the rules. They can give them a happy face. When students have collected a certain number of happy faces, they will receive a prize

## Differentiation & Accommodation

The strategy was thought for teachers who have many classes; however if they have few classes such as four or five, they can make posters of the classroom rules. Teachers can draw their symbols in flashcards, posters, or they can look for pictures that can project each one of the rules. It is a good idea to review the rules every class and for that they can use PowerPoint slides to show the rules if teachers have a projector in reach. English teachers always move from one classroom to another. Therefore, if they want to display a poster or the flashcards on the wall, they should ask the classroom teacher for space for their students will recall them not only during English classes.

## **Strategy 6: Building Positive Classroom Environment through Rules Foldable**

### **Description**



Building a safe and comfortable classroom environment is definitely indispensable to provide our students with gratifying learning experiences. Classroom rules are helpful in order to construct the appropriate atmosphere. School students are full of energy and enthusiasm that teachers must control and direct them toward

the students' benefit. Thus, rules have to become part of the instruction and kind of a daily routine in the classroom.

Students and teachers must agree on the rules to be followed in the classroom, and students must commit to follow them. When pupils feel they have contributed with their ideas and opinions, there is a good chance for teachers to be successful. Rules have to be fair and realistic. It means that they are possible for students to follow. Sometimes teachers set very strict rules that students will not fulfil at the end.

Another important detail that students should be aware of is that there will be consequences every time they do not respect the rules. On the other hand, they also need to know that they will be rewarded if they behave the way we expect them to behave. Both punishments and prizes should be socialized with the students before the rules start to run. Time-periods should also be established to check the compliance of the rules. As a consequence, students will know exactly what they are going to get for their behaviour and when. Classroom rules foldable strategy is an appropriate way to work with rules in the class.

## Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

Firstly, teachers must think of the consequences if students do not follow them and about the prizes they are ready to give their students if they follow the classroom rules. They should then set a time period to check with their students how they are doing with the rules. After that, they will share the ones that they want to apply in their class with their students and discuss with them what rules they want to follow and get into an agreement with them about the commands they need to follow in class. It is necessary to let them know the consequences and rewards they will get at the end of a period (every week, every month or every semester).



To make the foldable, teachers should get a big piece of cardboard. First, they have to fold the cardboard in the middle. Then in the front, they need to draw as many sections as rules they have. Next, they have to cut each section just in the front part and then write each rule in each section. On the other face, they should write the consequence, and on the other page the reward. They should write the reward. Finally, they must display it in the classroom; subsequently, students can check them every day.

## Differentiation & Accommodation

Cardboard and markers are basic materials that they can get easily in order to build the foldable; however, if teachers have access to other materials, they could use them in order to make the foldable more colorful and eye-catching. Teachers could also design their foldable in the computer and add some illustrations to each one of the rules. Then they could print them in color.



Teachers need to have a space in their classrooms where they can display the Classroom Foldable Rules. As English teachers move from one class to another, they should ask classroom teachers for that space. In the case, they cannot get that space, teachers can make their students create a mini foldable and stick them in the first page of their notebooks.



# Assessing Learning for Effective Teaching

Hazel Acosta

Pedagogical skill: Assessment and Evaluation	Topic: Formative Assessment
Curricular Thread: Oral Communication, Listening for Comprehension	Sub thread: Listening to an Audio, Speaking as form of response

## **Strategy 1: Performance-based Assessment Strategies**

### **Description**

Assessment reflects learning and it mirrors the instructional methods teachers employ to achieve learning targets. In assessing students in EFL learning environments, there is an added layer to the challenge it poses. First, students are learning a totally different code that implies that their capacity to demonstrate understanding may not be easy to infer due to their inability to express their thoughts. Second, in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), the production of knowledge is privileged over the acquisition of skills in grammar and structure. However, in most cases assessment, is predominantly characterized by the giving of grammar-oriented exercises that may not measure what the learning goals purport to achieve.

The use of practical assessment strategies help teachers assess learners at different ages in a “spur-of-the-moment” technique that facilitates easy identification of learning gaps and milestones. This kind of assessment also aids teachers in inferring whether or not students are on the right track in language acquisition. These strategies guide instructions, capture students’ strengths and describe areas for growth.

The varying types of strategies depend on the target age of the learners. These assessments do not necessarily result to quantitative scores such as the cognitive types like quizzes, comprehensive examinations; however, they inform teachers at a specific teaching moment if learners are learning or not.

### ***Strategy 1: Performance-Based Assessment Strategies***

#### **Description**

Performance-based strategies are context-relevant to young learners whose age ranges from 6 to 7 years old. Young learners easily absorb a foreign code; however, their vocabulary may not be as expansive as older learners. Assessing their comprehension and understanding may not be easy due to their inability to express in complete sentences in the English language. Conducting short, task-based strategies will inform teachers if students have understood what they have listened to and can demonstrate this knowledge they have acquired.

Performance-based strategies vary. For young learners, it can be through Yes or No responses from simple questions, following directions, doing a task and performing in a game. The kind of tools that teachers use to document their readiness and responses is crucial. Tools that prove to be appropriate are but not limited to: checklists, color scheme, house-system and through role-plays.

Performance-based assessment strategies aim to develop comprehension of an audio material/literary text manifested through the selection of appropriate answers, and they are aimed at expanding vocabulary by constructing words that are culled from the audio text material/literary text.

### Implementation of the Teaching Strategy



Source: *Spring Fortune Teller*

In conducting performance-based assessments, an action-oriented activity is at the core of its success when facilitating student's learning. The activity, "My Origami Story", is a performance-based activity that develops students' listening skills while they are being assessed in following instructions.

To facilitate this activity in a big class size, the teacher must provide simple and clear instructions. For basic users of the language like students who are in Year 2-3, teachers should provide a rim of colored papers or they may ask each child to bring 1 colored paper. When

teaching young learners, the teacher may start the activity by asking them, "What is your favorite color?" Young learners must be given a minute or two to approach the table where the colored papers are placed and let them pick one. After students have selected their preferred color, they must fold their favorite colored paper by listening to the instructions provided either orally or through a video. There are many videos on Origami folding in YouTube with detailed steps and instructions. When teaching children, teachers should speak slowly and they should translate certain words into Spanish. This is best achieved when teachers limit each step to one line which should be first uttered in Spanish and repeated in English.

When all students have finished folding their colored paper, they need to write down simple words in each part of the paper. The inner parts can be the characters of the story, and the outer parts can be illustration or

drawing that represent each character. In helping children fold and write the words into their papers, teachers should provide simple words like color, names, or other information about the story. When all important information is written down and the colored papers have been properly folded, the “origami” paper story is ready.

To assess how students respond to tasks, teachers should demonstrate their own story through the “origami” paper. A simple story should be read. Stories for young learners should be one-liners, simple and short. While reading, it is important to pause, point to key words and translate into Spanish the one-liner text so children would understand the story better

After the story is told, basic questions about the story should be asked by encouraging learners to use their “origami” paper to look for answers. Since the origami paper has blocks of similar answers, each side must be shown one at a time to avoid confusion among young learners. If major characters of the story are written inside the origami paper, teachers must direct students to open the inner part and look for the names of the major characters of the story.

## **Differentiation & Accommodation**

All activities can be adapted to various class sizes. The determining factor to the success of the activities lies on the teachers’ capacity to facilitate and explain instructions in short, simple and doable steps. In big class sizes, learners can be grouped into 4’s or 5’s so they can follow the instructions of the teachers. In making the origami, each step has to be explained clearly and learners are expected to do each step together. With children, following a step and doing the expected activity is already milestone.

Similar Activities that Assess Performance

a. Yes – No Cognitive memory Answers

When reading stories to children, short text or conversations in bubbles is the most practical way to assess or infer if students have understood the question. Further, asking cognitive-memory questions that entail giving short, direct and predictable answers is often effective. Teachers may construct Yes-No answers on a ½ page bond paper and paste these answers on a stick (ex. Popsicle).

Characters of the story maybe drawn, colored and pasted on a stick and when a question is raised, learners may be requested to raise the drawing of the character they think is the correct answer.

b. Color-Star Performance Assessment

To assess students' performance and accomplishment of “small tasks”, a big chart with colored levels can be constructed and posted on the sidewall. Each time a task is accomplished, learners are encouraged to move their names one notch higher until they reach the stars (highest level). This is an immediate feedback for the teacher to see if young learners are following the tasks or if they understand the purpose of an activity they are involved in.

The activities that are presented in this module do not need ICT tools. The use of conventional materials such as colored papers, poster and writing materials are enough. If projectors and laptops are available, videos may be used to make storytelling more vivid and visual. Otherwise, the teacher's voice and the use of an appropriate contextualized story would suffice.

Pedagogical skill: Assessment and Evaluation	Topic: Formative Assessment
Curricular Thread: Reading for comprehension, Writing details	Sub thread: Inferential reading, structured writing of texts

## ***Strategy 2: Product-Based Assessment Strategies***

### **Description**

Product-based assessments are tangible and concrete evidences of students' learning. This kind of assessments develop higher order thinking skills because students are expected, not only to apply knowledge, but also to construct, create and defend the proofs of their understanding of the topic or content.

There are various types of product-based assessments such as but not limited to books, reports, maps, charts, essays, and creative presentations, among others. There are two crucial aspects that should be considered in assessing product-based outputs namely - process in designing the product and assessing the output or product. Generally, teachers employ scales and rubrics; however, these tools are not easy to construct. Designing and assessing the process how students go through in producing the output is equally challenging due to the teachers' inability to monitor each aspect of the process. Most teachers employ monitoring templates and peer evaluation before the final product is presented.

Scales and rubrics may be used to grade the products of learners. If rubrics are difficult to construct, observation indicators can be used as alternatives. The most important is that through this type of assessments, learners are able to produce an output that manifests authentic learning.



Product-based assessment strategies are intended to analyze mechanisms on how to monitor students' progress individually and collectively through teacher-support materials that inform their level and understanding.

### Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

The “**The K-W-L of Inferential Reading**” activity is a product-based assessment strategy. This is appropriate to students who know basic English and can understand simple sentences. In facilitating this activity, a short reading material should be presented followed by a set of sentence structures and a collection of pictures. The class has to be divided into three (preferred) groups and each group receives a reading material, another group receives a set of sentence structures and the third group has a collection of pictures.

Based on the assigned material, prompt questions are raised or posed to assess prior knowledge based on ocular inspection, or impressions of observable features. Prior knowledge are written under the K column of the KWL chart.

*Table 1. K-W-L sample matrix*

<b>K:</b> What I know	<b>W:</b> What I want to know/What I wonder	<b>L:</b> What I learned

The first task is for teachers to ask students to provide answers under the “K” column about what they know like the details of the story. This is the start of inferential reading or inferential learning technique. The generation of answers is important, and for young learners, they should be encouraged to draw what they have understood, or, to use stickers to help them express what they wonder about the text or reading material.

After filling in the “W” column, students should start reading the assigned material or start demonstrating about sentence structures. For young learners, they must be continuously checked if they are following what is being taught or talked about. After the teaching material is read, discussed or demonstrated, refer to the K-W-L chart and ask them to review what they have written under the “K” and “W” columns. With probing questions as guide, the filling in of information under the “L” column follows. While accomplishing the “L” column in the chart, students’ answers should be assessed, as there are their outputs or products of knowledge and skills acquisition. A checklist to confirm if their answers are near to the ideal answers is generally used; however, to encourage openness and diversity of answers, instead of comparing answers to the ideal ones, the rationale of their answers has to be probed. With grammar-focused lessons, ideal and correct answers need to serve as parameters in assessing students’ learning.

## **B. Similar Activities that Assess Performance**

### Audio-recorded speaking activities

For basic users, audio-recorded speaking activities are effective product-based assessment strategies. The advent of ICT tools such as laptop, tablets and mobile phones make it easy for learners to access information in the Internet. To ensure that these tools and applications do not foster a mediocre attitude, teachers can conduct audio-recorded speaking activities to students. There are three key points that serve as guide in turning this activity into a success. First, teachers need to provide a task. For example, to develop basic reading for comprehension, students may be encouraged to describe their favorite place in Azogues or Cuenca. With detailed steps, students start talking and recording through their mobile phones. The recorded audio should be short and arranged by frame. Self-evaluations and checklists can be used for students to assess themselves and for teachers to track their progress in a formative manner.

b. Creation of student- support materials

Actual student performance can be strategically assessed through a product – written output, drawing, essay or personal narrative. For learners who are in Year 8-10, they may be asked to produce projects that reflect their preference, hobbies or their interests. For example, they may share a personal narrative of their favorite book describing the reasons why they like the book accompanied by photos and sound in video format for just 2.5 to 3 minutes. Likert scales and rubrics can be used to assess them; however, the product itself is already a form of formative assessment because it reflects they process they go through in describing and explaining their favorite book. Woodcarving or thread crochet can be good examples of products that document how students understand steps and instructions in English. The defining element that should be factored in when using product-based assessment strategies is the coherence between the objectives needed to achieve and the desired output expected from students.

### **Differentiation & Accommodation**

In conducting this type of assessment, teachers have to carefully consider the age and level of students. When requiring a product especially in an EFL class, guide sheets and orientation-related information about the product have to be presented to the students so that they are familiar with what is expected from them.

Both conventional and ICT-rich resources can be used and judicious use of these resources has to be observed to maximise its potential as tools. In creating digital stories, students need to have a working knowledge on how to record their voice, take photos through their mobile phones and package them into video format. This implies that this kind of product cannot be expected from young learners.

Assessing students through their products entails time; thus, in big class sizes, teachers may feel discouraged to use this kind of assessment. The best way to cope with time is for teachers to assess students in a pro-

cess-oriented manner; and, at each phase of the learning process, self-assessment and peer evaluation tools should be used.

### ***Strategy 3: Using Think-Aloud Protocols (TAP) for Vocabulary Assessment***

#### **Description**

Think-aloud protocols originally come from the field of data management, product design and development. This type of protocols is intended to gather data and determine the usability of a specific product or good. Think-aloud protocols can be effective assessment strategies especially to students who are in upper levels of senior high school or in “Bachillerato”.

The basic premise of a think-aloud protocol in an EFL classroom is to maximize the potential of students to remember, record, write down and establish their own understanding of a text heard or listened to. This type of assessment informs teachers on how students process the information they receive and how they think about how they think, thus, developing their metacognitive skills. Further, think-aloud protocols help students become active listeners and not just passive recipients of information.

Think-aloud protocols aim to develop skills in constructing content vocabulary from a text heard or listened to through the use of a think-aloud protocol sheet. They also monitor student’s understanding of the text through careful analysis of the words that are culled from the material used in class, and they foster retrospective reading through a report of one’s thoughts after the reading task is completed.

#### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

In using think-aloud protocols to assess vocabulary, providing a reading excerpt from a popular novel is recommended for higher-level students such as Year 8-10 or “Bachillerato 1-3” students. It should just be one

page, and a simple excerpt from a novel for teenagers or from a popular book can be used.

Before the excerpt is distributed, the “Think-aloud Protocol” sheet should be given either individually or in pairs. The sample below can be used.

*Table 2. Think-Aloud Protocol Sample Sheet (TAP)*

Think-Aloud Protocol		
Words/Phrases	Clues	Confusions

When students have the TAP sheets in their hands, the selected excerpt has to be read slowly and clearly. After the reading session, students should fill out the table.

After the first try, students should be encouraged to read the excerpt again; however, during the second time, the TAP sheet has to be filled out with answers before the reading time is up.

Answers in the TAP sheets have to be discussed as a class to facilitate collaborative understanding of the text.

### **Differentiation & Accommodation**

In conducting “Think-aloud Protocols” (TAP), teachers have to carefully prepare the TAP sheets and reading materials must be appropriate to the age and level of proficiency of the students. In using TAPs to young learners, children may be asked to draw and paste stickers to visualize what they have heard or listened to.

ICT tools can also be used to enhance the administration of TAP sheets to students especially those who are in advanced levels. They can use

codes, symbols and graphic organizers to express thoughts hidden from teachers who are observing them. However, the use of TAP sheets may be more strategic because while students are writing down their ideas and brainstorming what they think the essence of a text is, they are, at the same time, doing active memory call and constructive learning.

The use of TAP reflects authentic and formative assessment that promotes active learning and student-driven activities. By carefully writing down what they think about what they have listened to, teachers have a glimpse of where they should improve and what has to be done to take students' understanding to a higher notch or level.

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# Controlling Disruptive Students and Getting Students' Attention

*Luis Andrés Peralta*

Type of Pedagogical skill: Classroom Management	Topic: Controlling disruptive students and getting students' attention
Curricular Thread: Integrated skills	Sub thread: Communication and Solidarity

## **Strategy 1: Quiet Sprinkles**

### **Description**

Teaching small children poses tough challenges for EFL teachers who frequently need to deal with students that are not accustomed to having English classes. As Copland et. al (2014) state, it can be difficult to motivate children who may struggle to understand the relevance of learning English. This results in lack of enthusiasm and indifference that are subsequently transformed in talking. Thus, the Quiet Sprinkle strategy can bring effective results at controlling students' noise aiming to quiet disruptive students and regain control of the class, encourage students' self-regulation, and foster their imagination through fantasy elements.

## Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

### *Sample activity Pre Basic User Year 2-3*

Before the lesson, decorate a small bottle with glitter, sparkles, and shiny paper. You can even put some rice or beans inside the container to add a sound element. The idea is that the bottle catches the attention of the students easily. Then add a label to the bottle and write the words “Quiet Sprinkles”.

In class, explain the meaning of the words “Quiet Sprinkles” to your students. Tell the class that when you shake these imaginary sprinkles on the head of a talking person, that person is expected to get quiet and they freeze.

Try the strategy with one student to show the rest of the class how it works making sure that when implementing this strategy, as Watanabe-Crocket (2017) suggests, you as the instructor must be very active and go all around the classroom modelling the strategy. With this, you will definitely draw your students’ attention and foster their imagination through the process as well. Although this strategy is very fun for children, it is recommended not to use it more than twice a month in order not to lose its effectiveness.





## **Differentiation & Accommodation**

This strategy works with all class sizes. Any materials (such as jars, containers, boxes, etc.) can be used as long as they are decorated and grab the attention of the students. Another variation of this strategy is to get a spray bottle, write ‘Quiet Spray’ on it, and add water with a subtle scent as lavender. Teachers will spray a little water on disruptive students and when they feel and smell the scented water, they will need to freeze. However, this variation of the strategy is not as effective as the “Quiet Sprinkles’ one in terms of both getting your students attention and fostering students’ imagination.

Additionally, for the purpose of explaining the meaning of the words “Quiet Sprinkles”, a projector can be used with some visual representation of the words. If no projector is available, flash cards can be effective as well. Finally, make sure there is enough room to walk around the classroom ‘sparkling’ students.

### ***Strategy 2: Countdown Prism***

#### **Description**

This is a simple yet effective strategy that does not only help the teacher regain control over the class, but also provides students with the opportunity of learning and/or reviewing previously learned content (numbers). Also, it utilizes a visual element which furthers the chance of getting student’s attention. Moreover, this strategy aligns perfectly with the national curriculum of English for the first years of instruction.

Thus, this strategy has as objectives to quiet disruptive students and regain control of the class, to establish a routine with which students will be encouraged to use time accordingly, and to review previously learned content based on the Ecuadorian national curriculum of English as Foreign Language.

## Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

### *Sample activity Pre Basic User Year 2-3*

Before class, prepare the material or teaching aid to be used for this strategy which consists of a pentagonal prism with numbers 1 to 5 written on each of the sides and a stick to hold and turn the prism.

For the prism, it is recommended to use strong construction paper or cardboard to ensure its sturdiness and durability. Also, make sure your material/teaching aid is big enough so that students are able to see it and distinguish the numbers on the sides of the prism. A suggested size for each of the sides might be around 8 cm x 8 cm. Once you have your prism done, attach a stick to the its base which will serve as a handle that you can use to turn the prism showing the numbers to the students.

During the lesson, show the artifact to your students and explain to them that you are going to use it when an activity needs to be finished and everybody has to become silent. You might want to review the numbers with your students first.

Get your students to work in an activity in class and proceed to count down the numbers holding up the artifact and showing the respective numbers to the students when the assigned time for the activity is about to run out. By the time you reached number one, all the students must be back on their seats and quiet. Similar with other strategies used with small children, this strategy must not be used too often to ensure its effectiveness.



## **Differentiation & Accommodation**

This strategy works perfectly with all class sizes. Any material used to represent the numbers in countdown sequence works (such as individual flashcards). However, take into consideration that the material is not complicated to be handled. Besides, if there is a projector and an Internet connection available, you can make use of online digital tools (software, webpages, Google timer, etc.) to display the countdown sequence. A simple PowerPoint presentation can be effective as well.

### ***Strategy 3: Musical Stops***

#### **Description**

This strategy is highly effective when it comes to maintaining attention of students and to make them stop talking. Further, this strategy is very beneficial for teachers because they do not need to prepare any additional material in advance. As well, the ‘Musical Stops’ strategy promotes the use of positive reinforcement of students by rewarding them through prizes, and it promotes music appreciation to students.

#### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

##### *Sample Activity for Basic User*

Get a small musical instrument (e.g. a xylophone, a recorder, etc.) and learn an easy, simple, and pleasant sequence of chords on it.

Place the instrument in a spot of the classroom where all students can see and listen to it. Explain to the students that the instrument is going to be played every time students are caught talking when they are not supposed to.

Play the chords you learned so students get familiarized to them. Practice the routine with your students before implementing the strategy. Then determine a limit number of instrument plays for the week with your students, so they are given the goal of not reaching that number of “chances” to make noise.

Keep track of these “chances” in a visual manner. For instance, you can use a large chart paper placed on a strategic place in the classroom where students can be able to see it. If by the end of the week, there are still ‘chances’ on the chart paper, reward the class with some sort of prize.

## **Differentiation & Accommodation**

This strategy works with all class sizes as long as all students can listen to the instrument. You can use any small instrument as long as chords can be played on it instead of simply noise as with a drum. Also, make sure to assign a determined place for placing the musical instrument as long as it is visible for all the students. This strategy does not require additional technology elements.

### ***Strategy 4: Traffic Light***

#### **Description**

Using the traffic light concept to control the levels of noise and speaking levels in a classroom has been very common in schools around the world. Actually, some companies manufacture really fancy traffic lights for classroom purposes which have the respective red, yellow, and green lights and even a noise meter included. Obviously, this type of objects can be really expensive for teachers. Thus, a cheaper and equally effective option of the traffic light idea is presented. The use of this strategy is very favorable because it is cheap. It also promotes efficacy because it ensures that students maintain an adequate voice level in the classroom.

## Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

### *Sample activity Basic User*

Use a large piece of black cardboard paper as the background of the traffic light. Glue three circles of construction or cardboard paper (one red, one yellow, and one green) on the black cardboard paper which will represent the levels of noise the students will be allowed to use during class.

Write the words “Quiet” on the red circle, “Whisper” on the yellow circle, and “Normal voice” on the green circle. Make sure the words are big enough for students to read them at distance. Cover the three circles by taping a side of smaller squares of black cardboard paper.

Place your traffic light on a wall where all students can see it. Explain to your students that the traffic light will be used to control the noise levels in class. Make sure that all students understand the concept of the traffic light.

Uncover one of the lights depending on the type of activity that it is being carried out. For example, when the teacher is explaining a certain grammatical structure, the red light will be visible since students need to remain silent and pay attention. On the other hand, if an activity requires students to talk to each other, as in a role play, the green circle will be revealed allowing students to use their normal voice during the activity.



## **Differentiation & Accommodation**

This strategy works with all class sizes. Depending on the creativity of each teacher, a variety of materials and shapes can be used to represent the traffic light concept, such as, cardboard boxes, cardboard tubes, paint, shiny paper, etc. The only thing you need to take into account is that despite the materials you use to make your traffic light, they must be big enough for your students to see the traffic light from any point of the classroom.

Also, the Internet offers a wide variety of online options that can be used instead of the cardboard paper version of the traffic light. Make sure that there is a projector and Internet connection available.

### ***Strategy 5: Quiet Signals***

#### **Description**

Although using quiet signals are originally aimed for younger students, teachers can also make use of them with high school students because most of these activities require an advanced language level. Besides the fact that these signals help teachers get students' attention and make them quiet, these strategies also contribute to building rapport between the teacher and the students because they are also fun and increase students' levels of motivation. However, teachers will need to choose or design quiet signals appropriate for their students' language level and cultural context.

## **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

### *Sample activity Independent User*

Before the lesson, look for ideas on quiet signals from the Internet. Teaching websites like Teaching Resources ([lauracandler.com](http://lauracandler.com)) or Edutopia ([edutopia.org](http://edutopia.org)) offer a vast number of these ideas. Also, you can search for videos on YouTube to see how the strategies are implemented in a real classroom setting.

Make sure that the strategy that you choose is general and can be replicated in the Ecuadorian context. For instance, echo clapping and call and response strategies are recommended.

In class, tell your students that in order to get them quiet, you are going to use a quiet signal strategy. Model the strategy to the students' so that they get accustomed to the routine.

Practice as many times as necessary until all students understand the purpose of the activity. Try not to stick to one single type of quiet signal. Vary the strategies from time to time so students are permanently engaged and eager to try new strategies.

Come up with your own phrases, or mirror movements for your classroom. Get students involved with the creation of their own routines as well.

## **Differentiation & Accommodation**

These strategies are suited for all class sizes. Most of these strategies do not require the use of additional material, but flashcards or posters can be useful to present vocabulary to the students prior to the implementation of the strategies. Depending on the quiet signal used, projectors and slide presentations may be used in order to explain concepts or vocabulary to the students as well. Finally, make sure that the students have enough room for those strategies that involve movement.

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# Cooperative Learning Strategies to foster Students' Achievement

Monica Tamayo

<b>Pedagogical skill:</b> Language Teaching Methodology	<b>Topic:</b> Current Trends in Language Teaching
<b>Curricular Thread:</b> Cooperative Language Learning	<b>Sub thread:</b> Activities to develop comprehension, collaborative speaking and writing skills through group dynamics and cooperative strategies

## Strategy 1: Group formation

### Description

Cooperative Language Learning is an approach that encourages collaboration and reduces the isolated effort for competition usually found in a classroom. It provides students the opportunity to construct knowledge as they interact with their classmates.

Generally cooperative language learning strategies promote positive interdependence with the notion that one student cannot succeed unless everyone succeeds; enhance equal participation since all students should contribute equally, with no one being forgotten or opted out; Foster individual accountability in which each member is accountable for a specific portion of the work; and, promote interpersonal skills such as active listening, communication, decision-making and conflict management.

Students need to be provided with the motivation to use these skills in achieving group success.

Teachers may employ the following strategies to ensure that cooperative classroom situations are, indeed, cooperative.

Assigning roles to the group members is an essential part of the groups' achievement. Group formation based on closeness or student selection may be the fastest way to do it, particularly for big courses, as a result, learners may end up working with the same individuals. Teachers should assemble groups in various ways to further the activity's learning objectives.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**

#### **A. Sample activity. Pre Basic user Year 2-3**



The title of this activity is “*A fantasy zoo*”. The purpose is to create a zoo for their home town.

Students have to be assembled in groups for the activity. You have to whisper an animal name (four of each animal to every student) making sure that everyone is familiar with the names of the animals. The challenge is to find the other animals of one's kind. Ask students to make the sound of the animal that was whispered in their ears. They have to keep making the sound until they find one another.

Then, students need to put four chairs together. It is important to show or give them instructions by shifting their desks together to assemble their workspace. Each member of the group should cooperate. Guide one group to demonstrate what you mean. Practice at least three times.

Now, ask students to sit and give them instructions regarding group behavior during the cooperative learning activity. You can write and tell the participants the three responsibilities that all members have in the group: **To be polite, to listen, to cooperate.** Have them repeat orally the responsibilities in each group and post them on the board. For group management, draw a **Quiet signal** that signifies that whenever you wish the class to convene or to stop working in their groups; it could be a hand signal, a bell or a card with a symbol on it.

Tell the participants that when the teacher uses the signal, everyone understands that the whole class needs to pay attention. Drawing a **Team stop sign** is a good way to manage noise levels during group activities. If a team becomes too noisy, you can place a *Team Stop Sign* in the middle of the group's table. That team must be silent for 30 seconds.



It is time to assign roles to students according to the required tools to be used. Give each member of the group a number as follows: Number 1 can be in charge of the scissors, number 2 the glue, number 3 the pencil, number 4 the markers. Students need to know that they are allowed to use only the given item. You can choose a group, and demonstrate the way the zoo should be prepared:

The student with the pencil should use the colored papers to draw the animals. The student with the scissors should cut out the drawings. The student with the paper glue should paste the animals into large piece of paper (the zoo). The student with the markers should draw the cages of the zoo and the surroundings.

The following are roles that can be assigned to group members (names of superheroes may be used) such as:



**Iron Man/woman (Group Leader)** makes sure everyone follows the rules established by the teacher and remind the students not to make noise.

**Spider Man/woman (Materials Manager)** receives all the materials. The only person permitted to move away from the work zone to get the materials, returns additional material, and eliminate any garbage.

**Batman (Coach)** is in charge of helping the shoulder partner if he/she gets stuck with the task.

These roles should be presented in labels and placed colored index cards to distinguish between groups. Make two holes in the top corners of

the cards. Run a yarn through the holes to make a necklace that the students should wear while working in the cooperative learning group.



Another option is to make a crown to those who are group leaders. Monitor participants` work and participation in the group. Make sure that everybody is concentrated on his or her own task. You can also encourage students to help others if necessary. Offer positive feedback after the completion of the task (animal).

If students seem to have developed the understanding of the project and the group is on the right track, hand out plastic sign with the picture of “Thumb up” showing good progress. Remind the students about the time limit assigned for the activity. Once learners have finished their task, ask them to paste together on the board or on a wall (you have to show them how). They must remain in their seats.

There are several things you can do to assess participants. Ask two members of each group to count the animals and show every color of the animals. Ask the names of the animals, their sizes, etc. Example: is this a lion? Is this lion pink? Is this giraffe big? Enumerate the posters that belong to each group and provide positive feedback. (i.e This zoo is very beautiful. I love the white llamas). Another form to assess groups is

by using an observation checklist. It is especially helpful when different items need to be observed.

This activity may entail a time duration longer than the usual classroom time. The purpose is to promote the production of outputs towards the end. This ensures that cooperation is not only developed inside the classroom but is strengthened and maintained over a period of time outside the classroom.

The materials that can be used for this activity are, but not limited to, names of animals, glue, scissors for each group, colored papers, pencils, markers, tape plastic chips, yarn, cards with students roles, large sheets of paper (wrapping paper), thumb up sign.

### **Differentiation & Accommodation**

Always model a strategy before asking students to do it and use simple language for children to understand.

If you have big groups of students, it is important to establish routines for group seating arrangement for students to know what to do when a cooperative learning task is presented. This will help to save time for further activities. An additional suggestion is to set a few ground rules when forming groups.

After the students have found their partner/team, there is no trading partners or joining another group.

It is also important to set up group seating so that students are close enough to share materials and thoughts and make sure there is room for you to access each group. You can change the composition of groups at least each month so as to give students the opportunity to work with different classmates throughout the school year.

An additional suggestion is to keep your tone of voice clear and friendly and set up bell ringing to control time. The following are ways to have

your students` attention before, during and after an activity: blow a whistle, ring a bell, clap your hands, play their favorite music, or stand still.

## **Strategy 2: Deliver Team-Building Practice**

### **Description**

Assigning students to groups does not ensure that team building will happen. It is important to foster a climate of cooperation in the classroom by having learners participate in engaging students in team-building activities in which they enjoy and help each other in an effort to attain both academic and non-academic objectives. All group members must understand that one cannot achieve success unless they all cooperate. Everyone in the team must learn to synchronize their efforts to guarantee that this happens.

### **Implementation of the Teaching Strategy**



The topic of this activity is: “**A mysterious box**”. The purpose is to write a story using past tense and sequence connectors.

You can start this activity by assembling the groups. One way is to make puzzles with pictures or names of famous Ecuadorian legends. Students choose a puzzle piece and find the rest of the pieces of their puzzle to form a group. You can add on the back, a message related to a

behavior required for group work that is revealed after the small group puts all their pieces together.

Have participants put four chairs together and sit with their puzzle mates. Once seated, ask students to think what the message regarding group behavior in the puzzle means. One student from each group has to post the phrase on the board and tell the class what they think it means.

You can use the following phrases: **Get along with each other, Respect others, On task only, Use quiet voices, Participate and share, Stay on task.** At the end, have students notice that they have just formed the word GROUPS. You could summarize what you expect from them when working in groups.

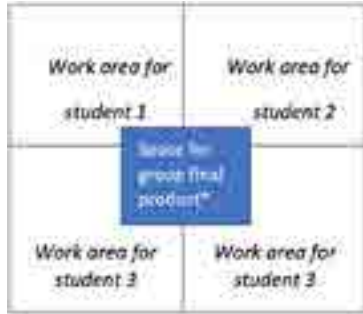
Now, you are ready to assign the following suggested roles to your students: **Recorder.** - writes the final product/work. **Narrator.** - reports the final product of the group. **Editor.** - checks if the final product has no errors. **Timekeeper.** - makes sure the group works within the time limit.



Divide a large piece of paper into four parts and leave a central square or circle. Give the introductory sentence for the story that each group has to use: **“When I was walking to school, I saw a box on the floor...”** Each group member has to write 3 different events for the story in a space around the center of a large piece of paper (place mat). Afterwards, the



group compares what each member has written, and the whole story has to be compiled in the center of the paper. See the sample below:



\*Taken from [http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu/pdf/Mod36\\_coop\\_placemat.pdf](http://www.eworkshop.on.ca/edu/pdf/Mod36_coop_placemat.pdf)

To ensure that groups are working together to accomplish the task, it is necessary that you monitor each group and provide feedback on a specific point of the task in order to reinforce their learning. While monitoring, take the time to motivate the groups by praising them for their skills shown during their work.

The students need to be told that they will be acting out the story. Once they are ready, provide a gift box that will help them to act out the story. The students can use other resources they have at hand. The narrator tells the story and the other members act out. Give positive feedback to students' work and again praise their effort when presenting the story. The placemat can be used to assess learners' individual and group work. You can also use a rubric to evaluate the content afterwards.

This type of activity basically needs colored paper, list of Ecuadorian legends, markers, cards with participants roles, pens or pencils, placemat design, gift box.

## **Differentiation & Accommodation**

Establishing routines and clearly defined expectations for performance can help you manage big classes successfully. You can also provide extra time to process oral information and directions in order to make sure everyone understands.

Before giving instructions for an activity, have students form desired groups and arrange the classroom furniture as needed. Try to group students in clusters of 4 to 5 if class size is larger than 30 participants. Having small groups makes the task organization and the skills management much easier. Always stay close to the groups in order to observe students' behaviors. You might discover that for one student, one role can work but not for another.

Do not burden your students with excessive feedback on their writing. Try to provide them with concrete possibilities for revision. You also need to make sure the learning environment is safe for participants. They should be able to move around the classroom without difficulties. Materials should be accessible so that students do not have to seek assistance from the teacher.

### ***Strategy 3: Manage and monitor group work appropriately***

#### **Description**

Assigning specific roles to learners can be an efficient way of structuring group work and can also **foster positive interaction in class**. Assigning roles encourages a sense of responsibility guarantees accountability for the participation of all members. Cooperative learning activities are generally unlikely to be very quiet; that is why establishing flexible group norms can help improve the quality of interactions. Teachers could also

use a regular classroom monitoring scheme to ensure that students are, in fact, working cooperatively.

## Implementation of the Teaching Strategy

The title of the activity is: Vacation Plan. You can have one student read the purpose from a slide previously prepared: “Your group is going to plan a vacation to the destination of your choice. You have a total budget of \$1500. The plan has to include 3: list of must-see-sites, logistics tips such directions, transportation information, etc. “must see sites”, traveling directions, transportation, lodging, activities/entertainment, restaurants, best time for travelling including weather and finally the estimated price for four people. Each group is expected to start their trip in their home town.”



The first step is to form the groups. One way to do this is by using words that have been explained and studied in a previous lesson and use them to assemble groups of four. Give each student a piece of paper with the word written down and ask him/her to stand up and look for three synonyms of the word he/she has.

It is necessary at this point to reinforce expected behavior during teamwork. You can hand out four most common problems students usually have when working in groups and have each group change these issues into positive behaviors. For example: We are not listening to each other. Instead of fostering other’s ideas and thoughts, we simply push our own opinions. Some of us don’t help. We are noisy and disrespectful. Have students write these positive behaviors in pieces of cardboard and post them in front of the class.

Once students are aware of the expected behaviors, you can assign their roles:

**Traveling leader** finds the sites, directions and transportation to their destination, best time to travel and other issues such as the weather, travel documents, etc. He/she keeps track of the time.

**Hotel leader** finds and calculates the price the lodging that suits the group.



**Activity/Entertainment Leader** finds and calculates the price of at least three activities to do at the destination.

**Restaurant leader** finds different restaurants/places to eat at while at the destination and calculates the estimated price for four people to eat at each place.

Each leader must cooperate with the other leaders in the group to create a fun and successful trip. While working on their project, they have to find a way to present their vacation plan to the rest of the class. This can be done using a poster, flyer or brochure.

As students do their work, you need to be available for the students to ask for advice regarding any language question they may have. This is also an opportunity to assess students' comprehension of their tasks. Also, observe different situations that can emerge from the discussions, so that you can refer to them by addressing the whole class. You can also sit with the groups in order to invite quiet participants to ask questions or to give opinions regarding the group task and their roles. Provide each

group some feedback on how you believe they are progressing before moving to the next step.

While students are presenting their final product to the rest of the class, acknowledge and value their work in order to help build confidence.

There may be several cases in which students like to check if their work in groups is helpful to them and successfully contributes to the task assigned. You can have them complete a group self-assessment or you can use a rubric to assess the students' product.

This activity entails a multimedia presentation (optional), small papers with synonyms, colored cards with roles for participants, wrapping paper, colored cardboard, colored markers.

### **Differentiation & accommodation**

If there is no access to a computer or projector, you can provide each group with a copy of the purpose of the activity and the roles.

For effective group work, the number of group members should not be more than four/five. Adjust the roles to make them suitable for the tasks and needs of the class.

Big classes can become very noisy, so it is necessary to summarize what has been said and/or have students repeat the instructions for the class.

In case the expected behavior is not shown by certain students, you can remind them by placing cards with the statement of the positive behavior in the center of their work space. Independent users should maintain control over their work. Instead of acting as an editor, you can help them learn to assess their own writing by only giving them some useful clues.

## Assessment in the cooperative learning process

Assessment helps teacher evaluate students' progress, set standards, motivates performance, and improve the quality of teaching. All of the teacher's assessment decisions will direct and change students' learning outcomes. Assessment activities can be categorized as formative or summative: **Formative assessment** is used to provide feedback, and to measure learners' progress so as to encourage them to reach greater levels. **Summative assessment** is used to evaluate the outcomes for competency development or improvement. While teachers monitor groups during the activity, some informal assessment may also be applied.

Credits: All photos by Mónica Tamayo

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## About the Book

This book has three chapters – productive, receptive and pedagogical skills, and each chapter has four sets of teaching strategies that were conceptualized based on the contexts and needs of teachers in the field. Each chapter describes in detail simple and practical strategies with contextualized differentiation and accommodation techniques to respond to the challenges that most teachers face in their classrooms such as class size, availability of teaching materials and the use of ICT tools. After reading this book, teachers are fully equipped to innovate their teaching and transform their classrooms into effective spaces of learning.

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